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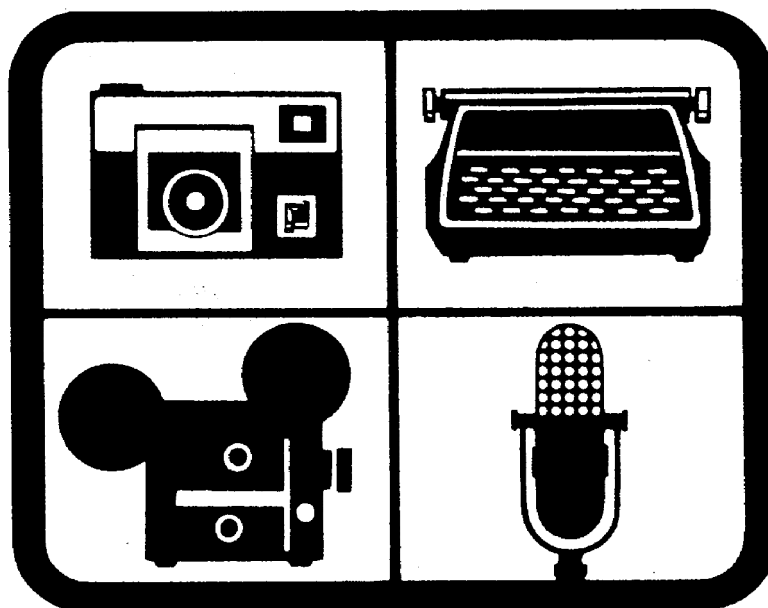
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PLAN AND PRODUCE AN ELECTRONIC  
FIELD PRODUCTION/TELEVISION  
SPOT ANNOUNCEMENT

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS**



THE ARMY INSTITUTE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
ARMY CORRESPONDENCE COURSE PROGRAM

**IPD**



**PLAN AND PRODUCE AN ELECTRONIC FIELD PRODUCTION/  
TELEVISION SPOT ANNOUNCEMENT**

Subcourse Number DI0460

EDITION 9

US Army Public Affairs Proponent Center  
Fort George G. Meade, Maryland

5 Credit hours

Edition Date: September 1989

**SUBCOURSE OVERVIEW**

This subcourse contains two lessons, giving the senior broadcaster the tools necessary to plan and produce electronic field productions and television spot announcements. These lessons will provide a general knowledge and understanding of television spot production and electronic field productions.

You must have a basic knowledge of military broadcasting prior to taking this subcourse. It is suggested you complete Army correspondence subcourses DI 0310, Techniques of Broadcast Journalism; DI 0350, Electronic Journalism; and DI 0370, Basic Television Lighting and Scenery.

This subcourse reflects the doctrine current at the time the subcourse was prepared. In your own work situation, always refer to the latest publications.

The words "he," "him," "his," and "men," when used in this publication, represent both the masculine and feminine genders unless otherwise stated.

**TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

**Task:** In this subcourse you will learn the duties and responsibilities of a senior broadcaster when planning and producing electronic field productions and television spot announcements.

**Conditions:** You are given the material presented in this lesson.

**Standards:** You will demonstrate a basic understanding of properly planning and producing electronic field productions and television spot announcements.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
SUBCOURSE OVERVIEW .....	i
Lesson 1: PLAN/PRODUCE AN ELECTRONIC FIELD PRODUCTION	
INTRODUCTION .....	2
EQUIPMENT .....	2
THE PRODUCTION PROCESS.....	5
PREPRODUCTION PLANNING.....	8
TRANSPORTATION.....	9
FOOD AND LODGING.....	9
PREPRODUCTION CONFERENCE.....	10
SHOOTING ON LOCATION.....	10
SHOOT THE SCENES.....	12
POSTPRODUCTION EDITING.....	13
EVALUATE PROGRAM.....	13
.....	
SAFETY.....	13
Practice Exercise.....	15
Answer Key and Feedback.....	16
Lesson 2: PLAN/PRODUCE TELEVISION SPOT ANNOUNCEMENTS	
INTRODUCTION.....	18
TYPES OF SPOT ANNOUNCEMENTS.....	18
FORMS OF SPOT WRITING.....	19
WRITING STEPS.....	20
MECHANICS OF SPOT WRITING.....	21
WRITING THE SPOT.....	22

WRITING EXAMPLE.....	24
THE SPOT REQUEST.....	25
Practice Exercise.....	27
Answer Key and Feedback.....	28
GLOSSARY.....	29

## LESSON ONE

### PLAN/PRODUCE AN ELECTRONIC

#### FIELD PRODUCTION

46R Soldier's Manual Task: 214-177-3415

#### OVERVIEW

##### TASK DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson you will learn the supervisor's responsibilities in planning and producing an electronic field production.

##### LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

ACTIONS: Describe the areas of responsibility in planning and producing an electronic field production.

CONDITIONS: You are given the material presented in this lesson.

