

American Forces Press Service Supplement to the Associated Press Stylebook

Effective April 2, 2012

American Forces Press Service uses Associated Press style. Listed in this supplement are exceptions to, and situations not covered in, the Associated Press Stylebook. It also contains some points covered in AP but included here for convenience. Email questions or comments to AFPSEditors@dma.mil.

abbreviations and acronyms

The AP stylebook entry covers most situations. Avoid alphabet soup, and use only abbreviations and acronyms the reader recognizes quickly.

Most abbreviations made up of initial letters from two or more words do not take periods — *NATO*, *IRS*, *IBM*. There are some exceptions, among them *U.S.*, *U.N.* and *a.m.*

Spell out service-unique terms such as *AFB* (*Air Force Base*), *FMF* (*fleet marine force*), *CBG* (*carrier battle group*) and *MEF/U* (*Marine expeditionary force/unit*). Capitalize the first letters in the spelled-out versions only when used as part of a specific unit/organization's proper name or when the word itself is a recognized proper noun. For example, PCS stands for permanent change of station, not Permanent Change of Station.

As a rule of thumb, make every effort to limit use of acronyms to those approved for first or subsequent reference by the AP style guide and those listed here. When using those or others not listed, introduce the acronym no more than two sentences from the first spelling out; if that's not possible, don't use it. Keep in mind that terms like *the unit*, *the program* or *the agency* help to avoid blocks of capital letters, which – except for the handful that are almost universally familiar – impede the reader. Remember, the fact an acronym or abbreviation is acceptable for second and subsequent references does not make its use mandatory. Clarity and ease of reading always should rule the day.

When a person being quoted uses an unapproved acronym, spell it out in an indirect quotation or replace it with the spelled-out version in brackets when the story is best served by keeping the rest of the direct quotation. Note the term “replace it.” Don't use both. Less unwieldy is introducing the spelled-out version in a sentence that precedes the quoted matter, allowing the acronym to remain intact in the quote. Also consider paraphrasing as a means of avoiding alphabet soup used in direct quotations.

addresses

Use two-letter postal abbreviations in mailing addresses, with no comma between the state and the ZIP code. Otherwise, use the standard abbreviations found in Associated Press style guide for the states that are abbreviated when used with a city or town. Remember the comma after the state when it's not at the end of a sentence. Don't use the state with cities that stand alone in datelines, or when the state is obvious, as in a story about activities of a state's National Guard.

AB, AFB

Though these abbreviations for *Air Base* and *Air Force Base* would be understood by an Air Force audience, that's not necessarily true of the joint military audience and the public. Spell them out every time.

Afghanistan cities and provinces

Use the following AP style. Frequently used provinces are listed here with their provincial capitals.

Badakhshan, Fayzabad
Balkh Mazar-i-Sharif, Mazar-e-Sharif
Bamiyan, Bamiyan
Ghazni, Ghazni
Helmand, Lashkar Gah
Herat, Herat
Kabul, Kabul
Kandahar, Kandahar
Khost, Khost
Kunar, Asadabad
Logar, Pul-e-Alam
Nangarhar, Jalalabad
Paktia, Gardez
Paktika, Sharan
Uruzgan, Tirin Kot
Wardak, Maydan Shahr
Zabul, Qalat

For provinces and cities not listed here, use the spelling provided by the source, which in most cases is International Security Assistance Force Joint Command.

Afghan National Army, Afghan National Police

Capitalize when used in full, lowercase *national army* or *army* or *national police* or *police* when not used in full. Restrict use of the full formal names to direct quotes or contexts that seem to require it. In most cases, *Afghan army* or *Afghan police* is sufficient. Do not use the abbreviations *ANA* or *ANP*.

Afghan national security forces

A catch-all term often used to describe Afghan military, police and border police forces. Capitalize only *Afghan*, and do not use the abbreviation ANSF. The term *Afghan security forces* suffices.

Africom

Acceptable in headlines and for second and subsequent references to *U.S. Africa Command*, a unified command formally activated Oct. 1, 2008, with headquarters at Kelley Barracks in Stuttgart, Germany.

AFRTS

Acceptable for second and subsequent references to *American Forces Radio and Television Service*. Be alert to the incorrect usage *Armed Forces Radio and Television Service*.

aircrew

One word when used, but *crew* usually is sufficient.

al-Qaida

This aligns AFPS with Associated Press style for the name of the terror organization. Note the lowercase A at the beginning, but capitalize it when the word starts a sentence.

al-Qaida in Iraq, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula

These groups are separate entities from al-Qaida and should not be shortened to al-Qaida in describing them or their members. Spell out every time; do not use the abbreviations *AQI* or *AQAP*.

Arabic names

Follow AP's guidelines:

In general, use an English spelling that approximates the way a name sounds in Arabic. If an individual has a preferred spelling in English, use that. If usage has established a particular spelling, use that.

Problems in transliteration of Arabic names often are traceable to pronunciations that vary from region to region. The *g*, for example, is pronounced like the *g* of *go* mainly in Egypt, and the *j* of

joy in the rest of the Arab world. Thus it is *Gamal* in Egypt and *Jamal* in nations on the peninsula. Follow local practice in deciding which letter to use.

Arabs commonly are known by two names (*Hassan Nasrallah*), or by three (*Mohammed Mahdi Akef*). Follow the individual's preference on first reference. On second reference, use only the final name in the sequence.

The articles *al-* or *el-* may be used or dropped depending on the person's preference or established usage. (*Ayman al-Zawahri*, *al-Zawahri*, or *Moammar Gadhafi*, *Gadhafi*). The article *al-* or *el-* should not be capitalized.

