ARMY: BEST PRACTICES-GOOD IDEAS

Korea: Delta Sigma Theta Sorority has volunteered to provide community outreach services for the Voting Assistance Program during the Absentee Voting Week, October 8-14, 2006. This support would include setting up information tables at the PX and Commissary and help to get the word out about voting by absentee ballot.

CFLCC/ARCENT Iraq, Afghanistan, HOA, Kuwait and Qatar: Posters and flyers were placed throughout the Camps. Focus areas for flyers and posters include DFACs, MWR sites, PXs, Gyms, and other high traffic zones. Voting booths were established in some MWR facilities. Forms were available at some Military Postal Service (MPS) customer service windows. There were voting drives occurring in various units within Iraq, Afghanistan, HOA, Kuwait and Qatar. The Chain of Command at all levels must put extreme emphasis on 100% contact, registration, and the voting program in general

USAREUR:

1. The 66th MI Brigade consists of 790 soldiers dispersed throughout Europe. There will be a unit organization/farewell cookout day for the Commander with an anticipated attendance of about 600 personnel. Their voting program for this event consists of the following:

   o   Set-up display tables and make multiple announcements via the PA system to:
   o   Publicly introduce the Group VAO Team
   o   Encourage everyone to complete and submit a Federal Post Card Application
   o   Assist voters on determining their voting state/county

   The unit also has a weekly email newsletter called the DAGGER. This past week's newsletter had the FPCA and the Postage Free Federal Voting Return Envelope as attachments included with an encouragement to fill it out and mail it. The newsletter is dispersed to all unit members, both military and civilian.

2. HHC 1st PERSCOM will set up an information booth by the local PX. Each day the booth will operate at different times, with a minimum operation of 4 hours each day. Also four voting banners will be hung at different local installations in high vehicular traffic areas. These banners will stay up until November 8th.
3. 202nd MP Group is a small geographically dispersed unit consisting of 200 soldiers, The SVAO will visit several of his unit installations. He plans on bringing donuts and sitting down with the soldiers to hand out FPCA's(SF 76) and showing the soldiers how to successfully fill them out.

State Department: VOTING ASSISTANCE BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED DURING THE 2007-08 ELECTION CYCLE

1. Posts worldwide responded to high demand for voting assistance services with innovative outreach programs during the 2007-08 election cycle. Posts used their warden systems to disseminate voting information to registered Americans and took advantage of internet resources, local media, and expatriate networks to reach unregistered voters. Consular Sections coordinated with their Public Affairs colleagues to manage press coverage of voting events and educate the public about the American electoral system. After finding that high demand for voting forms and large numbers of last-minute voters taxed local resources, posts identified the need to plan ahead for future election cycles. CA is proud of posts for their great work, and extends congratulations to all for the response to the demand for voting assistance.

2. Most overseas posts reported an unprecedented turnout among absentee voters for the 2007-08 election season, especially for the 2008 general and Presidential elections. A few posts, especially in EUR and Canada, did not notice a significant increase in voting services over 2004, but noted that most Amcits in their consular district used online resources to register to vote and request absentee ballots.

Voting Assistance Officer Training
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3. The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) offered in-person training workshops at 45 U.S. embassies and consulates, and the CA Voting Action Officers trained another 12 posts via digital videoconference. The voting workshops covered the role of the Voting Assistance Officer, took participants step-by-step through the absentee voting process, and offered suggestions for a successful voting program. Posts that had the most successful voting workshops invited a wide range of outside participants, including wardens and representatives from Democrats Abroad, Republicans Abroad, and expatriate groups such as missionary communities and the international school.

4. AIT Taipei asked incoming entry-level officers who would be assigned to the ACS Unit during the election cycle to attend one of the regularly-scheduled FVAP workshops in Rosslyn, VA before arriving at post.