STANDARDS: Define or identify the responsibilities in planning and producing an electronic field production (EFP) and plan and produce an EFP in the manner described in this lesson.

REFERENCES: The material contained in this lesson was derived from the following publications:

STP 46-46R-SM-TG 1/2/3/4/Broadcast Journalist Soldier's Manual and Trainer's Guide; Television Production, second edition, Wurtzel, Alan.

# PLAN/PRODUCE AN ELECTRONIC FIELD PRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

Special event programs, e.g., Armed Forces Day, German-American Volksfests and post sports championships, are produced for television at the remote location. This is called "electronic field production" (EFP). EFP uses a wide range of production techniques, which all have one thing in common: the use of portable television production equipment. This chapter provides a basic look at planning and producing a special event program.

EFP is used when time constraints are not a problem and when higher production values and technical quality are important considerations. EFP allows you the time to properly plan for the event and to attend to all the details as though it were produced in the studio.

## EQUIPMENT

Electronic field production requires a wide variety of equipment. A production crew may use equipment that is almost identical to that used by an electric news gathering crew. More complex productions may require high quality cameras, audio equipment, lighting gear and videotape recorders. A simple EFP shoot may only require loading up in a car, while a more complex shoot may call for the use of a production van (Figure 1-1, page 2).

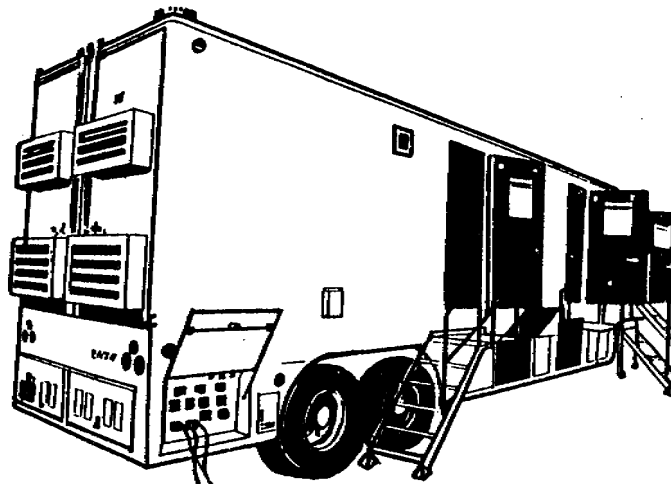
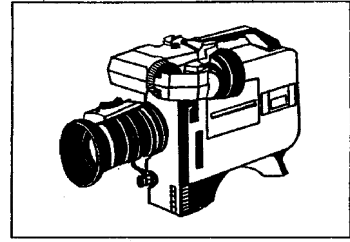


Figure 1-1. Production Van

## Cameras

The types of cameras used for an EFP will vary. High-quality shoulder-mounted cameras (Figure 1-2, page 3) are the norm. They offer a great deal of mobility and flexibility, which can come in handy during a special-event production. Accessories such as special lenses, filters and collapsible dollies, in addition to tripods and shoulder mounts, are also used.



**Figure 1-2. EFP Camera**

Before you actually shoot, several equipment limitations must be considered. Low or high light levels in the shooting environment adversely affect camera/recorder operations. Extreme temperature changes will also affect equipment operations. All video equipment is fragile. Handle the equipment with care, and don't expose it to sand, salt, heavy rain, etc.

Army correspondence subcourse DI 0350, Electronic Journalism, will provide you with a basic knowledge of EFP cameras.

## Audio

Audio needs will vary according to the special event. Simple productions may require a hand-held or lavalier microphone (mike), while a more elaborate production will involve boom and wireless microphones.

Hand-held and lavalier microphones are normally used in situations where an on-camera microphone is acceptable. Shotgun mikes and fishpole boom microphones are used so as not to be seen.

Wireless microphones are becoming more common on EFP shoots because of their versatility. The wireless microphone produces excellent sound quality and avoids the problems associated with trailing cable or a need for off-camera boom mikes.

Elaborate EFP shoots may use multiple mikes. In this case, you'll need a sound mixer, preferably battery powered, that allows you to balance and mix a number of microphones simultaneously.



EFP audio requirements should include extra mike cables, gaffer tape, and headphones for monitoring audio pickup, spare batteries, fuses and windscreens for the microphones.

## Video Tape Recorders

Electronic field productions are videotaped for editing later during postproduction. The most common videotape recorder (VTR) used for an EFP is the 3/4 inch format (Figure 1-3, page 4). However, the 1/2 inch camcorder, a single system camera/recorder, is fast becoming the most popular choice for electronic field productions. The 1/2 inch camcorder is smaller, lighter, and offers flexible production capability.

