



NOTE: Styles are taken from the 2017 AP Stylebook and Defense Imagery Style Guide, along with established Army Public Affairs style AR 360-1. When not mentioned, adhere to the AP Stylebook. If AP Stylebook entry does not cover a word or specific usage, refer to the Webster’s Dictionary.

HEADLINES

Only the first word and proper nouns are capitalized. Exception: First word after colon is capitalized. Avoid using state abbreviations in headlines whenever possible. Use single quotes for quotation marks. Use numerals for all numbers except in casual uses: *hundreds* instead of *100s*. Do not use periods in US, UK, UN along with state abbreviations with two capital letters (NY, NJ ...), retain periods for other states (Ky., Mont. ...) when used due to space constraints.

- Sentence case, present** “Dwell time decreases for deployed Soldiers”
- Sentence case, future** “Dwell time to decrease for deployed Soldiers”
- Common leader acronym acceptable in title** “CSA to visit Fort Hood”
- Known leader name acceptable in title** “Milley visits Fort Hood”

Postal code abbreviations The eight states that are not abbreviated in text: AK (Alaska), HI (Hawaii), ID (Idaho), IA (Iowa), ME (Maine), OH (Ohio), TX (Texas), UT (Utah). Also: District of Columbia (DC).

Miscellaneous Use *New York state* when necessary to distinguish the state from *New York City*. Use *state of Washington* or *Washington state* when necessary to distinguish the state from the *District of Columbia*.

BODY TEXT

Dateline format “NEWPORT NEWS, Va. (April 1, 2017) – Article text...”
Except for cities that stand alone in datelines, use the state name in textual material when the city or town is not in the same state as the dateline, or where necessary to avoid confusion: *Springfield, Massachusetts, or Springfield, Illinois*. Provide a state identification for the city if the story has no dateline, or if the city is not in the same state as the dateline. However, cities that stand alone in datelines may be used alone in stories that have no dateline if no confusion would result.

MILITARY TITLES/RANKS Refer to AP Stylebook.

NUMERALS In general, spell out 1-9, 1st-9th.

PROPER UNIT NAMES

Some unit names include **information behind the element name, in parenthesis**. This is part of the proper name of the unit, and should be included on all references. For example:

- 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard)* – The proper name of the Army unit that handles ceremonial responsibilities at Arlington National Cemetery.
- 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry)*
- 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)*
- 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne)*

STATE NAMES

U.S. states should be **spelled out** when used in the **body of a story**, whether standing alone or in conjunction with a city, town, village or military base. State name is not necessary if it is the same as the dateline. This also applies to newspapers cited in a story. For example, a story datelined Providence, R.I., would reference the Providence Journal, not the Providence (R.I.) Journal.

Abbreviations In conjunction with the name of a city, town, village or military base in most datelines. In lists, agate, tabular material, non-publishable editor’s notes and credit lines. In short-form listings of party affiliation: D-Ala., R-Mont. Use the **two-letter Postal Service abbreviations** only with full addresses, including ZIP code.

MODIFIERS

Nouns

- Reserve Component
- Active Component
- Active Duty
- National Guard

Compound Modifiers/Adjectives

- reserve-component Soldier
- active-component Soldier
- active-duty Soldiers

COMMON WORDS (A-E)

A

abbreviations/acronyms Only use abbreviations on second reference. The abbreviations should be established on first reference, preferably without using parenthesis: *Soldiers should check their Leave and Earnings Statement, known as an LES, to ensure the changes were implemented.*

active duty (noun) **active-duty** (compound modifier) Hyphenate when used as a compound modifier: *He was active duty before becoming a reserve Soldier. He was an active-duty Soldier before becoming a reserve Soldier.*

African American (noun) **African-American Soldier** (adjective) Black is the preferred adjective according to AP style.

all hands (noun) **all-hands** (adjective/compound modifier) Hyphenate when used as an adjective/compound modifier: *The commanding officer called all hands to the meeting. The Sailors attended the all-hands call.*

American flag, U.S. flag Lowercase flag.

C

career branches Capitalize when referring to a specific branch: *Infantry, Armor, Field Artillery, Signal, Public Affairs, Medical Service.* Lowercase when referring to a job title: *infantryman, paratrooper, military police.*

cavalry Lowercase unless it is part of a unit name. Do not confuse with Calvary, which is a religious term.

change of command ceremony (compound modifier) Do not hyphenate.

civilian titles Do not use courtesy titles such *Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms.* unless requested by the named person. Other formal titles such as *Dr., Sen. or Gov.* should be used where applicable. Do not use such titles on second reference unless necessary to differentiate two people with the same last name.

civilian (generic reference). Lowercase unless referring to *Department of the Army Civilians* (proper noun).

citizen-Soldiers Lowercase citizen.

colors The preferred style is *American flag* or *U.S. flag*. Do not use in reference to flags of other nations. Acceptable when referring to unit flags and guidons. *The battalion colors were furled during a transfer of authority ceremony.*

commander in chief Do not hyphenate; lowercase unless it appears before a name.

congressional Lowercase unless part of a proper name: *congressional salaries, the Congressional Quarterly, the Congressional Record.*

contingency operating base Lowercase unless it accompanies the name of a specific location. *COB* is acceptable on second reference.

corps Lowercase, shortened reference to units as a stand alone, except when referring to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Corps Capitalized refers to the U.S. Marine Corps.

counter improvised explosive device Do not hyphenate or capitalize. *Counter IED* is acceptable on second reference.