The Arabic word for son (*ibn* or *bin*) is sometimes part of a name. On second reference, it is often dropped, using only the final name. In cases of personal preference or common usage, it should be retained. (*Osama bin Laden*, *bin Laden*; *Abdul-Aziz bin Baz*, *bin Baz*).

The word *abu* or *abou*, meaning *father of*, occasionally is used as a last name (*Abdel-Halim Abou Ghazala*). Capitalize and repeat it on second reference: *Abou Ghazala*.

The word *abdul*, meaning "servant of (God)," generally does not stand alone as a name, except sometimes in South Asia and Afghanistan. It is used in combination with a second name (an Arabic word for an attribute of God). This combination should be hyphenated, unless the individual prefers otherwise, and capitalized (*Adil Abdul-Mahdi*, *Abdul-Mahdi*). In Egypt and some other countries, *Abdul* is often written *Abdel*, reflecting local pronunciation.

For royalty, the titles *king*, *emir*, *sheik* and *imam* are used, but *prince* usually replaces *emir*. Some Arabs are known only by the title and a given name on first reference (*King Abdullah*). Others are known by a complete name (*Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum*). Follow the common usage on first reference. On second reference, drop the title and use only the first name (*Abdullah*, *Mohammed*). The full names of many Gulf royals include the word *Al*, which in their case should be capitalized without a hyphen since it means *family of*.

The *al* should be capitalized in front of most Muslim and Arab institutions, universities, newspapers and major mosques, as in *Al-Azhar*, the university in Cairo; *Al-Aqsa*, the Jerusalem mosque, and the newspaper *Al-Ahram*.

armed forces, armed services, military services, uniformed services

Armed forces and *armed services* are synonymous and refer to the *military services* and the *U.S. Coast Guard*. *Military services* refers to the *U.S. Army*, *U.S. Navy*, *U.S. Air Force* and *U.S. Marine Corps*. *Uniformed services* refers to the armed services, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the officer corps of the U.S. Public Health Service, so use it only when that's the intent.

Baghdad

The capital of Iraq stands alone in datelines.

Bagram Airfield

No space, in keeping with Army style for its named airfields.

Black Hawk

The name of the UH-60 helicopter is two words.

brackets

Use brackets, not parentheses, to enclose changed words or insertions within direct quotations.

bulleted items

Introduce the bulleted items with a colon at the end of the text immediately preceding them. Indicate bullets with a double hyphen with one space between the double hyphen and the text that follows, and treat each bullet as a separate paragraph. Use parallel construction. Make each bullet a single thought — no more than one sentence or appropriate fragment. Keep items short, however. If you cannot contain the bulleted item in one sentence, abandon the bullet construction. Capitalize the first letter of each bulleted item, even if the bullets continue or complete a sentence begun in the preceding text. If the bulleted item is a complete sentence, close with a period. If not, use a semicolon until end of sentence. If bulleted items are complete sentences, do not use *and* before last item, but do use *and* after the semicolon of the next-to-last bullet if the bullets are not complete sentences.

bylines

The form for American Forces Press Service staff:

*By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service*

*By Army Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.
American Forces Press Service*

The form for bylined stories from non-AFPS sources:

*By Air Force Senior Airman Melissa J. Smith
1st Fighter Wing*

Note that this part of the credit line includes only the unit – not Public Affairs or other subset of the unit. But be aware that Army brigades must include the division. The style: 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

Operational updates do not carry a byline, but should be credited as appropriate in place of *American Forces Press Service* with one of the following choices from the “Organizations” area of the content management system:

For updates that involve compilation of two or more releases:

Compiled from International Security Assistance Force Joint Command News Releases

For updates that come from a single release:

From an International Security Assistance Force News Release

From an International Security Assistance Force Joint Command News Release

Use Washington as the dateline for compilations, and retain the original dateline for single releases.

Treat other unbylined articles from news releases similarly, using the originating organization as the credit line and the originator’s location as the dateline. For example:

Finance Officials Explain Changes to Pay Statements

From a Defense Finance and Accounting Service News Release

CLEVELAND, Sept. 30, 2011 – Monthly leave and earnings statements for service members and Defense Department civilian employees will get a new look in October, Defense Finance and Accounting Service officials here announced today.

For stories that consist of a lead sentence introducing a presidential statement or other verbatim matter, as well as other staff-produced stories that do not warrant a byline:

American Forces Press Service

capitalization

Follow AP’s guidelines:

In general, avoid unnecessary capitals. Use a capital letter only if you can justify it by one of the principles listed here.

Many words and phrases, including special cases, are listed separately in the AP Stylebook.

Entries that are capitalized without further comment should be capitalized in all uses.

If there is no relevant listing in the AP Stylebook for a particular word or phrase, consult Webster's New World College Dictionary. Use lowercase if the dictionary lists it as an acceptable form for the sense in which the word is being used.

Some basic principles:

PROPER NOUNS: Capitalize nouns that constitute the unique identification for a specific person, place, or thing: *John, Mary, America, Boston, England*. Some words, such as the examples just given, are always proper nouns. Some common nouns receive proper noun status when they are used as the name of a particular entity: *General Electric, Gulf Oil*.

PROPER NAMES: Capitalize common nouns such as *party, river, street* and *west* when they are an integral part of the full name for a person, place or thing: *Democratic Party, Mississippi River, Fleet Street, West Virginia*. Lowercase these common nouns when they stand alone in subsequent references: *the party, the river, the street*. Lowercase the common noun elements of names in plural uses: *the Democratic and Republican parties, Main and State streets, lakes Erie and Ontario*. Exception: plurals of formal titles with full names are capitalized: *Presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald R. Ford*.