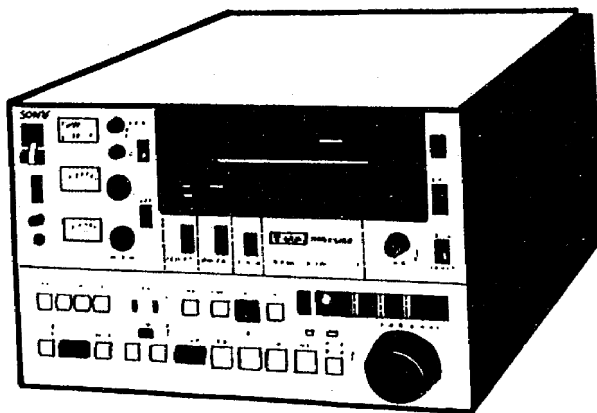


Figure 1-3. 3/4 Inch Format

## Lighting

Television cameras will not produce quality pictures without proper lighting. Television lighting is an art in itself. Proper lighting can create certain moods and effects. EFP often requires that proper lighting be set up to control illumination and to create whatever lighting effects are needed.

EFP shoots will normally require lensless spotlights, floodlights, mounting devices (stands, wall units), barndoors, screens, gels, and sufficient amounts of electric powercable. Army correspondence subcourse DI 0370, Basic Television Lighting and Scenery, will provide you with an understanding of the fundamental techniques of lighting, lighting equipment and the three-point lighting method.

## **Assess Need**

Prior to committing to produce any special event program, you have to assess the need for your intended product. Generally, input on whether to produce a new project comes from station management. There are times, though, when you'll receive input from the local public affairs officer, commanders of units you serve and leaders of community organizations.

## **Identify Objective and Target Audience**

Once you've assessed the need for the broadcast, the next step is to determine your objective.

- o What is your goal? Is the EFP to inform, educate or entertain?
- o Whom do you want to reach and why do you want to reach them?
- o Is there more than one audience?

Finally, write a concise statement, e.g. "The objective of this program is to inform the military community about the many exciting areas to travel throughout Europe."

Once this process is completed, you'll know your audience and what you have to accomplish. By identifying the direction this program will take, you have a basis on which to begin the EFP project.

## **Formulate Ideas and Research**

Up to this point, we have determined there is a need for this project, and identified our objective and target audience. The next step in the process is to formulate ideas and do research. This is the point where you'll need to bring in some of the principal players, i.e. the director and the writers. In some cases, you might be the producer, director and the writer of the entire production. It all depends on the size and nature of your EFP.

Gather all the information you can about the special event. You can never do enough research. Meet with the director and writers, go over the information and brainstorm ideas about how to present the special event on television. A brainstorming session stimulates creativity. One person might bring up a good idea and another will improve on it with ideas of his own. Write down everything you talk

about. Once the list of ideas has been compiled, narrow it down until you and the group come up with the direction to take. As producer of the EFP you have the final say, but by including other players on the project in the decision-making process, you already create an atmosphere of teamwork.

## **Write the Script**

Write a script, if necessary, focusing on one, central theme of the special event. Make sure the lead attracts the viewer's attention. Use colorful language to avoid just telling the viewer what is happening. Keep the viewer involved in the program by maintaining his interest. Draw your ideas out on storyboards. This helps you visualize how you want your program to appear. It will also help in expressing your ideas to others involved in the EFP project. Army correspondence subcourse DI 0310, Techniques of Broadcast Journalism, will provide you the basics of broadcast script writing.

## **Reviewing Materials for Broadcast Release**

One of the most important responsibilities you will have as a producer is to review materials for broadcast release. Once a product airs, it can't be retrieved. Local SOPs should provide basic guidance when it comes to release of material for broadcast.

All broadcast products aired must conform to **SECURITY, ACCURACY, POLICY** and **PROPRIETY**. Security measures for the Army are outlined in AR 380-5. Disclosure of classified information definitely violates this regulation. This would include any visual of areas or equipment that are classified. Always check first when in doubt on a shoot. Also, comments that are sensitive (but not classified) should not air. An example of this would be a missile crewman who proudly announces that it "only takes his crew 15 minutes to set up and fire from a field location." The comment is not classified but could be helpful to an enemy or potential enemy.

Information contained in the broadcast product must be accurate. Check the spelling of names; make sure the ranks are correct and unit designations are correct (e.g., there are batteries not companies in field artillery), etc. Even stories that are generated and released by the PAO should be checked for accuracy.

## **Privacy Act**

The Privacy Act prevents us from broadcasting certain information about an individual without that persons permission. This includes street addresses, social security numbers, telephone numbers, information contained in medical and personnel files, and information pertaining to on-going disciplinary actions that would clearly be an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

## **Libel**

Material containing information considered libelous must be deleted from a program intended for broadcast. If this is not possible, the program will have to be replaced with a backup. You may not say anything about persons, groups, organizations or businesses that exposes them to hatred or contempt, lowers them in the esteem of others, causes them to be shunned, or injures their business. Some libelous words are:

“drunk, radical, dishonest, unethical, a cheat, criminal (unless convicted), traitor,” etc.

## **Propriety**

Propriety is doing what is right and proper. You must ensure broadcast material is in good taste and does not violate the sensitivities of the listening/viewing audience. There are several types of material that would prevent a program from being aired: vulgarity, obscenity, gore, perversion and excessive violence.

