TAPS MAGAZINE STYLE GUIDE FOR AUTHORS

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Articles accepted for publication in TAPS Magazine are written in a style that is readable and accessible for a broad audience. Our readership includes survivors representing all branches of the armed forces, spanning all relationships to the deceased, and incorporating all circumstances of death.
- The title of the article and the author's name and credentials should be placed at the top of the text.
- A professional photo and 75 word author biography can be submitted at the end.
- For questions of spelling, capitalization, word division, use of numbers, punctuation and other matters of style, please follow the AP Stylebook.
- The first time any person is mentioned in text, the individual must be fully identified by first and last names.
- A few universally recognized abbreviations are required in some circumstances. Some others
 are acceptable depending on the context. But in general, avoid alphabet soup. Do not use
 abbreviations or acronyms that the reader would not quickly recognize.
- When used, ellipsis points (...) and em dashes () are separated from each other and from the text and any contiguous punctuation by one space on each side.
- Please remember that submitting an article is not a guarantee of publication and our printed space is limited. Due to the complex nature of our grief stories, TAPS observes strict publication guidelines pertaining to themes, content, language, safe messaging and length. After submission, we will contact you either by phone or email about the next steps and any possible ways we can use your story.
- TAPS reserves the right to edit any content for publication. Deadlines are printed in the submission form, but content for the magazine is often decided 4 or more months in advance of an issue. Blogs and Faces of TAPS are more appropriate for last minute submissions or regular, timely submissions.
- Lastly, thank you for writing and sharing the possibility of hope with your TAPS family.

TAPS Magazine uses the AP Stylebook and Webster's New World College Dictionary. This guide is an outline of style rules basic to TAPS style. Where no rule is present on this list, follow the AP Stylebook. For spelling, follow Webster's first spelling if there is a choice and use American (not British) spellings.

QUOTATIONS

Pull Quotes

Pull quotes are key phrases, quotes or excerpts pulled from an article and used for emphasis, to interest people in reading or to break up the text for design purposes.

Pull quotes should be justified when they are one column width, otherwise they may be centered.

Quotations in text:

When we attribute the quote (he said, she said) no italics, just use quote marks and correct punctuation.

Periods and commas should be placed inside quotation marks.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Treat authors consistently. Use headshots when available for authors of 2-page spreads. Standardize the size of the photo. Word length for author biographies should be 75-80 words. List names of authors in the Table of Contents, and then put all their titles (Ph.D., etc) on the bylines

with their bio at the end of the article.

Professionals

Limited to 75 words Include headshot showing the author, if possible

Survivors

Include name, date, and relationship to deceased and a brief bio if requested.

CAPTIONING

Captions will avoid redundancy and be appropriate to the article context. Please include explanatory information about all photos you submit to ensure proper captioning.

COMMAS

The following guidelines treat some of the most frequent questions about the use of commas.

In a series: Use commas to separate elements in a series, but do not put a comma before the conjunction in a simple series: *The flag is red, white and blue. He would nominate Tom, Dick or Harry.* (That is no Oxford comma). Put a comma before the concluding conjunction in a series, however, if an integral element of the series requires a conjunction: *I had orange juice, toast, and ham and eggs for breakfast.*

Use a comma also before the concluding conjunction in a complex series of phrases: *The main points* to consider are whether the athletes are skillful enough to compete, whether they have the stamina to endure the training, and whether they have the proper mental attitude.

With equal adjectives: Use commas to separate a series of adjectives equal in rank. If the commas could be replaced by the word *and* without changing the sense, the adjectives are equal: *a thoughtful, precise manner; a dark, dangerous street*.

Use no comma when the last adjective before a noun outranks its predecessors because it is an integral element of a noun phrase, which is the equivalent of a single noun: *a cheap fur coat* (the noun phrase is *fur coat*); *the old oaken bucket*; *a new, blue spring bonnet*.

With nonessential clauses: A nonessential clause must be set off by commas. An essential clause must not be set off from the rest of a sentence by commas.

With nonessential phrases: A nonessential phrase must be set off by commas. An essential phrase must not be set off from the rest of a sentence by commas.