Among AP Stylebook entries that provide additional guidelines are:

<u>animals</u>	<u>legislature</u>
<u>brand names</u>	<u>months</u>
<u>building</u>	<u>monuments</u>
<u>committee</u>	<u>nationalities and races</u>
<u>Congress</u>	<u>nicknames</u>
<u>datelines</u>	<u>non-U.S. governmental bodies</u>
<u>days of the week</u>	<u>non-U.S. legislative bodies</u>
<u>directions and regions</u>	<u>organizations and institutions</u>
<u>family names</u>	<u>planets</u>
<u>food</u>	<u>plants</u>
<u>geographic names</u>	<u>police department</u>
<u>governmental bodies</u>	<u>religious references</u>
<u>heavenly bodies</u>	<u>seasons</u>
<u>historical periods and events</u>	<u>trademarks</u>
<u>holidays and holy days</u>	<u>unions</u>

POPULAR NAMES: Some places and events lack officially designated proper names but have popular names that are the effective equivalent: *the Combat Zone* (a section of downtown Boston), *the Main Line* (a group of Philadelphia suburbs), *the South Side* (of Chicago), *the Badlands* (of South Dakota), *the Street* (the financial community in the Wall Street area of New

York). The principle applies also to shortened versions of the proper names of one-of-a-kind events: *the Series* (for the World Series), *the Derby* (for the Kentucky Derby). This practice should not, however, be interpreted as a license to ignore the general practice of lowercasing the common noun elements of a name when they stand alone.

DERIVATIVES: Capitalize words that are derived from a proper noun and still depend on it for their meaning: *American, Christian, Christianity, English, French, Marxism, Shakespearean*. Lowercase words that are derived from a proper noun but no longer depend on it for their meaning: *french fries, herculean, manhattan cocktail, malapropism, pasteurize, quixotic, venetian blind*.

SENTENCES: Capitalize the first word in a statement that stands as a sentence. See **sentences** and **parentheses** in the AP Stylebook. In poetry, capital letters are used for the first words of some phrases that would not be capitalized in prose. See **poetry** in the AP Stylebook.

COMPOSITIONS: Capitalize the principal words in the names of books, movies, plays, poems, operas, songs, radio and television programs, works of art, etc. See **composition titles**; **magazine names**; and **newspaper names** in the AP Stylebook.

TITLES: Capitalize formal titles when used immediately before a name. Lowercase formal titles when used alone or in constructions that set them off from a name by commas. Use lowercase at all times for terms that are job descriptions rather than formal titles. See **academic titles**; **courtesy titles**; **legislative titles**; **military titles**; **nobility titles**; **religious titles**; and **titles** in the AP Stylebook.

Centcom

Acceptable in headlines and for second and subsequent references to *U.S. Central Command*, a unified combatant command with headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.

chaplain

Capitalized when used with a name, lowercase in other uses. For military chaplains, the rank goes in parentheses in first-reference-with-name style: *Army Chaplain (Maj.) Joseph T. Smith*. Use a chaplain's religious affiliation only if it's relevant to the story.

commander in chief

No hyphens. Once used both as the title for the president in the context of his authority over the armed forces and for commanders of the unified commands, it now applies only to the president. Use it only in context, and not as a routine synonym for *president*. To apply the term to the president when he is acting in a nonmilitary capacity uses the term out of context. Example: *The commander in chief asked Congress to ratify the treaty*. An example of using the term in context: *Using his authority as commander in chief, the president relieved the general of his command*.

CONUS

It's avoidable alphabet soup. Use it only in quoted matter, and even at that, be sure that use closely follows a spelled-out reference to the continental United States. Better yet, just paraphrase the quote. This term refers to the 48 contiguous states. The term's origin predates the admission of Alaska and Hawaii as states, and while Alaska is indeed part of the North American continent, Hawaii is not.

counter-

AP's rules in **prefixes** apply, but in general, no hyphen.

crew member

Two words, consistent with *service member*.

cutlines

Write in historical-present tense, identifying recognizable people left to right with full name and title, and including the year in dates. Use a colon at the beginning of the lead sentence or commas in the body of the sentence to indicate a person's relative position in the photo. The form:

Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta, left, meets with Australian Defense Minister Stephen Smith during U.S.-Australia Ministerial Consultations in San Francisco, Sept. 15, 2011. U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Jacob N. Bailey

Left to right: Army Staff Sgts. Eric Anton, Leigh Clarke David Thiele of the North Dakota National Guard judge a Memorial Day weekend duck-calling contest on Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, May 30, 2010. U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Yoshauna Gunn

See also: **photo credits**

Cybercom

Acceptable in second and subsequent references for U.S. Cyber Command, a subunified command under U.S. Strategic Command. Cybercom's headquarters is on Fort Meade, Md.

cyberspace, cybersecurity Associated Press's guidance on the *cyber-* prefix is vague. Because the term is used frequently in AFPS articles, AFPS needs a more definitive style rule. Limit the one-word construction to cyberspace and cybersecurity. Use two words for all other terms. This is, indeed, arbitrary, but it's easy to remember and ensures consistency regardless of the editing team.

datelines

Use all caps for the community, followed by the state or country, if appropriate, in downstyle, followed by a comma, a space, the full date in AP style, a space, a double hyphen and another space. AP's guidelines apply as to whether a locale in a dateline needs a state or country. Per AP, datelines for Canadian cities use the province in the same form as that used for U.S. states. Do not use *Canada* in datelines. Consult the electronic AP Stylebook if in doubt; AP updates it in real time. The printed stylebook could be outdated.