## **Regulations**

As the program producer, it is essential that you be familiar with public affairs policy. Two regulations that you must have a good understanding of are AR 360-5, Army Public Affairs Public Information, and AR 360-81, Command Information Program. In addition, the broadcast supervisor must be familiar with AR 340-17, Release of Information from Army Files and Records; AR 360-80, Release of Information When More Than One Service is Involved in Accidents or Incidents; AR 380-5, Department of The Army Information Security Program; DoD Directive 5122.10, American Forces Information Service; and AR 360-7, Army Broadcast Service.

# **PREPRODUCTION PLANNING**

## **Site Selection**

Where will you shoot your EFP? For example, certain field productions such as changes of command and sporting events make it imperative that you shoot at those locations. While others, such as a command information spot announcement, require a search for the ideal area to fit in with the intended message of your production. Later in this lesson we'll discuss conducting location surveys. This will give you further ideas on what to look for prior to selecting a site.

## **Talent Selection**

When selecting on-camera and voice-over personalities for the EFP, ensure that the talent meet the needs of the production. Are they able to convey the intended message effectively? Often, producers grab the nearest broadcaster and assign him to a production. The voice and appearance of the announcer play an important part in any production. A monotone announcer would not exactly motivate an audience to go out and do what you're trying to entice them to do. To sell an idea, the announcer must have an on-air presence and a voice that can get people excited about your message. As far as appearance, you wouldn't want an overweight broadcaster trying to sell fitness in a spot production. Your production would lose all its credibility.

## **Crew Selection**

Finding the right people to fill out your production crew is sometimes a difficult process. Personnel may be assigned to different projects and unable to assist you. In the military, we have to take into account leaves, work schedules and other duty requirements. Crew selection should start as soon as possible to ensure the people you want are available.

## **Final Script Approval**

Ensure the script has been circulated to all the departments involved for comments and suggestions. Incorporate the feedback and send the script through the proper channels for final approval. The script might have to be approved by the

program director, station manager, public affairs officer, or even the local commander. Don't let the chain of command be surprised by the content of your production. Keep the lines of communication open to avoid possibly embarrassing situations.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Believe it or not, transportation arrangements often are not made until right before the event. You must include this in your preproduction planning. When considering your transportation needs, look at:

- o number of personnel.
- o amount of equipment.
- o type of vehicle required.
- o arrangements for fuel (coupons, money, interservice agreements for refueling, etc).
- o where you're getting the transportation (motorpool, renting).
- o who will service the vehicle if it breaks down en route. If it does, will you be able to get a replacement sent out to your crew?

## **FOOD AND LODGING**

If you want to end up on the bad side of your crewmembers, then overlook arrangements for food and lodging. A well-fed, comfortable crew will give you maximum output when working on the production. If your crew is going to require lodging, reservations should be made well in advance. Once the reservations are made, it doesn't hurt to call and verify that you do indeed have lodging space reserved.

Handling meals for your crew can sometimes be a problem. If your crewmembers are on TDY, they will receive reimbursement for their meals. The problem is not money for the meals, but where to eat. Sometimes an EFP may take place in a location where meals are not readily available. You must be aware of this possibility. Finding out at lunch time that there is nowhere to eat could really put you in a bind. Make arrangements for sack lunches or field rations. Your dining facility NCOIC should be able to help you out.

You've selected the EFP site, the talent and the crew, and the final script has been seen and approved by the chain of command. Now it's time to assemble all the elements of your EFP.

Start by having a preproduction conference. At this meeting require all the people involved to be present. Brief your staff on the upcoming EFP. Present them with all the information you have concerning the project. Pass out assignments, production schedules and any other materials necessary to assist the staff in performing its duties.

Once the staff has been fully briefed, open the meeting for discussion. Encourage an exchange of ideas and be receptive. Chances are, you'll get some great ideas for improving the EFP.

## **SHOOTING ON LOCATION**

Why shoot on location? There are advantages and disadvantages of shooting from a remote location. You have to weigh them carefully.

Shooting from the location offers:

- o realism, detail, proper atmosphere,
- o no set designing
- o and authenticity.

Shooting from the studio offers:

- o safety and comfort,
- o better control of the production,
- o sound and weatherproofing,
- o a light-tight environment,
- o more equipment, electrical power and physical space,
- o heating and air conditioning
- o and restrooms and telephones.

Studio production also allows for more careful, detailed planning and coordination. Remember, when shooting from the remote location, you're always subject to noise, weather and difficulties that are grouped under Murphy's Law, "Whatever can go wrong, will go wrong when you least expect

it." In conducting a site survey, your main purpose is to determine the personnel and equipment that will be needed, but there is much more that you'll need to find out on your site survey.

## **Conduct a Site Survey**

When conducting your site survey, ensure that you visit the site at the same time of day the event is scheduled to take place. For instance, if you survey the site in the evening, you may find that the parking lot has ample space for parking and equipment. That same location, during the day, can look quite different, with the parking lot full and the streets crowded with pedestrians and traffic.