D

demining Do not hyphenate.

Dr. Using the title before a name is OK. This differs from AP Style.

DOD Abbreviation for *Department of Defense*. All caps. *DOD* is acceptable on first reference.

E

email Acceptable in all references for *electronic mail*. Use a hyphen with other *e-terms: e-book, e-business, e-commerce.*

exercises Capitalize uniquely named exercises, but only capitalize the descriptive word exercise if it is part of the official title of the exercise. Lowercase generic descriptors for exercises: *operational readiness exercise, joint task force exercise, composite training unit exercise.*

explosive ordnance disposal Lowercase, unless part of a unit name or operation name. *EOD* is acceptable on second reference.

COMMON WORDS (F-O)

F

Family Capitalize when referring to Army Families (AR 360-1, para. 13-12b).

Family names Capitalize words denoting family relationships only when they precede the name of a person or when they stand unmodified as a substitute for a person's name: "I wrote Grandfather Smith. I wrote Mother a letter. I wrote my mother a letter."

female engagement team Lowercase unless writing about a specific team.

firefighter One word.

Fort Do not use Ft. Lowercase unless it precedes the name of a specific fort.

forward operating base Lowercase unless it accompanies the name of a specific location. *FOB* is acceptable on second reference.

from Do not use from to describe a Service member's affiliation with a military unit. Use with, assigned to or attached to. The term from implies hometown or native country. "U.S. Army Spc. Joe Snuffy is an infantryman assigned to the 1st Battalion, 333rd Infantry Regiment."

I

IED Abbreviation for *improvised explosive device*. *IED* is acceptable on first reference.

J

joint Lowercase unless used as a proper noun as part of a unit.

L

landing zone Lowercase unless it accompanies the name of a specific location: *U.S. Soldiers gather their gear after parachuting onto Landing Zone Tombstone. The landing zone was not cleared.* *LZ* is acceptable on second reference.

landing craft, air cushion Singular and plural. Lowercase unless identifying a specific numbered LCAC: *Landing Craft, Air Cushion 8.* *LCAC* is acceptable on second reference.

landing craft utility Lowercase unless identifying a specific numbered LCU: *Landing Craft Utility 1627.* *LCAC* is acceptable on second reference.

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live fire (noun) **live-fire** (adjective/compound modifier) Hyphenate when used as an adjective/compound modifier: *The practice range was for shooting blanks only; it did not allow live fire. The live-fire exercise lasted all day.*

M

mass casualty/mass casualty exercise Do not hyphenate.

Medal of Honor The nation's highest military honor, awarded by Congress for risk of life in combat beyond the call of duty. Use *Medal of Honor recipient* or a synonym, but not winner. There is no *Congressional Medal of Honor*.

MedEvac Abbreviation for *medical evacuation*. *MedEvac* is acceptable on first reference.

military operations on urban terrain *MOUT* is an out-of-favor term; the preferred term is urban operations (*UO*). The term *MOUT* is still in limited use and may be used when referring to a specific *MOUT city* or *MOUT site*, but should not be used in the following senses: "... train for military operations on urban terrain ..." or "... conducts military operations on urban terrain training."

MIA/POW(s) Abbreviation for *missing in action/prisoner(s) of war*. *MIA/POW* is acceptable on first reference. This differs from the AP Stylebook.

N

nation Lowercase.

national anthem Lowercase. But: "*The Star-Spangled Banner.*"

NCO Abbreviation for *noncommissioned officer*. *NCO* is acceptable on first reference.

noncommissioned officer in charge Do not hyphenate. Lowercase unless it appears before a name. *NCOIC* is acceptable on second reference.

O

officer in charge Do not hyphenate. Lowercase unless it appears before a name. *OIC* is acceptable on second reference.

COMMON WORDS (O-Z)

Organizations Capitalize the full names of organizations and institutions. Some are widely recognized by their abbreviations, refer to abbreviations/acronyms entry: *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* is the proper organizational name. *USACE* is acceptable on second reference. Do not use *corps* or any unofficial abbreviations, such as *ACOE*, *USA COE*, *COE*.

P

pass in review Not *pass and review*.

paratrooper Lowercase.

Pentagon Use *WASHINGTON* in dateline; use *Arlington, Virginia*, to describe the location of the Pentagon, if the location is relevant to the story.

POW(s)/MIA Abbreviation for *Prisoner(s) of war/missing in action*. *POW/MIA* is acceptable on first reference. This differs from the AP Stylebook.

R

rappel, rappelling/repel, repelling To use ropes to lower oneself from a high place, such as a cliff, building or helicopter. To *repel* is to fend something off.

Reserve Capitalize when referring to *U.S. Army Reserve* (not *Reserves*). Lowercase in reference to members of these backup forces: *reserve Soldiers*. Only use the term *reserves* when referring to the reserve components collectively. Do not use the term *reservist*.