Use a locale in a dateline only when you actually reported or wrote the story there. Use of the word "here" in the story is understood to mean the datelined community, and is preferable to repeating the community, especially in the lead. Washington (no D.C.) is the dateline locale for staff-generated AFPS stories reported or written at the Pentagon, in the District of Columbia, or at Defense Media Activity on Fort Meade. Exception: Use FORT MEADE, Md. as the dateline for stories resulting from covering activities on the installation.

The form:

ORANGE, Calif., Oct. 1, 2011 – California National Guard troops are mobilizing to fight a wild fire that threatens hundreds of homes here.

Unbylined articles that come from a single release carry their original dateline.

dates

Use *yesterday*, *tomorrow* or the date – not the day of the week -- for all time references except the date in the dateline, which is *today*. This exception to AP and normal journalistic "dateweek" practice clarifies the time element for archived stories, stories shared in social media, etc. Because each story has a dateline, *yesterday*, *today* and *tomorrow* are understood easily. Days of the week become meaningless in a story that's read days, weeks or months after it was written. Use the year in the body of a story only when confusion may result without it, and set it off by commas; the verb tense normally is adequate to convey the previous or next year. Always include the year with dates in cutlines.

DeCA

Acceptable for second and subsequent references to the *Defense Commissary Agency*. Note the lowercase *e*, which is part of the acronym but doesn't stand for a separate word. But shoot for constructions such as *the agency*.

departments

Follow AP style:

The following are the U.S. government departments: *Department of Agriculture (USDA* acceptable on second reference); *Department of Commerce*; *Department of Defense (DOD* or *Pentagon* acceptable on second reference); *Department of Education*; *Department of Energy (DOE* acceptable on second reference); *Department of Health and Human Services (HHS* acceptable on second reference); *Department of Homeland Security (DHS* acceptable on second reference); *Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD* acceptable on second reference); *Department of the Interior*; *Department of Justice (DOJ* acceptable on second reference); *Department of Labor*; *Department of State*; *Department of Transportation (DOT* acceptable on second reference); *Department of the Treasury*, and *Department of Veterans Affairs (VA* acceptable on second reference).

It is preferable to list the subject first in stories, such as the *Agriculture Department* and *Commerce Department*. Exceptions are *Department of Health and Human Services*, *Department of Homeland Security*, *Department of Housing and Urban Development* and *Department of Veterans Affairs*. (Note: AFPS sought and received clarification from the AP Stylebook editor on this paragraph. The editor said constructions such as *Homeland Security Department* and *Veterans Affairs Department* are fine for Cabinet departments with more than one word in the descriptive portion of their full names. Though the stylebook has yet to change to reflect that, AFPS uses the shorter constructions.)

Avoid acronyms when possible. A phrase such as *the department* is preferable on second reference because it is more readable and avoids alphabet soup.

Lowercase *department* in plural uses, but capitalize the proper name element: *the departments of Labor and Justice*.

A shorthand reference to the proper name element also is capitalized: *Kissinger said, "State and Justice must resolve their differences."* But: *Henry Kissinger, the secretary of state*.

Lowercase *the department* whenever it stands alone.

Do not abbreviate *department* in any use.

Department of Defense

Use *Defense Department* in most instances, reserving *Department of Defense* for quoted matter or situations that require that level of formality. The abbreviation *DOD* is permitted in second and subsequent references, even if the first reference is *Defense Department*.

dependent

Use *family member* unless using in conjunction with a formal description of military benefits.

Diego Garcia

Do not refer to this base in the Indian Ocean in connection with the U.S. Central Command area of operations, per Centcom public affairs guidance.

doctor

Place in parentheses after military rank in first references -- *Army Col. (Dr.) Joseph T. Smith* – if use of the title is appropriate using AP’s guidelines.

An AFPS exception to AP style calls for using Dr. Jill Biden on first reference for the wife of the vice president. Normally use Biden in second and subsequent references, but use Dr. Biden in second and subsequent references to avoid confusion in articles in which she and her husband are quoted.

Here are AP’s guidelines:

Use *Dr.* in first reference as a formal title before the name of an individual who holds a doctor of dental surgery, doctor of medicine, doctor of optometry, doctor of osteopathic medicine, or doctor of podiatric medicine degree: *Dr. Jonas Salk*. The form *Dr.*, or *Drs.*, in a plural construction, applies to all first-reference uses before a name, including direct quotations.

If appropriate in the context, *Dr.* also may be used on first reference before the names of individuals who hold other types of doctoral degrees. However, because the public frequently identifies *Dr.* only with physicians, care should be taken to ensure that the individual's specialty is stated in first or second reference. The only exception would be a story in which the context left no doubt that the person was a dentist, psychologist, chemist, historian, etc.

In some instances it also is necessary to specify that an individual identified as *Dr.* is a physician. One frequent case is a story reporting on joint research by physicians, biologists, etc.

Do not use *Dr.* before the names of individuals who hold only honorary doctorates.

Do not continue the use of *Dr.* in subsequent references, except to avoid confusion between two people with the same last name if only one of them is a doctor. If both are doctors, use full names in all references.

DOD

Acceptable for second and subsequent references to *Department of Defense* or *Defense Department*. See **Department of Defense**.

DODDS

Acceptable for second and subsequent references to *Department of Defense Dependents Schools*.

Note the plurals, capital O and lack of apostrophe. *DODDS* and *DOD Dependents Schools* refer to the school system. Use *Defense Department dependents school* or *schools* when referring to individual schools.

ellipsis (...)

In general, treat an ellipsis as a three-letter word, constructed with three periods and two spaces, as shown here. Use an ellipsis to indicate the deletion of one or more words in condensing quotes, texts and documents. Be especially careful to avoid deletions that would distort the meaning. An ellipsis also may be used to indicate a thought that the speaker or writer does not complete. Substitute a dash for this purpose, however, if the context uses ellipses to indicate that words actually spoken or written have been deleted. The **ellipsis** entry in the AP Stylebook provides more details and examples.