Establish a point of contact at the location. You'll need assistance in obtaining access and information, and in getting help with various location details.

Take nothing for granted during your site survey.

- o Do the electric outlets actually work?
- o Will the window you need to run a cable through open?
- o Are there elevators and will you be able to use them to transport equipment?

You will also need to determine:

- o camera locations. Place the cameras so the sun will be behind them. Sketch the camera locations and make cable diagrams.
- o lighting needs. Take a light meter along on the survey. As pointed out earlier in this lesson, cameras must have proper lighting to operate. Sketch a diagram of where you want to place the lights. Doing this allows you to move equipment to the approximate location and set up quickly.
- o audio needs. What type of microphones will you be using? Does this shoot require hidden microphones or will they be visible on camera? As with the cameras and lights, make a sketch of where the microphones and cables will be placed.



o power requirements. Have a station engineer present to check out your electrical needs. If not, you will need to estimate the production's total power requirements and ensure the necessary power is available. Note the voltage and amperage and make sure the wiring configuration is compatible with your equipment. Locate the fuse box or circuit, breaker box and spread out your electrical load evenly by plugging into several outlets wired to different circuits. One important thing to avoid is laying electric cables near video or audio lines, this can cause electrical interference. Checking power requirements is quite technical, that's why having a station engineer present is a necessity.

o what permits and clearances are required. Will there be a need for parking permits? Are special credentials and passes needed to enter the EFP location?

o alternate plans. What happens if the weather fails to cooperate? If the location is outdoors, will you cancel or go on with the broadcast? Are you prepared for the sudden illness of a crewmember? Try to come up with every possible scenario that could hinder or cancel your production effort. Once you've listed all possible problem areas, discuss them with your staff and formulate alternate plans. As a boy scout would say, "Be prepared."

o how to publicize the event. Publicize the air date of your EFP on television and radio. Have talent do promos at the EFP location to lend credibility to the program. Contact the public affairs office for coverage in the post newspaper.

## **SHOOT THE SCENES**

The day of the EFP has arrived, the script has been finalized, the crew selected, the site surveyed and all possible production problems taken into account. The time has come to shoot the product.

Ensure that the entire crew is familiar with what the script calls for. Continuity will play a big part in your production. Costumes, uniforms and the positions of talent and props have to be closely monitored. For instance, in the first shot the on-camera personality is wearing a hat, but in the next shot, which is part of the same scene, the hat is missing. The viewer will catch this and probably spend the rest of the program wondering what happened to the hat. The same goes for the location of props. From time to time you may have noticed on television or in the movies,

**DI0460**

**12**

that a prop mysteriously moves or disappears during a scene. One shot of the scene might have been completed, the crew took a break, and someone unintentionally, without thinking, removed or moved a prop. Monitor the

continuity of each shot in a scene. Failure to do so could be embarrassing and cause a return to the location to reshoot one particular camera shot.

As you shoot, slate each scene and log good and bad takes to save postproduction time.

## **POSTPRODUCTION EDITING**

Prior to getting to the postproduction stage, you should have already scheduled the necessary facilities for putting your program together. Schedule the facilities as far in advance as possible. Chances are you'll be working on a tight schedule to complete the EFP, so planning is extremely important. If you need a refresher on editing procedures, read Army subcourse DI 0350, Electronic Journalism. DI 0390, Television Graphics For Broadcast Journalists, will assist you in planning and designing graphics.

## **EVALUATE PROGRAM**

Evaluate the program once it has aired. Gather feedback from your station peers and from the viewers. This can be done in several ways: by telephone, written surveys, person-to-person interviews, etc,. Feedback will provide you with a feel for what you did well and what failed to work during your production.

Write an after-action report detailing the production process from beginning to end. Make this document a part of the program file for your EFP. The next time you or another staff member has a similar EFP assignment, the program file of your EFP will make a great starting point.

## **SAFETY**

With any production using electrical equipment, it is always wise to follow safety precautions set forth in the manufacturer's and in your outlet's standing operating procedures.

## PLAN/PRODUCE AN ELECTRONIC FIELD PRODUCTION

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Review the material in this lesson. Answer the questions below by circling the " T" or "F" next to each question. Compare your answers with the answer key on the next page.

- T F 1. Once you've assessed the need for an EFP, the next step is to determine your objective.
- T F 2. Brainstorming sessions with production crew members are generally not very productive.
- T F 3. EFP is used when there are time constraints and when lower production values and technical quality are not important considerations.
- T F 4. When conducting a site survey, it is extremely important that you visit the proposed site at the same time of day the event is scheduled to take place.
- T F 5. An EFP normally requires that high-quality studio cameras be used.
- T F 6. Scriptwriters frequently draw their ideas out on storyboards to help visualize how they want the program to appear.
- T F 7. A light meter is seldom used to check lighting for an outdoor production.
- T F 8. Shooting from the location offers realism, detail and better control of the production.
- T F 9. When writing a script, use colorful language to avoid just telling the viewer what is happening.
- T F 10. The 3/4 inch format is fast becoming the popular choice for electronic field production.