With introductory clauses and phrases: A comma is used to separate an introductory clause or phrase from the main clause: When he had tired of the mad pace of New York, he moved to Dubuque. The comma may be omitted after short introductory phrases if no ambiguity would result: During the night he heard many noises.

But use the comma if its omission would slow comprehension: *On the street below, the curious gathered.*

With conjunctions: When a conjunction such as *and*, *but* or *for* links two clauses that could stand alone as separate sentences, use a comma before the conjunction in most cases: *She was glad she had looked, for a man was approaching the house.*

As a rule of thumb, use a comma if the subject of each clause is expressly stated: We are visiting Washington, and we also plan a side trip to Williamsburg. We visited Washington, and our senator greeted us personally. But no comma when the subject of the two clauses is the same and is not repeated in the second: We are visiting Washington and plan to see the White House.

The comma may be dropped if two clauses with expressly stated subjects are short. In general, however, favor use of a comma unless a particular literary effect is desired or if it would distort the sense of a sentence.

Introducing direct quotes: Use a comma to introduce a complete one-sentence quotation within a paragraph: Wallace said, "She spent six months in Argentina and came back speaking English with a Spanish accent." But use a colon to introduce quotations of more than one sentence.

Do not use a comma at the start of an indirect or partial quotation: He said the victory put him "firmly on the road to a first-ballot nomination."

Before attribution: Use a comma instead of a period at the end of a quote that is followed by attribution: "Rub my shoulders," Miss Cawley suggested.

Do not use a comma, however, if the quoted statement ends with a question mark or exclamation point: "Why should I?" he asked.

With hometowns and ages: Use a comma to set off an individual's hometown when it is placed in apposition to a name (whether of is used or not): *Mary Richards, Minneapolis, and Maude Findlay, Tuckahoe, New York, were there.*

If an individual's age is used, set it off by commas: *Maude Findlay, 48, Tuckahoe, New York, was present.*

Names of states and nations used with city names: His journey will take him from Dublin, Ireland, to Fargo, North Dakota, and back. The Selma, Alabama, group saw the governor.

Use parentheses, however, if a state name is inserted within a proper name: *The Huntsville (Alabama) Times*.

Separating similar words: Use a comma to separate duplicated words that otherwise would be confusing: *What the problem is, is not clear.*

In large figures: Use a comma for most figures greater than 999. The major exceptions are street addresses (1234 Main St.), broadcast frequencies (1460 kilohertz), room numbers, serial numbers, telephone numbers, and years (1876).

Placement with quotes: Commas always go inside quotation marks.

With full dates: When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, set off the year with a comma: Feb. 14, 1987, is the target date.

COMPOSITION TITLES AND ARTICLE TITLES

Apply the guidelines listed here to book titles, computer game titles, movie titles, opera titles, play titles, poem titles, album and song titles, radio and television program titles, and the titles of lectures, speeches and works of art. The guidelines:

- Capitalize the principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters.
- Capitalize an article *the*, *a*, *an* or words of fewer than four letters if it is the first or last word in a title.
- Put quotation marks around the names of all such works except the Bible and books that are
 primarily catalogs of reference material. In addition to catalogs, this category includes
 almanacs, directories, dictionaries, encyclopedias, gazetteers, handbooks and similar
 publications. Do not use quotation marks around such software titles as WordPerfect or
 Windows.
- Translate a foreign title into English unless a work is generally known by its foreign name. An exception to this is reviews of musical performances. In those instances, generally refer to the work in the language it was sung in, so as to differentiate for the reader. However, musical compositions in Slavic languages are always referred to in their English translations.

Magazine names: Capitalize the initial letters of the name but do not place it in quotes. Use italics. Lowercase magazine unless it is part of the publication's formal title: *Harper's Magazine, Newsweek* magazine, *Time* magazine, *TAPS Magazine*.

DASH

Abrupt change: Use dashes to denote an abrupt change in thought in a sentence or an emphatic pause: *Through her long reign, the queen and her family have adapted – usually skillfully – to the changing taste of the time.* But avoid overuse of dashes to set off phrases when commas would suffice.