Eucom

Acceptable in headlines and for second and subsequent references to the *U.S. European Command*, a unified combatant command with headquarters at Stuttgart, Germany.

exercise, operation

Use *Exercise/Operation* as part of the title on first use only: *Exercise Cobra Gold* on first reference, *Cobra Gold* thereafter. Lowercase the word in generic and plural references.

explosively formed penetrator

An advanced form of improvised explosive device that uses a shaped charge and is designed to penetrate armor, also commonly referred to as an *explosively formed projectile*. EFP is acceptable for second and subsequent references, but the writer should avoid the term when possible and explain its armor-piercing capability whether the term is used or not.

first lady

As an exception to AP style, capitalize as a formal title when used before a name. Lowercase in other uses.

flightline

One word, in keeping with Air Force practice.

foreign currency

Convert to U.S. equivalents. A calculator is available at <http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic?user=onlineconversion&lang=en>.

foreign leaders

The order of precedence for spelling the names of foreign leaders not listed in the AP Stylebook is the spelling used in the electronic AP Stylebook's pronunciation guide, and for foreign leaders not listed there, the CIA World Factbook's foreign leaders index at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/world-leaders-1/index.html>.

fort

Per AP, never abbreviate fort as ft., even in datelines or names of installations.

headlines

Write in historical present tense, using telegraphic English and subject-verb-object structure. Capitalize all significant words and prepositions of four or more letters, and use a comma in place of "and."

More guidelines:

-- Avoid negatives. Wrong: *Not Too Late to Vote, Official Says*. Right: *Official Says Time Remains to Vote*.

-- Include attribution in headlines that express opinions.

-- Keep headlines short. They need to be able to fit in a single line on the articles page -- <http://www.defense.gov/news/articles.aspx> -- and on the Defense.gov news page -- <http://www.defense.gov/news/>.

-- Avoid all but instantly recognizable abbreviations and acronyms.

-- Per AP headline guidelines, use numerals for all numbers, even those less than 10.

-- As an exception to AP guidelines, AFPS uses periods in its headlines for U.S. and U.N.

-- Use single quotation marks.

-- Limit use of last names in headlines (and leads, for that matter) to well-known people. Last names of the president and vice president, the secretary and deputy secretary of defense, Cabinet officials and the chairman and vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff always are acceptable. Beyond that is a judgment call depending on how frequently the person in question has been in the news, but lean heavily toward not using other names.

health care

Two words, per AP.

he/she, he or she, his/her, his or her

Avoid the perception that your writing is gender-biased, but never use “he or she” or “his or her” except in quoted matter. Writing in third-person plural avoids the need to use gender-specific pronouns or the temptation to mix plural pronouns with single antecedents. Wrong: *A soldier is accountable for their actions. They must take responsibility seriously.* Technically correct, but unnecessarily klunky: *A soldier is accountable for his or her actions. He or she must take responsibility seriously.* Better: *Soldiers are accountable for their actions. They must take responsibility seriously.*

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Humvee

Capitalized because it’s a brand name. Acceptable in all references to what Army nomenclature calls a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle.

identification of military personnel

Use service, rank and full name on first reference. Job title and unit should follow immediately, but may be used in the next sentence if necessary. If the person is a Marine, use Marine Corps for the service portion of first-reference identification. Follow the guidelines in the AP Stylebook’s **military titles** entry:

Capitalize a military rank when used as a formal title before an individual's name. See the lists that follow 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. In subsequent references, do not continue using the title before a name. Use only the last name.

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

In some cases, it may be necessary to explain the significance of a title: *Army Sgt. Maj. John Jones described the attack. Jones, who holds the Army's highest rank for enlistees, said it was unprovoked.*

In addition to the ranks listed on the next page, 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:

MILITARY TITLES

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

Warrant officer (W01)	Warrant Officer
Chief warrant officer two (CW2)	Chief Warrant Officer 2
Chief warrant officer three (CW3)	Chief Warrant Officer 3
Chief warrant officer four (CW4)	Chief Warrant Officer 4
Chief warrant officer five (CW5)	Chief Warrant Officer 5

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

NAVY, COAST GUARD

Commissioned Officers

admiral	Adm.
vice admiral	Vice Adm.
rear admiral upper half	Rear Adm.
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
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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 2nd 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.

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.
corporal	Cpl.
lance corporal	Lance Cpl.
private first class	Pfc.
private	Pvt.

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

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.*

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.*

FIREFIGHTERS, POLICE OFFICERS: Use the abbreviations listed here when a military-style title is used before the name of a firefighter or police officer outside a direct quotation. Add *police* or *fire* before the title if needed for clarity: *police Sgt. William Smith, fire Capt. David Jones.* Spell out titles such as *detective* that are not used in the armed forces.

IG

No periods. Acceptable for second and subsequent references to *inspector general*.

improvised explosive device

A homemade device incorporating destructive, lethal, noxious, pyrotechnic, or incendiary chemicals and designed to destroy, incapacitate, harass, or distract. It may incorporate military materials, but normally is devised from nonmilitary components. The term is applied to a variety of explosive devices, such as bombs and mines. IED is acceptable for second and subsequent references, but if the available facts are detailed enough to allow avoiding use of this jargon term entirely, opt for *homemade bomb*, *roadside bomb* or the appropriate plain-English term.

in order to, in order for

Shorten to *to* or *for*.

installations

Use full title on first reference and in datelines. In second and subsequent references drop *Fort*, *Naval Station*, *Air Force Base*, etc., unless the need exists to distinguish the installation from an adjacent or similarly named town or city.

job titles

Because of the length of some titles in the Defense Department, it often is preferable to use an informal title on first reference, particularly to avoid a cumbersome lead. Example: *The Pentagon's military manpower chief* instead of *deputy assistant secretary of defense for military personnel policy*. Use the full title on second reference.