**ANSWER KEY**

**LESSON 1**

**SUBCOURSE DI0460**

**PLAN/PRODUCE AN ELECTRONIC FIELD PRODUCTION**

1. True (Page 5)
2. False (Page 5)
3. False (Page 2)
4. True (Page 11)
5. False (Page 2)
6. True (Page 6)
7. False (Page 11)
8. False (Page 10)
9. True (Page 6)
10. False (Page 4)

## LESSON TWO

### PLAN/PRODUCE TELEVISION SPOT ANNOUNCEMENTS

46R Soldier's Manual Task: 214-177-2351

#### OVERVIEW

##### TASK DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson you will learn the supervisor's responsibilities in planning and producing television spot announcements.

##### LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

ACTIONS: Describe the areas of responsibility in planning and producing a television spot announcement.

CONDITIONS: You are given the material presented in this lesson.

STANDARDS: Define or identify the responsibilities in planning and producing television spot announcements, and plan and produce a television spot announcement in the manner described in this lesson.

REFERENCES: The material contained in this lesson was derived from the following publications:

STP 46-46R-SM-TG 1/2/3/4/Broadcast Journalist  
Soldier's Manual and Trainer's Guide;  
Television Production, second edition, Wurtzel,  
Alan.

# PLAN/PRODUCE TELEVISION SPOT ANNOUNCEMENTS

## INTRODUCTION

Of all the communication tools available to you in military television, the spot announcement is the most common. Unlike the feature, which is normally aired only once, the television spot will be used over and over again.

A civilian media spot is normally thought of as a commercial, something that sells a product. The TV spot can do more. It can sell a person on an organization, activity or even a mood. A TV spot can do all this without ever asking the audience to spend money on a commercial product. Many programs or activities in a military community are brought to the audience's attention in this manner.

In this lesson we'll discuss the types and forms of spots, the mechanics of spot writing and producing your television spot announcement.

## TYPES OF SPOT ANNOUNCEMENTS

There are two types of spot announcements used in military broadcast media. These are:

- o command information spots
- o public service announcements

### Command Information Spots

Command information spots support the commander's information goals. These areas are normally handled for the commander by the public affairs officer (PAO). Coordinating with other command agencies, the PAO establishes a campaign to emphasize the commander's information goals. For example, the PAO may work closely with the post engineer to determine energy saving campaigns for the calendar year, or the safety officer might suggest a series of spots promoting swimming safety. While most of this information can be included in community and unit newspapers, bulletins or in commander's calls, most soldiers, like the rest of the world, use television as their primary source of information. Using information gathered from the PAO, the station's traffic and continuity department compiles a command information calendar. This document is

## **Public Service Announcements**

The public service announcement (PSA) is the most common type of spot presented on military television. The PSA provides information the audience wants to know, rather than needs to know. Some examples of a PSA are: information on travel, social announcements or fund-raising activities.

## **FORMS OF SPOT WRITING**

There are two forms of spot writing: selling and information.

### **Selling**

The most common method of broadcast spot writing is the selling form. The selling form is the most demanding because it requires you to use your imagination to come up with unique material.

The selling form includes an action step. This is a point of motivation. The selling spot encourages the audience to take action, not just retain a piece of information. You can sell throughout the spot. The action step is your last effort to get the viewer or listener to do what you want him to do.

### **Information**

The information form is not as overt in its intentions as the selling spot. In the selling spot you actively encourage your audience to go out and do something or buy something. In the information form, you want to convey your facts in such a way that the audience will retain them, but you do not include the action step.

To write an effective spot, there are three steps you must use. These are:

- o attention step
- o appeal step
- o action step

## **Attention Step**

All forms of broadcast writing require you to first gain the audience's attention. This is called the attention step, or "hook." The object is to quickly gain the audience's interest. Most spots are: 30 and : 60 seconds in length. For example, "**YOU ARE SLOWLY COMMITTING SUICIDE.**" could be the attention step for an anti-smoking spot.

The attention step in broadcast spot writing can include startling statistics, a jarring question, as in the example above, or a startling fact. Use the most appropriate opening to reach the audience as quickly as possible.

## **Appeal Step**

To motivate your audience, use the appeal step. This is the body of the spot. During the appeal step you list all the reasons your audience should buy your product or become interested in your idea. Appeal steps in the anti-smoking spot could be:

- o You'll stop coughing.
- o You'll feel better.
- o You won't run out of breath so quickly.
- o Your clothes won't smell smoky anymore.
- o Non-smokers won't avoid you.