Information Sharing
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5. Nearly all posts shared voting information with registered American citizens through the warden system. CA/OCS sent out a number of pre-cleared warden messages during the election cycle, and many posts supplemented those messages with newsletter articles, listserve messages, and customized warden messages. Embassy Sofia used its annual warden system test to remind all
registered Amcits about voting procedures. Even posts that sent out a large number of voting-related messages learned that you must continuously remind Amcits that they can't vote at the embassy, that all states have different requirements and deadlines, and that overseas voters need to start the absentee voting process early.

6. While warden messages are a great way to reach registered Americans, many posts struggled to get their voting message to Amcits who are not registered. Several posts distributed voting information to every American citizen who visited the consular section, and with every passport, CRBA package, and Social Security check. Many posts conducted outreach through the local women's clubs, American Chamber of Commerce, international schools, universities and study abroad programs, as well as through their post newsletter. Other posts used expatriate blogs, non-governmental organizations' networks, English-language newspapers, post websites, and radio and televisions programs to communicate with Americans who were not plugged in to the warden network. Embassy Sofia's Public Affairs Section included voting information in the welcome packets for Fulbright Scholars in Bulgaria. ConGen Johannesburg recorded one-minute public announcements that were played on Johannesburg's most popular radio talk show, and the Consul General was interviewed on air about voting procedures.

Outreach Events
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7. Many posts organized voting drives during Overseas Citizens Voters Week in July and Absentee Voting Week in October. ConGen Hong Kong advertised an after-hours voting event for working Amcits with a large banner displayed on the outside of the Consulate building. Post installed private voting booths, computers with Internet access, and extra tables in the NIV waiting room to accommodate approximately 650 Amcit voters. Similarly, Buenos Aires' successful voting party attracted approximately 900 Amcits as well as considerable media attention.

8. Many posts took their voter outreach events outside of the Consular Section. Amcits in Chiang Mai's consular district appreciated post's voter registration table at a local supermarket with ample parking and no security check. ConGen St. Petersburg set up voter information tables in an American-run bar, and Embassy Jakarta's absentee ballot drive at the American Club drew 300 American voters.

9. At many posts, public diplomacy and consular goals went hand in hand, as Public Affairs Sections (PAS) used the American elections to educate local audiences about American democracy while consular Voting Assistance Officers reached out to potential American voters. In Sofia, for example, the PAS sponsored over a dozen election-related outreach events centered on the elections and the candidates.

10. Public Affairs Sections were also instrumental in coordinating press coverage of voting outreach and maintaining current voting information on post websites. For example, ConGen Sydney invited members of the press to photograph voters filling out and submitting their absentee ballots (with the voters' permission). Embassy Mexico City's PAO coordinated CNN interviews with an 80 year old Amcit voting for the first time in 50 years and an 18 year-old first-time voter, both of whom appeared at the Consular Section at the same time.

11. Worldwide, Consular Sections teamed up with their front offices and Public Affairs Sections to host successful election night events, many of which were all-night parties. Consulate General Merida used its popular election night event to register Amcits who had not previously registered with post.

Workload and Resource Issues
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12. Many posts commented that they provided individualized advice about state registration requirements and deadlines to each voter who contacted the Consular Section, which created significant workload issues in the weeks prior to the November 4 general election. Embassy San Salvador recommended creating an action plan to handle the crush of last-minute voters on election day, and maintaining statistics to better quantify the hard work of ACS staff during election cycles. ConGen Sydney and Embassy Kigali extended customer service counter hours and accepted voters on a walk-in basis to meet the demand for voting assistance. ConGen Montreal had to extend ACS hours on November 3 and 4 to assist all of the last-minute voters at post. Embassy Rome and ConGen Hong Kong designated "voting windows" so that ACS work could continue at the other windows. Embassy Dublin established a dedicated pre- recorded phone line with voting information which received over 3,000 calls, but LES staff was still overwhelmed by the need to balance voting inquires with regular ACS work. Embassy Athens reported that the passport unit fielded a number of requests for emergency passports from Amcits who had missed the absentee ballot deadline and wanted to travel back to the United States to vote in person.