Joint Forces Command

U.S. Joint Forces Command on first reference, *Joint Forces Command* thereafter. Do not abbreviate. The command was disestablished in 2011.

JROTC

Use *Junior ROTC* in all references.

Kabul

Per AP, the capital of Afghanistan requires the country on first reference and in datelines.

Marjah

When this Afghan city first became prominent in news stories, Associated Press had not designated a spelling. AFPS went with *Marja*, which was the way it most commonly appeared in civilian media. Although AP still has not formally established a spelling, the editor answered a question in the online stylebook's "Ask the Editor" feature by saying AP uses Marjah. Therefore, AFPS is following suit.

medevac

Acceptable as a noun or adjective in all references for *medical evacuation*, though it's usually sufficient to say a wounded person was flown, taken, or transported to a hospital. Do not use as a verb.

metric measurements

Convert metric measurements to those used in the United States. A conversion calculator is available at <http://www.worldwidemetric.com/measurements.html>.

mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicle

This style applies proper punctuation and provides a more reader-friendly form than the official nomenclature, Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle. *MRAP vehicle* is acceptable for second and subsequent references. MRAPs is acceptable as a plural form in quoted matter after the spelled-out version is established, but normally use MRAP vehicles as the plural form. The all-terrain version has a different second-reference form that should be introduced on first reference, set off by commas. *The all-terrain version of the vehicle, known as the M-ATV, was designed to operate in Afghanistan's rough, mountainous regions.*

Moammar Gadhafi

This is the spelling as listed in the online AP Stylebook's pronunciation guide, the first source AFPS uses for names not listed in the main stylebook.

months

Follow AP's guidelines. Avoid the wordy and redundant construction *the month of*.

MRAP vehicle

Acceptable for second and subsequent references to the mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicle. Use *M-ATV* for second and subsequent references to the all-terrain version of the vehicle.

Multinational

Used in place of the *Multi-National* construction in the names of various military organizations in Iraq and Afghanistan. AFPS style also calls for using a space, rather than a hyphen, between the descriptive part of a command's name and the part that specifies the country. *Multinational Force Iraq*, not *Multi-National Force-Iraq*.

NATO

Per AP, acceptable in all references for North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

NCO

Acceptable for second and subsequent references for *noncommissioned officer*. Plural is NCOs, no apostrophe. Applies to enlisted members in grades E-4 and higher in the Marine Corps, and – except for E-4s holding the rank of specialist -- the Army. Air Force enlisted members are not considered NCOs until attaining the rank of staff sergeant, E-5. The Navy and Coast Guard generally do not use the term. Use *petty officer(s)* for enlisted members of those services E-4 and above.

NCOIC

Use *noncommissioned officer in charge* – always lowercase – unless the term noncommissioned officer already has appeared in the story. In that case, use *NCO in charge*.

non-

Follow AP's guidelines:

The rules of **prefixes** apply, but in general no hyphen when forming a compound that does not have special meaning and can be understood if not is used before the base word. Use a hyphen, however, before proper nouns or in awkward combinations, such as non-nuclear.

Northcom

Acceptable in headlines and for second and subsequent references to *U.S. Northern Command*, a unified combatant command with headquarters at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo.

Osama bin Laden

Use *bin Laden* in second and subsequent references.

Pacom

Acceptable in headlines and for second and subsequent references to *U.S. Pacific Command*, a unified command with headquarters at Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii.

paragraph breaks

No indentation. Indicate paragraph breaks by a blank line.

PCS

Acceptable for second and subsequent references to *permanent change of station*, but never as a verb form such as *PCSe*d or *PCSing*. If those verb forms appear in quoted matter, rewrite and paraphrase. Constructions such as *a move*, *a move to a new assignment*, *moving*, *moving to a new assignment*, *etc.*, always are preferable.

peacekeeper, peacekeeping

petty officer

An enlisted member of the Navy or Coast Guard in the rank of E-4 or above. Follow AP style in identification, even though internally the Navy and Coast Guard use ranks that include the individual's specialty. So while Navy usage might refer on first reference to YN1 John P. Jones, the first-reference AFPS and AP style would be Petty Officer 1st Class John P. Jones, a Navy yeoman. See **NCO**.

photo credits

A photo credit should follow every cutline, formatted as if it were the final sentence in the cutline, but without a period at the end. Use AP style for service affiliation, rank and name.

The forms:

For official photos when the photographer's identity is known:

U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Joseph T. Smith
DOD photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.
DOD photo by Donna Miles

For official photos when the photographer is not known, but the affiliation is:

U.S. Air Force photo
NATO photo
DOD photo

For unofficial photos when the person who provided it also is the photographer:

Courtesy photo by Marine Corps Cpl. Thomas B. Smith

For unofficial photos when the person who provided it is not the photographer, but the photographer's identity is known:

Photo by Margaret L. Bundy, courtesy of Operation Homefront

For unofficial photos when the photographer's identity is not known: *Photo courtesy of Operation Homefront or Courtesy photo*

If a photo from a civilian media outlet is used, obtain and express permission to use it: *Photo by Sam Saunders, Belleville (Ill.) News-Democrat, used by permission*

pre-position (v.), pre-positioned (adj. and past tense v.)

