



Publication Style Guide

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Introduction

This style guide has been developed to assist American Legion staff and volunteers to be as consistent as possible in all written communications. The ultimate goal is for articles, press releases, social media posts, brochures, booklets and other published material to have a uniform style. This booklet does not replace rules and regulations adopted at local posts or individual departments; however, it is designed to offer guidance as to established norms, and is highly recommended for use at every level of the organization.

Sections include quick tips; the use of abbreviations, acronyms and capitalization; titles; and military terms and ranks.

In most circumstances, The American Legion follows AP style, as outlined in the latest editions of *The Associated Press Stylebook* and *Webster's New World College Dictionary*.

Quick tips

Keep your text simple. Don't use two words when one will do.

Not sure when to capitalize the "t" in The American Legion? Only when referring to the main organization or Sons of The American Legion. When the name is followed by another word or words, go with a lowercase "t": *the American Legion Family, the American Legion Department of California, the American Legion Riders, the American Legion Legacy Run, the American Legion Baseball program, the American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation.*

It's often necessary to give readers a full term or name before using an abbreviation or acronym. For example, most people know the Department of Veterans Affairs as VA, but don't know what CARES stands for (Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services). On first reference, give the full name or term. Use the acronym in second and further references: *American Legion posts nationwide are raising money for the National Emergency Fund.* After that, use the acronym: *the NEF provides direct financial assistance.* Avoid abbreviations and most acronyms in headlines except those widely recognizable: *FBI, IRS, NASA,* etc.

Avoid alphabet soup by using capitalization only where it's needed and appropriate. When too many words are emphasized, none stand out. Don't say, *American Legion Posts are full of Veterans who respect our Nation's Flag.* Do say, *American Legion posts are full of veterans who respect our nation's flag.* Limit capitalization to the first word of a sentence, proper nouns (people, groups, places, etc.), and titles preceding names.

What about titles? This rule is simple: capitalize a title preceding a name: *President Joe Biden signed the bill.* Don't capitalize a title if it follows the name or is used without an individual's name: *the president visited Arlington National Cemetery.* A few American Legion-specific examples include:

Preceding	Following
National Commander Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola	Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola, national commander
American Legion Auxiliary President Vickie Koutz	Vickie Koutz, president of the American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Indiana Commander James Daube	James Daube, commander of the Indiana American Legion
Post 48 Commander Jane Smith	Jane Smith, commander of Post 48
National Americanism Commission Chairman Mark Avis	Mark Avis, chairman of the Legion's National Americanism Commission

Abbreviate only a handful of titles. Spell out most formal titles, with the exceptions of *Dr.* (doctor), *Gov.* (governor), *Lt. Gov.* (lieutenant governor), *Rep.* (representative), *Sen.* (senator), *the Rev.* (minister or priest) and certain military titles. Avoid using *Dr.* as a formal title for individuals without a doctoral degree in dental surgery, medicine, optometry, or osteopathic, podiatric or veterinary medicine. If the context calls for using *Dr.* to identify a person with another type of doctoral degree, indicate the specialty in first or second reference.

Speaking of abbreviations, check those months and addresses. Write dates without *st, nd, rd, th*: *April 3*, not *April 3rd*. When a month is given with a specific date, abbreviate *Jan.* (January), *Feb.* (February), *Aug.* (August), *Sept.* (September), *Oct.* (October), *Nov.* (November) and *Dec.* (December). Spell out when using alone or with a year alone: *October 2001*. Do not use a comma to separate a month and year unless a date is given: *July 27, 1975*.

Spell out street names when used alone: *Pennsylvania Avenue*. With numbered addresses, use *Ave.* (avenue), *Blvd.* (boulevard) and *St.* (street): *700 N. Pennsylvania Ave.* Spell out similar words (*alley, drive, road, terrace*). Also spell out *First* through *Ninth*, and use numbers for *10th* and above. Abbreviate compass points for the direction of a street, in numbered addresses: *412 N. 82nd St.* Otherwise, *North 82nd Street*. City quadrants do not require periods: *NE, SW*.

Some cities and states are special. Per AP, the following U.S. city names can stand alone, without a state, in datelines and articles: *Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Honolulu, Houston, Indianapolis, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New Orleans, New York, Oklahoma City, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, Washington*. In datelines on press releases, be sure to use all capital letters.

In the case of other U.S. cities, include the state. Spell out *Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, Ohio, Texas* and *Utah*.

Other state names are abbreviated as follows, unless they stand alone in copy: *Ala.* (Alabama), *Ariz.* (Arizona), *Ark.* (Arkansas), *Calif.* (California), *Colo.* (Colorado), *Conn.* (Connecticut), *Del.* (Delaware), *Fla.* (Florida), *Ga.* (Georgia), *Ill.* (Illinois), *Ind.* (Indiana), *Kan.* (Kansas), *Ky.* (Kentucky), *La.* (Louisiana), *Md.* (Maryland), *Mass.* (Massachusetts), *Mich.* (Michigan), *Minn.* (Minnesota), *Miss.* (Mississippi), *Mo.* (Missouri), *Mont.* (Montana), *Neb.* (Nebraska), *Nev.* (Nevada), *N.H.* (New Hampshire), *N.J.* (New Jersey), *N.M.* (New Mexico), *N.Y.* (New York), *N.C.* (North Carolina), *N.D.* (North Dakota), *Okla.* (Oklahoma), *Ore.* (Oregon), *Pa.* (Pennsylvania), *R.I.* (Rhode Island), *S.C.* (South Carolina), *S.D.* (South Dakota), *Tenn.* (Tennessee), *Vt.* (Vermont), *Va.* (Virginia), *Wash.* (Washington), *W.Va.* (West Virginia), *Wis.* (Wisconsin), *Wyo.* (Wyoming).