13. Some posts, such as Embassy Mexico City, provided voting assistance at the gates of the embassy or consulate, allowing Amcits to pick up and drop off voting forms without navigating post security. Embassy Stockholm put a secure Federal Postcard Application (FPCA) drop box in the waiting room so that Amcits would not have to wait in line at the ACS window to drop off their voter registration and absentee ballot request forms. ConGen Johannesburg placed a drop box for voted ballots at the consulate's public entrance.

14. Many posts underestimated the high demand for FPCAs and Federal Write-in Absentee Ballots (FWAB), or discovered late in the election season that they were using the 1995 versions of those forms instead of the updated forms released in 2005. Although all states will accept the older forms, the 1995 FWAB is particularly problematic because it requires the voter to include his or her personal information, including Social Security number, on the outside of the envelope. A few posts, especially in EUR, saw little demand for paper forms, because most of their voters preferred to use online resources.

15. The mailing of ballots proved to be a resource issue for many posts, especially posts with diplomatic pouch service only. Many posts used post program funds to send bundles of completed ballots to the diplomatic pouch facility at SA-32, where the ballots were put in the U.S. postal system. Other posts, like Algiers and Havana, arranged for mission personnel to hand carry voting materials back to the U.S. mail system.

16. Many posts commented that the redesigned FVAP website was a significant asset during the busy election season. Although the change in website layout halfway through the election season confused a few Voting Assistance Officers, the vast majority of posts were pleased with the improved navigability and user- friendliness of the new site.

Reminders for the 2009-10 Election Season
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17. It is never too early to start planning! Make sure to include funds for voting forms in your budget planning process. In 2007-08, the FPCA cost $36.88 per 100 and the FWAB cost $36.14 per 100. Also consider in your budget, the costs of voting outreach travel, advertising, and LES overtime.

18. Review your VotePost@state.gov collective e-mail address. All voting-related messages are sent to the VotePost@state.gov collectives (e.g., VoteParis@state.gov, VoteAccra@state.gov). At least one consular officer and one LES (preferably two) should be on distribution at all times. If possible, consider assigning the voting portfolio to someone who will be on board for the entire election season.

19. Educate voters about the use of the FWAB early and often, especially in countries with unreliable local mail systems.

20. In addition to the 2010 primary and mid-term elections, a number of elections will take place in 2009. Legislative and gubernatorial elections will be held in Virginia and New Jersey, and there will be special elections in California and Illinois to replace representatives who have been selected for cabinet positions. Special elections could take place when an elected office vacancy occurs. Encourage voters to monitor the FVAP website for information about elections in their state.

21. Voting assistance is an annual activity. New arrivals at post, registration of new Amcits, eighteenth birthdays, and change of names are all events that require an Amcit to provide new information to local election officials.

22. The Department greatly appreciates the dedication, energy, and hard work of voting officers and voting assistants around the globe who made it possible for fellow Americans to participate in the 2008 electoral process. It has been a pleasure to work with you, and we sincerely hope that you will continue to be involved in the voting assistance program.

USMC: Voting Assistance Program Best Practices Report

The following is a list of the best practices provided by Marine Corps Bases and Stations used to heighten the awareness of the voting program within the Marine Corps during the 2008 election.