Use a hyphen when referring to supplies and equipment positioned beforehand to avoid the need for airlift or sealift in case the need arises to use it. The hyphen construction avoids confusion with *preposition*, a part of speech. The term is military jargon, and writers should seek a more reader-friendly way to express it when possible.

post-traumatic stress disorder

Note the lowercase construction, per AP's *diseases* entry. PTSD is acceptable in second and subsequent references. Not everyone who has symptoms of post-traumatic stress has post-traumatic stress disorder, so don't use the terms interchangeably.

prefixes

Follow AP's guidelines:

Generally do not hyphenate when using a prefix with a word starting with a consonant. Three rules are constant, although they yield some exceptions to first-listed spellings in Webster's New World College Dictionary:

- Except for *cooperate* and *coordinate*, use a hyphen if the prefix ends in a vowel and the word that follows begins with the same vowel.
- Use a hyphen if the word that follows is capitalized.
- Use a hyphen to join doubled prefixes: *sub-subparagraph*.

preventive

Not preventative.

provincial reconstruction team

All lowercase unless part of a specific team's formal name: *Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team*, but *the provincial reconstruction team in Afghanistan's Nangahar province*. Do not use the abbreviation *PRT*. Rather, use constructions such as *the team*, or spell out *provincial reconstruction team* if the context requires more than that.

quotations and attribution

Attribution for opinions or for material that is not common knowledge is essential to AFPS credibility.

Attribute early, preferably at the first natural break. It can be unnerving for a reader to read through an entire paragraph before finding out who is speaking. Even though the speaker does not change, insert attribution from time to time in extended passages to remind reader who is speaking. When unattributed information interrupts attributed information and the article returns to attributed information, always re-identify the source.

Use past tense: *said*, not *says*. Occasional variation in attributive verbs is fine, especially when the precision of a word like *shouted* or *barked* or *whispered* is called for in a feature. But overuse of alternative attributive verbs with no other purpose except avoiding use of *said* draws undue attention to itself, disrupting the reader's rhythm. Chapter 5 of "The Word," the AP guide to news writing, addresses this issue thoroughly. A few stand-bys such as *continued*, *added* and *noted* are available to avoid stacking *said* too many times in rapid succession, especially in long passages of direct and indirect quotes from the same speaker. But in most cases, *said* is the best attributive verb. It's almost transparent to readers, and that's a good thing. For the sake of consistency in the AFPS "voice," opt for the *Smith said* construction, as opposed to the *said Smith* construction. Exception: Use "said" between the quote and the speaker if the name and identification of the speaker is lengthy. Wrong: "*Addressing the poppy trade in Afghanistan is one of our top priorities,*" *Richard Douglas, deputy assistant secretary of defense for counternarcotics, counterproliferation and global threats, said.* Correct: *Addressing the poppy trade in Afghanistan is one of our top priorities,* " *said Richard Douglas, deputy assistant secretary of defense for counternarcotics, counterproliferation and global threats.*

Reserve *shouted*, *exclaimed*, etc., for personality pieces, and even then, use them sparingly and correctly. Do not attribute quotes with verbs denoting nonverbal physical processes such as *laughing*, *smiling*, *pouting*. No one laughs, smiles or pouts words.

regional commands

Use a space instead of a hyphen in the names of regional commands in Afghanistan and elsewhere. *Regional Command East*, not *Regional Command-East*.

Reserve

Capitalize only as part of the formal name of one of the service's reserve components: Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve. Lowercase the plural form, reserves, in all uses.

reserve components

Refers to all reserve forces of the United States, including the National Guard (and, technically, the ROTC, though this rarely is intended by the user/speaker). Not capitalized. Example: *The reserve components face a cut of more than \$3.5 billion in the next federal budget.*

reservist

Lowercase except when starting a sentence.

resilience

The quality that manifests being resilient. Many people refer to this quality as “resiliency” – a word that appears in some dictionaries, but is a colloquial construction that contains a superfluous syllable. The goal of style is consistency, so AFPS shouldn't be hopping around between the terms. Paraphrase quotations that use the incorrect word, or replace the incorrect word with the correct one, using brackets. Exception: If a facility's formal name includes, for example, *Sgt. John T. Smith Resiliency Center*, use that name, but ensure the word “resilience” otherwise is used appropriately throughout the article.

rocket-propelled grenade

RPG is acceptable for second and subsequent references. The plural is RPGs, with no apostrophe. But when used as a modifier, an additional hyphen comes into play: *a rocket-propelled-grenade attack.*

secretary general

Though AP style is hyphenated, the preference varies among organizations that use the title. Because references to NATO's secretary general are more likely in AFPS articles than references to any other organization's secretary general, AFPS does not use a hyphen, in accordance with NATO style. Capitalize only when used as a formal title before a name.

secretary of defense

Use the shortened form, *Defense Secretary*, as a formal title before a name. Lowercase *defense secretary* and *secretary of defense* in other uses. Use the same construction for the heads of other

Cabinet departments, except for the secretary of state, which should not be shortened to state secretary.

service affiliation

Put service affiliation before rank. Do not use service affiliation when it is obvious -- *Gen. John T. Smith, commander of Air Force Space Command* -- but always use it for people in unified combatant commands -- *Marine Corps Maj. John D. Smith, a U.S. Central Command spokesman* -- and in any other case where the affiliation would not be obvious to people with little knowledge of the military rank structure or the services in general. Use the service even with ranks used only in that service, such as *lance corporal, gunnery sergeant, sergeant first class*, etc. While the person's service affiliation would be obvious to people with that level of knowledge, AFPS stories should be clear to any reader. In all cases, use service affiliation in AP style for labeling the link to a service member's biography.

serviceman, servicewoman, service member

The two-word construction of *service member* is a recent addition to the AP Stylebook.

