

Suggested Guidelines for Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association® (CVMA®)

Media Interviews

First, make sure your CC and CEB is aware of the media interview. When a member is representing the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association® (CVMA®) in a media interview, if possible, remarks should be carefully targeted and prepared with the below guidance. There may be an occasion when a member is approached in public and asked to speak or comment on a particular issue resulting in an impromptu interview.

Representing the CVMA. If a member is wearing and/or displaying a CVMA logo, emblem or name, to include Skullly, then that member's comments should be limited only about the CVMA. That member's words and actions, when speaking to or in the presence of the media, and public for that matter, are reflective of the entire Association. For instance, if the member is attending a fundraiser for veteran suicide prevention sponsored by an MC, not to state the obvious, but the member should refrain from commenting on or about the MC, or any other organizations for that matter. Members may comment on the cause, such as: "The CVMA supports our veteran community in numerous ways, including veteran suicide prevention."

As a general rule, during media interviews, members should stay away from:

- 1) commenting on other organizations; and,*
- 2) endorsing products; and,*
- 3) stating preference for this person, object, organization, entity or establishment; and,*
- 4) addressing the number of CVMA chapters and/or members; and,*
- 5) making negative comments; and,*
- 6) bear in mind that our membership numbers are reflective of how many members that we have in the CVMA. They are for use within our organization and should not be shared externally.*

If a new member is approached by the media, that member should defer to an officer, if one is present. Impromptu interviews can be difficult, especially for new members who haven't experienced the full spectrum of support that the CVMA provides.

Creating Talking Points. Radio and TV media are often looking for brief sound bites, 10-15 second blurbs that they can easily be used on TV or radio and fit into tight programming schedules. Newspapers can go longer but radio and TV are limited on their air time for each story, so talking points should be succinct.

It's good practice for every chapter to have established talking points. Here are some suggested talking points:

- a. The CVMA is an association of combat veterans from all 5 branches of the United States Armed Forces who ride motorcycles as a hobby. Our mission is to support and defend those who have defended our country and our freedoms. Our focus is to help veterans and other veteran organizations, whether through donations, visiting veteran care

facilities, providing a warm meal, clothing, helping hand, shelter, and guidance, or simply to say, "Thank You" and "Welcome Home."

b. Formed in 2001, the CVMA is comprised of Full Members (military veterans with verified combat service), Support Members (military veterans who have not served in combat), and Auxiliary Members (the spouse of a member). We have members from all 50 states, Europe and Asia. Many members continue to serve in our Armed Forces and some are currently serving in combat zones throughout the world.

c. The CVMA supports Veterans and the community in a number of ways, which include:

1. **Raising funds.** Funds raised go to assist veterans. At the national level, for example, since 2003, the CVMA has donated over \$1,340,000 to charities supporting veterans throughout the nation. Additionally, individual chapters have collectively raised and donated millions of dollars to their local communities in support of veterans. All who serve in our Association do so without pay or benefits. They do so for their love of our veterans.
2. **Community Events.** The CVMA supports our veteran community in numerous other ways. For example, we shop for groceries for those that can't, we build handicap access ramps for our disabled veterans, we make home repairs, yard cleanup for our elderly, take veterans to appointments, and a litany of other things.
3. **Veteran Support.** We do Deployment and Re-Deployment escorts, make appearances and are active in many veteran events within the local community.
4. **Stewards of the Community.** We provide motorcycle mentorship to veterans within our communities to ensure the safest possible ride and adherence to all traffic laws and regulations.

d. The CVMA is committed to providing our veterans with the best support and assistance that we can provide. "Vets helping Vets".

For all pre-arranged interviews, please contact your Chain of Command beforehand to assist with gaming out talking points and ensuring a consistent and positive message throughout the CVMA. Should you need any assistance or guidance in your positions, please don't hesitate to contact me at NPRO@combatvet.us.

Scott "Hulk" Harris, National Public Relations Officer
Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association®