Series within a phrase: When a phrase that otherwise would be set off by commas contains a series of words that must be separated by commas, use dashes to set off the full phrase: *He listed the qualities – intelligence, humor, conservatism, independence – that he liked in an executive.*

Attributions: Use a dash before an author's or composer's name at the end of a quotation: "Who steals my purse steals trash." – Shakespeare.

With spaces: Put a space on both sides of a dash in all uses except the start of a paragraph and sports agate summaries.

TAPS prefers the em dash — as seen in this example.

HYPHENS

Hyphens are joiners. Use them to avoid ambiguity or to form a single idea from two or more words. The fewer hyphens the better; use them only when not using them causes confusion. (*Small-business owner*, but *health care center*.) Some guidelines:

Avoid ambiguity: Use a hyphen whenever ambiguity would result if it were omitted: *The president will speak to small-business men.* (*Businessmen* normally is one word. But *the president will speak to small businessmen* is unclear.) Others: *He recovered his health. He re-covered the leaky roof.*

Compound modifiers: When a compound modifier – two or more words that express a single concept – precedes a noun, use hyphens to link all the words in the compound except the adverb *very* and all adverbs that end in *-ly*: a first-quarter touchdown, a bluish-green dress, a full-time job, a well-known man, a better-qualified woman, a know-it-all attitude, a very good time, an easily remembered rule.

Many combinations that are hyphenated before a noun are not hyphenated when they occur after a noun: The team scored in the first quarter. The dress, a bluish green, was attractive on her. She works full time. His attitude suggested that he knew it all.

But when a modifier that would be hyphenated before a noun occurs instead after a form of the verb to be, the hyphen usually must be retained to avoid confusion: The man is well-known. The woman is quick-witted. The children are soft-spoken. The play is second-rate.

The principle of using a hyphen to avoid confusion explains why no hyphen is required with *very* and *-ly* words. Readers can expect them to modify the word that follows. But if a combination such as *little-known man* were not hyphenated, the reader could logically be expecting *little* to be followed by a noun, as in *little man*. Instead, the reader encountering *little known* would have to back up mentally and make the compound connection on his own.

Two-though compounds: serio-comic, socio-economic.

Compound proper nouns and adjectives: Use a hyphen to designate dual heritage: *Italian-American, Mexican-American*. No hyphen, however, for *French Canadian* or *Latin American*.

Avoid duplicated vowels, tripled consonants: Examples: anti-intellectual, pre-empt, shell-like.

With numerals: Use a hyphen to separate figures in odds, ratios, scores, some fractions and some vote tabulations. When large numbers must be spelled out, use a hyphen to connect a word ending in -y to another word: *twenty-one*, *fifty-five*, etc.

Suspensive hyphenation: The form: He received a 10- to 20-year sentence in prison.

MILITARY TITLES

Capitalize a military rank when used as a formal title before an individual's name. See the list below to determine whether the title should be spelled out or abbreviated in regular text.

On first reference, use the appropriate title before the full name of a member of the military.

Spell out and lowercase a title when it is substituted for a name: *Gen. John Jones is the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan. The general endorsed the idea.*

In addition to the ranks listed below, each service has ratings such as *machinist*, *radarman*, *torpedoman*, etc., that are job descriptions. Do not use any of these designations as a title on first reference. If one is used before a name in a subsequent reference, do not capitalize or abbreviate it.

ABBREVIATIONS: The abbreviations, with the highest ranks listed first:

Rank	Usage before a name
Army	
Commissioned Officers	
general	Gen.
lieutenant general	Lt. Gen.
major general	Maj. Gen.
brigadier general	Brig. Gen.
colonel	Col.
lieutenant colonel	Lt. Col.
major	Maj.
captain	Capt.
first lieutenant	1st Lt.
second lieutenant	2nd Lt.
Warrant Officers	
chief warrant officer five (CW5)	Chief Warrant Officer 5
chief warrant officer four (CW4)	Chief Warrant Officer 4

chief warrant officer three (CW3)

chief warrant officer two (CW2)

Chief Warrant Officer 2

Chief Warrant Officer 2

warrant officer (W01) Warrant Officer

Enlisted Personnel

sergeant major of the Army Sgt. Maj. of the Army command sergeant major Command Sgt. Maj.

sergeant major Sgt. Maj. first sergeant 1st Sgt. Master Sgt. master sergeant sergeant first class Sgt. 1st Class staff sergeant Staff Sgt. sergeant Sgt. corporal Cpl. Spc. specialist Pfc. private first class private Pvt.