- Published Voting Assistance Officer's contact information in the Monthly Family Newsletters.
- Incorporated Voting into Base check-in and check-out procedures to ensure each new join, transferring servicemember, and their eligible family members, are provided the opportunity to complete a FPCA.
- UVAO's presented Voting information at unit's welcome aboard briefs.
- VAO's worked closely with the Family Readiness Officer to ensure information was passed to all spouses.
- Distributed weekly command-wide emails detailing upcoming primaries and deadlines for voter registration.
- Took advantage of Pre-liberty/holiday/safety briefs to discuss voting procedures, deadlines, and events.
- Published articles in local periodicals.
- Conducted mass voting information mailings to Marines and their families' through-out the voting year.
- Conducted Voter Awareness training prior to all deployments.
- Published voting information in monthly Drill Newsletter for reservists.
- Advertised the use of programs like Project Vote Smart to assist Marines in gathering unbiased and relevant information about the candidates.
- Used Military OneSource to disseminate voting information to Family members.
- Ensured Voting was addressed regularly at staff meetings.
- Set up voting awareness stations outside of MCCS facilities such as the Base Gyms, Exchanges, and Commissaries.

MEMORANDUM

From: Jason Watkins, LT, USN, Navy Voting Program Manager
To: Director, Federal Voting Assistance Program

Subj: VOTING PROGRAM "GOOD IDEAS" AND LESSONS LEARNED

Ref: (a) SENIOR SERVICE VOTING REPRESENTATIVE REPORT TO DIRECTOR,
        FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ON SERVICE'S VOTING ASSISTANCE
        PROGRAM

1. Per ref (a) Service Voting Programs are to submit separately to the
Director, FVAP a report of good ideas that have been identified as
improving the Service Voting Assistance Program, including
identification of lessons learned.

2. Navy Voting "Good Ideas" include:

    a. Installations can establish Voting Information Centers in common
    areas such as Housing Offices, Galleys, or Fleet and Family Service
    Centers.

    b. Installations can conduct Voting Information and Registration
    Drives at Liberty and Recreation Centers. Doing this can help to
    drum up interest within the 18-25 year old age group.

    c. Distribution of SF-76 forms can be more effective and far
    reaching through the use of digital applications.

    d. Distribution of promotional material in varied media formats and
    from varied sources. Navy Voting was able to utilize Fleet and
    Family Service's Multimedia Marketing team to create a wealth of
    promotional material and distribute it throughout the force. This
    included tri-folds, training presentations, audio and video Public
    Service Announcments (PSAs), posters, information cards, and voting
    advertisements.

    e. Continuing to build the Navy Voting Web Site into a one-stop
    shopping location for VAOs world wide.

2.   Navy Voting Lessons Learned:

    a. CNO issued an updated Standard Naval Distribution List (SNDL) in
    June 2008. This database is invaluable in identifying commands
    which are required to designate Voting Assistance Officers.
    Updates to the database are readily available from online sources.

    b. Navy Voting (CNIC) website is being remodeled in direct to
    feedback from field-level VAOs. Particular enhancements are being
    made in terms of navigability.

    c. Inventory levels of hard-copy forms (e.g., SF-76 and SF-180)
    need to be monitored closely to ensure year-round availability.

d. VAO turnover directly affects program continuity and effectiveness.

    i.   Navy Voting will begin training VAOs for the 2010 election season in the summer of 2009. Navy VAO will request from Regional and Installation Commanders that VAOs are only assigned from personnel that will be onboard for the duration of the 2010 election.

   ii.   VAOs will continue to be trained on the importance of proper turnover maintenance of continuity folders.

  iii.   Enhancements to the VIMS website will better enable commands to monitor the voting programs of subordinate activities.

   iv.   Navy Voting Action Officer will continue to travel to Navy sites worldwide to perform on-site assessments, provide direct assistance and obtain field-level feedback and suggestions.

USAF VOTING EOY REPORT
BEST PRACTICES
(TAB 9)

1. Laptops were utilized by the IVAOs to access the FVAP website at installation voting assistance booths to help personnel register to vote

2. Installations held mandatory wing CC calls to disseminate information

3. IVAOs emailed the voting newsletter to each UVAO weekly

4. Powerpoint slides distributed by email that included the ten most frequent errors made on the SF76; polling locations; and the benefits of voting early

5. Flyers distributed throughout the base along with a big 15ft banner at the main gate

6. IVAO sent out presidential trivia questions weekly to boost interest in voting

7. Voting video was added to the daily computer log-on script

8. Al Udeid (deployed location) created their own local voting intranet page

    IntraWeb

9. Voting booth was set up at the Labor Day bash (huge success) on Andersen AB, Guam.

10. Andrews AFB: Voting drives at BX/Commissary, scrolling marquee, base newspaper articles, interviews, and ads, wing/base emails, Commander's Access Channel (powerpoint), and use of Community of Practice web application for both UVAOs and individuals.