## **Action Step**

The final step in the selling method is the action step. Using six words or less, the action step suggests your audience should go into action and buy whatever it is you are trying to sell. This step should be forceful,



combining invitation and demand, and should compel the audience to buy, join, write or perform according to the action you have suggested. The action step of the anti-smoking spot could be, "**FOR A LONGER LIFE, STOP SMOKING.**"

## **MECHANICS OF SPOT WRITING**

### **Target Audience**

Spots are geared to attract all kinds of people, young and old, men and women, active duty and family members. However, each spot is not aimed at all of these groups, but at a small portion of the overall audience. It is your job as the spot writer to target your spot to that select group. For instance, if your spot were on the local day care center, your target audience would be married soldiers with working spouses or sole parents.

There are several questions you need to ask yourself:

- o Is this spot needed?
- o How do I reach this segment of the audience?

Since the target audience is probably not home during the day, nighttime television might be the best medium to air your spot. **Never** guess about the viewing habits of the audience. Your station's audience surveys will provide you with the information necessary to help you reach the intended audience. Once you've determined your target audience, write a specific spot announcement objective to include the purpose of the spot. This statement provides you with the direction in which this spot must go to serve the audience. Too many times folks working with the AFRTS (Armed Forces Radio and Television Service) have the old, "I'm the only station in town" attitude. Just because you're the only station in town, doesn't mean the audience is tuned in.

Prior to writing the spot, you must decide how you are going to package your finished product. A television spot might be produced in the studio, with actors and sets, or it might be shot at a remote location, with limited equipment.

## **WRITING THE SPOT**

### **Verb Tense**

Write your spot in the active voice, using either the present or the present perfect tense. It's better to say, "Show pride in your uniform," rather than, "You have shown pride."

## **Pronouns**

Your spot should be conversational. Personalize your message as though you were speaking to one person. Remember, your spot must have appeal to the broad-based target audience, but it must seem as though you're talking to each viewer at home.

The best pronoun is YOU. The word **YOU** always makes the audience feel as though you are talking to them. "For more information, **you** can call Jane at 5259" or "How often do you think about retirement," are directed at the individual.

## **Sentence Length**

Always use short sentences when spot writing. Sentences should vary in length to avoid monotony, but should be no more than 17 words.

## **Word Usage**

Hard to pronounce words that give an announcer trouble, should be avoided, if possible. Avoid using military jargon, acronyms or sayings that might confuse the audience.

USE	INSTEAD OF
Post Exchange	PX
Commander	CO
12 Noon	1200 hours
Specialist John Jones	SPC Jones
Ambulance	Emergency Transport Vehicle

DI0460

22

## **Format**

Your spot will be inserted into the program day, so it is extremely important to meet the time requirements. If the spot request calls for a :60 second spot, then it should be :60 seconds. Follow the time guidelines. Taking the liberty to make your spot :32 seconds can cause serious problems.

For instance, in television a spot that runs long might cause the on-air switcher to run late into a network or satellite broadcast.

When writing for television, remember that your audio must stand alone. The television audience may not always be actually watching the set, so it's important that the words stand by themselves. The video used in your spot production should complement the audio. If you use music with the spot, make sure it enhances the spot message. The same applies to music with lyrics. It must enhance or support the message, not distract from it. The use of sound effects falls under the same guidelines as music and lyrics. The video that you select must support the audio. The principle that video complements audio is the central theme of writing for television.

## **Writing Style**

As in all broadcast writing, there are steps you should follow in writing a spot.

- o Use the six C's of broadcast writing. Clear, Concise, Correct, Conversational, Complete and Current.
- o Use contractions whenever possible.
- o Television copy must be divided vertically, with video scripting on the left of the page and audio on the right.
- o Repeat numbers and addresses in your copy. These are hard to remember, so give your audience a second chance.
- o Always double space your copy and triple space between scenes. When in doubt, follow your station's format.
- o Use proper punctuation.
- o Make sure your copy is accurate. Always check and double check your facts, especially numbers and times.
- o Most spot writers work with deadlines. If given a deadline, meet it.

## **Policy and Regulation**

All spots must conform to the Army's Public Affairs policies and regulations. These regulations are listed on Page 7, Paragraph 4 of Chapter 1 of this lesson.

## **WRITING EXAMPLE**

Now that we've discussed the mechanics of spot writing, let's take a look at an example of a television spot.

GOODWILL AMBASSADOR

May 28, 1992

(30 SECONDS)

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

BRIEFCASE

ANNOUNCER

FOR YEARS, A BRIEFCASE WAS ONE OF THE SYMBOLS ASSOCIATED WITH AN AMBASSADOR.

SOLDIER IN UNIFORM

TODAY, THERE'S ANOTHER SYMBOL, FOR A DIFFERENT KIND OF AMBASSADOR.

ANNOUNCER ON CAMERA

IT'S THE UNIFORM YOU WEAR AS A GOODWILL AMBASSADOR.

SOLDIER/LOCAL  
NATIONAL

YOUR UNIFORM MARKS YOU AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF YOUR SERVICE AND YOUR COUNTRY.