Retired Do not use (*Ret.*) when describing a retired service member. Capitalize the word *Retired* and place it before the service (if applicable), rank and name: *Retired U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Joe Smith, left, delivers a speech*.

rifle salute A salute to the deceased at military funerals, usually by seven riflemen each firing three shots in unison. Do not confuse this with a **21-gun salute**.

S

Sept. 11 When referring to the terrorist attacks of this day, use *Sept. 11 attack* or *Sept. 11 terrorist attack*, or *9/11*. Use 2001 only if needed for clarity.

service member Two words; lowercase: *U.S. service members help clean up in*

New York City after Hurricane Sandy.

smartphone One word.

Soldier Capitalize when referring to U.S. Soldiers (AR 360-1, para. 13-12b).

Special Forces Do not use interchangeably with *special operations forces*. Capitalize when referring specifically to the U.S. Special Forces, also known as *Green Berets*. Others, such as *Army Rangers*, should be called *special operations forces*.

Special Operations Forces Use this term to describe U.S. special warfare units or members of those units when their exact service or unit affiliation is not clear, or when special warfare units of multiple services are conducting joint operations. Do not use *special operator* or *commando*. Capitalize when referring specifically to the U.S. Special Operations Forces: *A U.S. Special Operations Forces Service member patrols in a field near Kandahar, Afghanistan, April 5, 2012*.

T

Tomb of the Unknowns Not *Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*.

troop Lowercase. A *troop* in its singular form is a group of people, often military or animals. *Troops*, in the plural, means several such groups. But when the plural appears with a large number, it is understood to mean individuals: *There were an estimated 150,000 troops in Iraq*. But not: *Three troops were injured*.

W

war on terrorism This is the acceptable term to use; all lowercase. Do not use *global war on terrorism*, *GWOT* or *war on terror*.

warfighter One word; lowercase.

Web Capitalize.

website One word; lowercase.

White House Use *Washington, D.C.*, to describe the location.

ARMY UNITS

AP Style for military units, going from **smallest** to **largest**, with units separated by commas: *“I’m tired,” said Sgt. Joe Snuffy, with 1st Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). “I can’t wait to get home to my family.”* Abbreviate Army units using standard acronym rules; note if it is a National Guard unit.

Army units can be tricky. It does not suffice to say that a Soldier simply belongs to Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, as there are a multitude of Alpha Companies and 1st Battalions throughout the Army. Be sure to get the unit’s regimental, brigade or division affiliation; in other words, make sure a **precise, unique** unit name is listed.

ARMY: Numbered armies (e.g., *First Army*) can generally stand alone if the Soldiers depicted are assigned to various units within the numbered army or it’s a wide shot of a numbered army event.

CORPS: Corps (e.g., *XVIII Airborne Corps*) can generally stand alone if the Soldiers depicted are assigned to various units within the corps or it’s a wide shot of a corps event except when referring to the *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*

DIVISION: Divisions (e.g., *1st Cavalry Division*) can generally stand alone if the Soldiers depicted are assigned to various units within the division or it’s a wide shot of a division event.

BRIGADE/BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM: Most brigades/brigade combat teams numbered lower than 5 are part of a larger division. For example, each active-duty division has a 1st brigade combat team, so be sure to list the division affiliation: *1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division*. There are a number of active-duty and National Guard standalone brigade combat teams, and they generally can be listed without a division. If it’s a National Guard unit, be sure to list the state it’s affiliated with: *30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, North Carolina Army National Guard*.

REGIMENT: Do not use the shorthand for these units. For example, instead of writing *1/120th Infantry*, write out the full name: *1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment*. Always list the subordinate unit before the name of the regiment: *1st Battalion, 2nd Squadron*. While the Army generally does not use the regimental command structure like it used to, the regimental heritage is kept to maintain the history and heraldry of many units.

BATTALION/SQUADRON: Most combat arms (e.g., *infantry, artillery, cavalry and armor*) battalions and squadrons belong to a numbered regiment, which must be listed in captions: *the 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division*. Many combat support and combat service support battalions do not have a specific regimental affiliation, but it’s best to list the brigade and/or division to which they belong: *the 82nd Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division*.

COMPANY/TROOP/BATTERY: Companies starting with a letter always belong to a numbered battalion and regiment, which will be listed in the caption as well. Spell out such company names using the phonetic alphabet: *Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment, 30th Brigade Combat Team, North Carolina Army National Guard*. NOTE: Some company-level units use non-standard nicknames: *“Killer Company.”*

FORCE STRUCTURE

Soldier	Individual
Squad/Section	9 to 10 Soldiers
Platoon	16 to 44 Soldiers; 2 to 4 squads
Company or Battery/Troop	62 to 190 Soldiers; 3 to 5 platoons
Battalion or Squadron	300 to 1,000 Soldiers; 4 to 6 companies
Brigade or Group/Regiment	3,000 to 5,000 Soldiers; 2 to 5 battalions
Division	10,000 to 15,000 Soldiers; 3 brigades
Corps	20,000 to 45,000 Soldiers; 2 to 5 divisions
Army	50,000+ Soldiers