

From the Editor ...

This quarter's theme, "Expectations vs. Reality," had me reflecting on my own time in service. Although I only served five years on active duty, those years encompassed some of the most impactful moments of my life. From the time I met with a recruiter to the day I received my discharge papers, most expectations I had as a Soldier ended up far different from what became reality. And looking back, I believe I am a better person for it.

Prior to enlisting, I expected I would deploy to Iraq – eventually. I did not expect the deployment would occur so quickly (after being at my first duty station for less than three months). And had my first assignment been with a public affairs unit (my expectation) instead of a military police brigade (my reality), I would not have been forced out of my comfort zone nor had the same opportunities to develop as a PA Soldier (and later NCO). I also did not expect to deploy for a second time one year later – back to the same place – that time with a public affairs unit. During that period, I learned more about the PA career field and consequently grew to love it – so much that I re-enlisted and had fully intended to make a career of the Army. Then "life happened," and more expectations ended up not matching reality. I opted to leave active duty earlier than expected, and the reality that followed has been a journey that led me to where I believe I am meant to be.

One of the greatest takeaways I have from my time in uniform is that sometimes it's best to embrace the unexpected.

Whether you opted to submit an article or not, I hope this quarter's topic prompted you to think about your own military experiences and that you will be open to sharing them with others – either in writing or through conversations. Now for a few admin notes ...

Artificial intelligence can be a valuable tool for a variety of tasks when used properly. Using it to write articles to be published in the Army Communicator (and other branch journals) should not be one of the uses.

I recently attended a two-day workshop that focused on military writing and covered various topics including AI integration. One of the workshop's panelists, a senior editorial manager for a prominent nonprofit association, said a few things that will stay with me for a long time. Voicing her thoughts about AI, she said, "Have *pride* in your work; don't outsource your work to *gross mediocrity*. Don't automate your creative ability to make something that only *you* can make."

If you insist on using AI, use it for what it is intended to be: a tool. Do not allow it to do all the "work" for you. To quote another panelist from the workshop I attended, "If you didn't write it, you need to cite it."

Lastly, be sure to check out [Line of Departure](#). I suggest bookmarking it. A product of the Harding Project, it is where all of the Army's professional journals are currently housed. The Harding Project is evolving, which means the Army Communicator is also evolving. And if you have not subscribed to the [Harding Project Substack](#), take a moment to check it out.



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Submission guidelines

Articles need to be sent in Word. Photos and graphics must be attached **separately** (*not embedded* in Word or a PDF). Include a description of each photo/graphic along with the rank, full name, and unit of person who took the photo (or created graphic). Acronyms **must be spelled out** on first reference, with the abbreviation of the term acceptable on subsequent reference. Between 500 and about 2,000 words per article is ideal. This helps ensure a minimum of one page and maximum of four pages in publication layout (depending on photos, etc.). Use **APA** format when citing sources.

Summer 2026 theme: The Enduring Signaleer: Building a Resilient Network

Summer 2026 deadline: June 5