HANDSHAKE/LOCAL  
NATIONAL

HOW YOU ACT IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY CAN VERY WELL MEAN THE DIFFERENCE IN OUR PUBLIC RELATIONS.

**DI0460**

**24**

ANNOUNCER ON CAMERA

WHEN YOU'RE IN PUBLIC, REMEMBER YOU ARE A GOODWILL AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED STATES.

**###**

## **THE SPOT REQUEST**

We've gone over the mechanics of spot writing, now let's take a look at handling an incoming request for a television spot announcement.

When given a new request, the first thing to do is read it over thoroughly to become familiar with the background information. If the request does not contain the essential information (who, what, when, where, why and how), contact the requester. You'll also need to:

- o give the script to your supervisor for approval.
- o make any corrections that are needed.
- o re-time the script, if you make corrections, to ensure it meets the time requirement.
- o meet with all the personnel involved in the production to ensure each person knows what is expected of him.
- o rehearse the spot. If there are problems, go over them with the crew and rehearse until you are satisfied all problems have been resolved.
- o ensure that prior to shooting the final product, all talent is well groomed in accordance with specific service regulations or local standing operating procedure (SOP).

How you shoot the final product may depend upon your local SOP. Generally, a slug slate is recorded in front of the final product. This is an information slate placed in front of the countdown leader. It usually includes spot title, date, number, length, start date and kill date. Again, this will depend on the local SOP. Slug slates are normally put together on a character generator. You, as the producer of the spot, should provide the needed information to master control personnel.

After the slug slate, make sure a countdown leader is recorded. Your next step is to record the final product. You may have to shoot it several times to get the video shots you want. Once shooting is completed, then you enter the electronic editing phase. DI 0350, Electronic Journalism will provide you with the basics of electronic editing.

Frequently, the subject of a television spot will require a remote location. Lesson 1, Electronic Field Production, will assist you in producing your spot at a remote location.

**PRACTICE EXERCISE**

**LESSON 2**

**SUBCOURSE DI0460**

**PLAN/PRODUCE TELEVISION SPOT ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

Review the material in this lesson. Answer the questions below by circling the "T" or "F" next to each question. Compare your answers with the answer key on the next page.

- T F 1. Command information spots are the most common type of spots presented on military television.
- T F 2. A slug slate is normally placed at the end of the television spot.
- T F 3. Television copy must be divided vertically, with video scripting on the right of the page and audio on the left.
- T F 4. Broadcast spot copy is single spaced with a double space between scenes.
- T F 5. Sentences written for broadcast spot copy should be no more than 17 words.
- T F 6. The two forms of spot writing are selling and informational.
- T F 7. The most common method of broadcast spot writing is the informational form.
- T F 8. The audio portion of a television spot must be able to stand alone.
- T F 9. Broadcast spots should not be written in the active voice.
- T F 10. When writing a broadcast selling spot, you use the action step as your last effort to get the viewer or listener to do what you want him to do.

**ANSWER KEY**

**LESSON 2**

**SUBCOURSE DI0460**

**PLAN/PRODUCE TELEVISION SPOT ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1. False (Page 19)
2. False (Page 25)
3. False (Page 23)
4. False (Page 23)
5. True (Page 22)
6. True (Page 19)
7. False (Page 19)
8. True (Page 23)
9. False (Page 22)
10. True (Page 20)



# GLOSSARY

**Audio:** The sound portion of a radio or television program.

**Audio level:** The strength of the audio signal.

**Audio mix:** Balancing all audio levels to provide the desired composite sound.

**Barndoors:** Metal flaps, mounted on lighting instruments, that are used to control light distribution.

**Dolly:** A camera support that permits a camera to smoothly move across the floor of the studio.

**Filter:** A lens cover, made of glass or gelatin, that is used to change the quality of light entering a camera.

**Fishpole boom:** Hand-held and used mainly on location, where a larger boom is too unwieldy.

**Floodlight:** A wide-aperture light source that produces flat, diffused illumination, over a wide area.

**Gel:** Colored plastic or gelatin material, mounted in front of lighting instruments, to produce colored light.

**Lavalier microphone:** A tiny microphone, worn by talent, clipped to the tie, lapel or blouse, or hung from a cord.

**Level:** The volume or signal strength of an audio or video level.

**Light meter:** An instrument designed to read light intensity, using either incident or reflected light.

**Location:** A production area located outside the normal studio.

**Master control:** The operations area where all audio and video outputs of various production studios are sent for distribution and broadcast or recording.

**Remote:** A radio or television production produced outside the studio.

**Shotgun microphone:** A highly directional microphone designed to pick up audio from great mike-to-subject distances.

**Spotlight:** An instrument that produces a hard, directional, intense beam of light.

**Storyboards:** Sketches of important visual sequences of a script that help illustrate the writer's concept.

**Tripod:** Three-legged camera mount that can be attached to a dolly for maneuverability. Normally, tripods are lightweight and are used for remote productions.

**Wireless microphone:** Transmits a low-power signal that permits cable-free operation.