Navy, Coast Guard

Commissioned Officers

Adm. admiral Vice Adm. vice admiral Rear Adm. rear admiral upper half rear admiral lower half Rear Adm. captain Capt. commander Cmdr. lieutenant commander Lt. Cmdr. lieutenant Lt.

lieutenant junior grade Lt. j.g. ensign Ensign

Warrant Officers

chief warrant officer Chief Warrant Officer

Enlisted Personnel

master chief petty officer of the Navy Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy

master chief petty officer Master Chief Petty Officer senior chief petty officer Senior Chief Petty Officer

chief petty officer Chief Petty Officer
petty officer first class Petty Officer 1st Class
petty officer second class
petty officer third class Petty Officer 3rd Class

seaman Seaman

seaman apprentice Seaman Apprentice

seaman recruit Seaman Recruit

Marine Corps

Ranks and abbreviations for commissioned officers are the same as those in the Army. Warrant officer

ratings follow the same system used in the Navy. There are no specialist ratings.

Others

sergeant major of the Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps

sergeant major Sgt. Maj.

master gunnery sergeant Master Gunnery Sgt.

first sergeant 1st Sgt. master sergeant Master Sgt. gunnery sergeant Gunnery Sgt. staff sergeant Staff Sgt. sergeant Sgt. Cpl. corporal Lance Cpl. lance corporal private first class Pfc. Pvt. private

Air Force

Ranks and abbreviations for commissioned officers are the same as those in the Army.

Enlisted Designations

chief master sergeant of the Air Force Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force

chief master sergeant Chief Master Sgt. senior master sergeant Senior Master Sgt.

master sergeant Master Sgt.
technical sergeant Tech. Sgt.
staff sergeant Staff Sgt.
senior airman Senior Airman
airman first class Airman 1st Class

airman Airman airman basic Airman

Periods: Use one space after a period at the end of a sentence.

Plurals: Add *s* to the principal element in the title: *Majs. John Jones and Robert Smith; Maj. Gens. John Jones and Robert Smith; Spcs. John Jones and Robert Smith* or Sergeants Major of the Army.

Retired officers: A military rank may be used in first reference before the name of an officer who has retired if it is relevant to a story. Do not, however, use the military abbreviation *Ret*. Instead, use

retired just as former would be used before the title of a civilian: They invited retired Army Gen. John Smith.

NUMERALS

In general, spell out one through nine: *The Yankees finished second. He had nine months to go.*Use figures for 10 or above and whenever preceding a unit of measure or referring to ages of people, animals, events or things.

Use figures for:

- Addresses: 210 Main St. Spell out numbered streets nine and under: 5 Sixth Ave.; 3012 50th St.; No. 10 Downing St. Use the abbreviations Ave., Blvd. and St. only with a numbered address: 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. Spell them out and capitalize without a number: Pennsylvania Avenue.
- Ages: a 6-year-old girl; an 8-year-old law; the 7-year-old house. Use hyphens for ages expressed as adjectives before a noun or as substitutes for a noun. A 5-year-old boy, but the boy is 5 years old. The boy, 5, has a sister, 10. The race is for 3-year-olds. The woman is in her 30s. 30-something, but Thirty-something to start a sentence.
- Planes, ships and spacecraft designations: B-2 bomber, Queen Elizabeth 2, QE2, Apollo 9, Viking 2 An exception: Air Force One, the president's plane. Use Roman numerals if they are part of the official designation: Titan I, Titan II.
- Centuries. Use figures for numbers 10 or higher: 21st century. Spell out for numbers nine and lower: fifth century. (Note lowercase.) For proper names, follow the organization's usage: 20th Century Fox, Twentieth Century Fund.
- Court decisions: *The Supreme Court ruled 5-4, a 5-4 decision*. The word *to* is not needed, except in quotations: *"The court ruled 5 to 4."*
- Dates, years and decades: *Feb. 8, 2007, Class of '66, the 1950s*. For the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, *9/11* is acceptable in all references. (Note comma to set off the year when the phrase refers to a month, date and year.)
- Decimals, percentages and fractions with numbers larger than 1: 7.2 magnitude quake, 3 1/2 laps, 3.7 percent interest, 4 percentage points. For amounts less than 1, precede the decimal with a zero: The cost of living rose 0.03 percent. Spell out fractions less than 1, using hyphens between the words: two-thirds, four-fifths. In quotations, use figures for fractions: "He was 2 1/2 laps behind with four to go."
- Dimensions, to indicate depth, height, length and width. Examples: He is 5 feet 6 inches tall, the 5-foot-6 man ("inch" is understood), the 5-foot man, the basketball team signed a 7-footer. The car is 17 feet long, 6 feet wide and 5 feet high. The rug is 9 feet by 12 feet, the 9-by-12 rug. A 9-inch snowfall. Exception: two-by-four. Spell out the noun, which refers to any length of untrimmed lumber approximately 2 inches thick by 4 inches wide.
- Distances: He walked 4 miles. He missed a 3-foot putt.
- Highway designations: *Interstate 5, U.S. Highway 1, state Route 1A*. (Do not abbreviate *Route*. No hyphen between highway designation and number.)

- Military ranks, used as titles with names, military terms and weapons: Petty Officer 2nd Class
 Alan Markow, Spc. Alice Moreno, 1st Sgt. David Triplett, M16 rifle, 9 mm (note space) pistol,
 6th Fleet. In military ranks, spell out the figure when it is used after the name or without a
 name: Smith was a second lieutenant. The goal is to make first sergeant.
- Millions, billions, trillions: Use a figure-word combination. 1 million people; \$2 billion, NOT one million/two billion. (Also note no hyphen linking numerals and the word million, billion or trillion.)
- Monetary units: 5 cents, \$5 bill, 8 euros, 4 pounds.
- Rank: He was my No. 1 choice. (Note abbreviation for "Number"). Kentucky was ranked No. 3. The band had five Top 40 hits.
- School grades. Use figures for grades 10 and above: 10th grade. Spell out for first through ninth grades: fourth grade, fifth-grader (note hyphen).
- Sequential designations: Page 1, Page 20A. They were out of sizes 4 and 5; magnitude 6 earthquake; Rooms 3 and 4; Chapter 2; line 1 but first line; Act 3, Scene 4, but third act, fourth scene; Game 1, but best of seven.
- Recipes: 2 tablespoons of sugar to 1 cup of milk.
- Times: Use figures for time of day except for noon and midnight: 1 p.m., 10:30 a.m., 5 o'clock, 8 hours, 30 minutes, 20 seconds, a winning time of 2:17:3 (2 hours, 17 minutes, 3 seconds). Spell out numbers less than 10 standing alone and in modifiers: I'll be there in five minutes. He scored with two seconds left. An eight-hour day. The two-minute warning.

Spell out:

- At the start of a sentence: Forty years was a long time to wait. Fifteen to 20 cars were involved in the accident. The only exception is years: 1992 was a very good year.
- In indefinite and casual uses: Thanks a million. He walked a quarter of a mile. One at a time; a thousand clowns; one day we will know; an eleventh-hour decision; dollar store; a hundred dollars.
- In fanciful usage or proper names: Chicago Seven, Fab Four, Big Three automakers, Final Four, the Four Tops.
- In fractions less than one that are not used as modifiers: reduced by one-third, he made three-fourths of his shots.

Ordinals:

Numbers used to indicate order (first, second, 10th, 25th, etc.) are called ordinal numbers. Spell out first through ninth: *fourth grade, first base, the First Amendment, he was first in line*. Use figures starting with 10th.

PARAGRAPH STYLE

Do not indent paragraphs, separate with a blank line.

PHOTO CREDITING

For photos submitted by article authors, the credit will read: *Photos courtesy of the ______* family/branch/media outlet or *Photos courtesy of Individual Name*.