Shiia, Shiite

Two I's, No apostrophe.

ships, boats

Do not italicize ship/boat names, ship classes, battle groups, etc. See AP's **boats, ships** entry for further guidance, which includes not referring to them as "she."

Southwest Asia

The capital S is an exception to AP style. Definitions vary as to the composition of the region. Because of agreements with host nations, this umbrella term is the sole allowable location in datelines and copy for the following:

Al Udeid, Qatar
Al Dhafra, United Arab Emirates
Ali Al Salem, Kuwait

Special to American Forces Press Service

AFPS no longer uses this designation for articles written by people who are not members of the AFPS staff. See **bylines**.

state abbreviations

Use postal abbreviations as part of a mailing address. In all other instances, use AP-approved abbreviations. Follow the *datelines* entry in the AP Stylebook for cities that stand alone.

Socom

Acceptable in headlines and for second and subsequent references to *U.S. Special Operations Command*, a unified combatant command with headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. Avoid using it if the story's context might cause some readers to confuse it with Southcom, U.S. Southern Command.

Southcom

Acceptable in headlines and for second and subsequent references to the *U.S. Southern Command*, a unified combatant command with headquarters in Miami. Avoid using it if the story's context might cause some readers to confuse it with Socom, U.S. Special Operations Command.

Spacecom

Acceptable in headlines and for second and subsequent references to *Space Command*. U.S. Space Command no longer exists; it was absorbed into U.S. Strategic Command in 2002. If referring to a service's space command in second and subsequent references, the form is *Air Force Spacecom*. If referring to the now-defunct U.S. Space Command, the second-reference form is *U.S. Spacecom*.

Stratcom

Acceptable in headlines and for second and subsequent references to the *U.S. Strategic Command*, a unified combatant command with headquarters at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

TAD

The alphabet-soup term the Navy and Marine Corps use as their equivalent of the other services' TDY (temporary duty). Use temporary duty in all references.

task forces

The form: *Combined Joint Task Force 101*, *Joint Task Force Horn of Africa*. No hyphens or commas. Lowercase without a specific unit designation.

TDY

The alphabet-soup term the Army and Air Force use for *temporary duty*. Use *temporary duty* in all references.

Transcom

Acceptable in headlines and for second and subsequent references to *U.S. Transportation Command*, a unified combatant command with headquarters at Scott Air Force Base, Ill.

TRICARE

Though AP calls for capitalizing only the first letter of trademarked all-caps company names for which the letters aren't pronounced individually, AFPS uses the all-caps construction preferred by officials of the military health plan.

UCMJ

Acceptable for second and subsequent references to *Uniform Code of Military Justice*.

VIRINs

All photos posted with AFPS articles must have a VIRIN – visual information record identification number -- as the filename. It is the photographer's responsibility to name the file.

Instructions for creating a VIRIN filename are here:
<http://www.defenseimagery.mil/learning/howto/virin.html>.

warfighter, warfighting

Web links

Writers should find links to appropriate biographies of senior leaders and general/flag officers, to the websites of key organizations or fact sheets for equipment prominent in the story, and to related AFPS articles. Include a text label followed by a space, followed by the complete URL for each – this allows for a single “copy” maneuver from the story document when placing the link into the content management system. Verify the link's accuracy. The best method of ensuring a link is correct is to navigate to the site, highlight and copy the URL in the navigation window, and paste it into the story. The <http://> part of the Web address is necessary for the link to work in the content management system.

For biographies, first check whether the person is included in the Defense.gov biography collection at <http://www.defense.gov/bios/>. Second choice is the person's service-level bio, and third choice is the individual's command or organization.

The form:

Leon E. Panetta

<http://www.defense.gov/bios/biographydetail.aspx?biographyid=310>

Army Gen. Raymond T. Odierno

<http://www.defense.gov/bios/biographydetail.aspx?biographyid=323>

Following are some good starting points in finding links:

Biographies of Defense Department leaders: <http://www.defense.gov/bios/>

An alphabetized list of general Defense Department sites:

<http://www.defense.gov/RegisteredSites/RegisteredSites.aspx>

Army main site: <http://www.army.mil/>

Army A-Z: <http://www.army.mil/A-Z.htm>

Army units and installations: <http://www.army.mil/organization/>

Army fact sheets: http://www.army.mil/fact_files_site/index.html

Navy main site: <http://www.navy.mil/>

Navy fact sheets: <http://www.navy.mil/navydata/fact.asp>

Navy biographies: http://www.navy.mil/navydata/bios/bio_list.asp

Index of Navy sites: <http://www.navy.mil/links/alpha.asp>

Air Force main site: <http://www.af.mil>

Air Force fact sheets: <http://www.af.mil/information/factsheets/index.asp>

Air Force biographies: <http://www.af.mil/information/bios/>

Index of Air Force sites: <http://www.af.mil/publicwebsites/index.asp>

Marine Corps main site: <http://www.marines.mil/Pages/Default.aspx>

Marine Corps units : <http://www.marines.mil/news/Pages/UnitDirectory.aspx>

Marine Corps biographies : <https://slsp.manpower.usmc.mil/gosa/biographies/>

State Department Country Background Notes <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/>

Webster's New World College Dictionary

This is AP's official dictionary for matters its stylebook doesn't cover. A searchable version is available at <http://www.yourdictionary.com/dictionary-definitions/>.

-wide

Generally no hyphen when using this suffix, in accordance with AP style. Hyphenate, however, when combined with a proper noun or an acronym, providing the acronym itself is acceptable. *NATO-wide*, but *alliancewide*.