11. Dobbins ARB, GA:
    1. New Comer's Information Card
        (Attached)

    New Comers Voting
    Handout.doc

    2. Patriotic Unit Voting Sheet.
        (Attached)

    BeSmartInstallation
    slide.ppt

    3. Mobile Voting Information Display (for use on deployment lines or public information days).
        a. Buy a science fair three part display board (colored).
        b. Spray glue or stick glue three folders on the board for SF76, SF 186 and Voting Schedules.
        c. Attach patriotic and military to fill in areas.

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staff meeting and encouraged to share the information   provided in the detailed flyer within their organizations.

20. Little Rock AFB: Had their own IVAO/UVAO business cards, a Voting Assistance Notary Witness Guide for all states, a flyer with all states' registration deadlines, opened up a voting assistance CoP, and provided county early voting schedules for 2 local counties.

21. Malmstrom AFB:

FVAP Web Site Tutorial.pptx   Electronic Contact Instructions.doc

22. McConnel & McChord AFB both used "sharepoint" sites.

23. RAF Mildenhall, UK: Our single most important best practice, without a doubt, was the Okaloosa County (Florida) pilot program for electronic voting. Approximately 35 voters cast ballots from an electronic voting kiosk in Mildenhall Village, having their ballots counted and confirmed immediately. Dozens of non-Okaloosa County voters, however asked about the program, expressing a desire to vote electronically. Having observed the voting kiosk in action, I can say it's faster, simpler, and more reliable than mail-in ballots, while giving the voters with much greater confidence that their votes are actually being counted. The Okaloosa County officials indicated a possibility that Florida will adopt the system state-wide during the next election, but after observing the system firsthand, I recommend DoD and FVAP officials do everything they can to encourage other states to adopt the system as well.

24. Minot AFB: Placed a "visit UVAO" on deployment checklist.

25. Patrick AFB: Created vote@patrick.af.mil email address for people to get assistance.

26. Pope AFB: Created a "voting deadlines.xls" spreadsheet

27. Ramstein AB, GE: utilized AFN, radio personalities, the Eagle Mascot, and USO in monthly voter drives.

28. Robins AFB: (see atch'd):

bps.doc

29. Scott AFB: We were able to get additional exposure by having the base newspaper do an article highlighting those people working the booth. In conjunction with the voting booth set-up at the BX, AMC headquarters did their own voting drive by having UVACs posted by the doors to the headquarters building. These volunteers were available during the morning rush of incoming and outgoing personnel to help answer questions and encourage personnel to register to vote.

30. Shaw had internet connected laptops at their booth during AFVW, which helped get people's questions answered on the spot.

31. Sheppard AFB: Several Unit Voting Assistance Officers (UVAO) sent weekly humorous and interesting "Presidential Trivia" questions to their unit personnel to boost interest in the general election. One training group provided an electronic countdown to the election, as well as

reminders posted on the group electronic calendar that displayed upon computer log-in. Our Wing Learning Development Center briefs all Airmen in Training (approximately 25K per year) on their voting responsibilities and logistics as they come to Sheppard AFB for initial technical training.

32. Spangdahlem:

Informational
Flyer.pub

33. Tinker AFB: Had wing cc record short video promoting voting participation…added to daily computer log-on checklist.

34. Vandenburg AFB: Had business card w/ fvap.gov site and UVAO contact information. Had voting slogans from the '07 contest scrolled on the electronic marquee.