PROPER NOUNS

TAPS Regional Military Survivor Seminar
TAPS National Military Survivor Seminar
TAPS National Military Suicide Survivor Seminar
TAPS Good Grief Camp or Good Grief Campout
Team TAPS
teams4taps
TAPS Care Group
TAPS Online Community
TAPS Peer Mentors
TAPS Retreats
TAPS Expeditions
National Military Survivor Helpline
TAPS Honor Guard Gala
TAPS family

SPELLING

email, Internet, online, website lifespan, lifestyle nonprofit servicemember

worldview

Post traumatic stress is preferred over post-traumatic stress disorder or posttraumatic stress disorder. Many believe that the removal of the term "disorder" de-stigmatizes treatment for post-traumatic stress and removes a barrier to seeking care.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Fort: Should always be spelled out as part of the name of a military installation.

Military: Refers to the four branches except Coast Guard.

Armed Forces: Refers to the four branches plus the Coast Guard and Merchant Marine.

Active Duty: Refers to a full-time occupation as part of a military force, as opposed to reserve duty. Therefore, the term "active duty" does not encompass military reserve personnel. TAPS programs are open to those whose loved ones died while in active duty status or while in reserve status, so care should be exercised in using "active duty" as it may be perceived as exclusionary.

Family: Referring to survivors as family excludes fiancées, significant others and close friends. Use "family" sparingly in publications for survivors, but more freely in explaining our programs to donors

and the public. The preferred wording is "anyone grieving the death of someone who served in the armed forces" or "survivors whose loved one died while serving in the armed forces."

Gold Star: In the interests of inclusivity and due to the sensitivity regarding the use of the term "Gold Star," TAPS will refer to all of our events and their components as "TAPS" activities. Therefore we have TAPS Care Groups (not Gold Star Support Groups), TAPS Seminars (not Gold Star Conferences), TAPS Galas, Luncheons and Banquets (not Gold Star Luncheons or Gold Star Dinner Bashes).

Gold Star Pin: There are two types of pins awarded to surviving family members. One is the Gold Star Lapel Button, with a purple background and laurel leaves. The other is the Next of Kin Deceased Pin which has a gold background and oak leaf cluster. Our families are TAPS families, although a large number of them also fit the requirements of being recipients of the more restricted Gold Star Lapel Button, issued by act of Congress and awarded by the separate military branches. The term "Gold Star" is used by various organizations to mean combat death (following the guidelines established by Congress in 1947) Some organizations have moved to be more inclusive. Most of the general populace understands the term as meaning family member whose loved one died in combat. There are similar misunderstandings about the issuing and display of the Service Flag, commonly referred to as a Blue Star or Gold Star Banner.

For the awarding of the Gold Star Lapel Button, the actual act of Congress specifies a limited number of family relationships (immediate family only) as well as considerations of geography and cause of death. These distinctions are exclusionary, which is why TAPS specifically structured its mission statement with this in mind.

States: When the name of a state name appears in the body of a text, spell it out. When the name of a city and state are used together, the name of the state should be abbreviated (except for *Alaska*, *Hawaii*, *Idaho*, *Iowa*, *Maine*, *Ohio*, *Texas* and *Utah*). States should also be abbreviated when used as part of a short-form political affiliation. Examples: *He came from Lafayette*, *Ind. The peace accord was signed in Dayton*, *Ohio*. The wildfire began in California and moved east toward Carson City, Nev.

Technological terms: Here are the correct spelling and capitalization rules for some common technological terms:

- BlackBerry, BlackBerrys
- download
- *eBay Inc.* (use *EBay Inc.* when the word begins a sentence)
- e-book
- e-book reader
- e-reader
- email
- cellphone
- Facebook
- Google, Googling, Googled
- hashtag

- *IM* (*IMed, IMing*; for first reference, use *instant messenger*)
- Internet (after first reference, the Net)
- *iPad, iPhone, iPod* (use *IPad, IPhone,* or *IPod* when the word begins a sentence)
- LinkedIn
- social media
- smartphone
- the Net
- Twitter, tweet, tweeted, retweet

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- World Wide Web, website (see the AP's tweet about the change), Web page
- webmaster
- YouTube