Need to identify a member of Congress? Abbreviate representative or senator, and set off the party and state by commas following the person's name: *Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa., Rep. Marcy Kaptur, D-Ohio., Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt.* Include *U.S.* if necessary to distinguish the person from a representative or senator serving in state government: *U.S. Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., U.S. Rep. Ruben Gallego, D-Ariz.*

Bills, laws and all that stuff Terminology is important here. An *amendment* is a change or proposed change to a bill or law, and is *passed* or *enacted*. A *bill* is a draft proposal requiring debate, voting and final approval before it becomes law; bills *pass* or *fail*, or are *approved* or *signed*. A *law* is *enacted*. An *ordinance* is the municipal equivalent of a law and is *enacted*. A *resolution* is *adopted* or *fails*. A *rule* is *enacted, created* or *ordered*. A *statute* is a written or enacted law or ordinance. Any of these terms can be described generically as a *measure*. In addition, be aware of accepted abbreviations for numbered resolutions, bills and laws: *H. Con. Res.* (House Concurrent Resolution), *H.J. Res.* (House Joint Resolution), *H. Res.* or *H.R.* (House Resolution), *P.L.* (Public Law), *S.* (Senate Bill), *S. Con. Res.* (Senate Concurrent Resolution), *S.J. Res.* (Senate Joint Resolution).

A word about race and ethnicity No hyphen for terms such as *African American* and *Asian American*, used when relevant to refer to an American person's heritage. *Black* and *African American* are acceptable for American black persons of African descent. Use *Negro* or *Afro-American* only in names of organizations or quotations. *Latino* is the preferred term for a person from (or whose ancestors were from) a Spanish-speaking land or culture. Use *Latina* for women. *Hispanic* is acceptable, but follow a person's preference. Use *American Indian* or *Native American* for those in the United States, naming the tribe if possible. In Alaska, indigenous groups include Aleuts, Eskimos and Indians, collectively known as *Alaska Natives*. Again, where possible, follow a person's preference.

Compositions and publications Put quotation marks around the titles of books, movies, plays, poems, albums, songs, radio and TV programs, lectures, speeches and works of art: "All Quiet on the Western Front," "Sergeant York," "A Streetcar Named Desire," "Abbey Road," "The Simpsons," Van Gogh's "Starry Night." Exceptions include the Bible, the Quran and other holy books, as well as almanacs, directories, dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks and other catalogs of reference: *Encyclopedia Britannica, Webster's New World College Dictionary, Fifth Edition*. Do not italicize the names of sculptures, software, apps, games or video games.

Italicize the names of magazines and newspapers: *Rolling Stone*, *Good Housekeeping*, *The Wall Street Journal*, the *Star Tribune*. Lowercase *magazine* unless it is part of the publication's formal title: *Harper's Magazine*, *TIME magazine*. Capitalize *the* in a newspaper's name if that is the publication's preference: *The Washington Post*. Where location is needed but it not part of the official name, use parentheses: *The Huntsville (Alabama) Times*.

Think outside the box (or, ditch clichés and overused words/phrases). To quote The Associated Press, "Cliches are the junk food of the literary pantry, much loved by lazy writers. But platitudes and shopworn phrases serve as signals to the readers to move along, there's nothing to see here." Cliches to avoid (like the plague?) include *all in a day's work*, *at a crossroads*, *blessing in disguise*, *boils down to*, *bottom line*, *by the same token*, *come in under the wire*, *diamond in the rough*, *fall through the cracks*, *fan the flames*, *far cry*, *force to be reckoned with*, *from day one*, *go the extra mile*, *hands on*, *in the wake of*, *jump in with both feet*, *on the cutting edge*, *on the same page*, *on track*, *par for the course*, *perfect storm*, *push the envelope*, *raise the bar*, *trial by fire*, *uphill battle*, *wakeup call*.

Useless words include *a little*, *absolutely*, *actually*, *almost*, *basically*, *essentially*, *important*, *in reality*, *kind of*, *maybe*, *particular*, *perhaps*, *really*, *simply*, *slightly*, *some*, *sort of*, *that*, *ultimately*, *unique*, *unprecedented*, *very*.

Overused words and phrases include *a matter of time*, *all walks of life*, *as a nation*, *at first glance*, *at long last*, *at the end of the day*, *be that as it may*, *begs the question*, *_____ is not alone*, *_____ is no exception*, *bring to the table*, *broken system*, *cautiously optimistic*, *famously*, *for all intents and purposes*, *game-changer*, *iconic*, *if history is any guide*, *impact*, *in a nutshell*, *in fact*, *in the final analysis*, *in the wake of*, *increasingly*, *innovative*, *more often than not*, *needless to say*, *oft-cited*, *raised questions*, *remains to be seen*, *shines a spotlight on*, *slated*, *sparked debate*, *state-of-the-art*, *suffice it to say*, *tapped*, *the (anything) community*, *this day and age*, *underscores*, *war-torn*.

Redundant words include *absolutely certain*, *added bonus*, *ATM machine*, *close proximity*, *crisis situation*, *direct confrontation*, *earlier in time*, *end result*, *equally as*, *final outcome*, *free gift*, *full gamut*, *future plans*, *gather together*, *hourly/daily/weekly/monthly basis*, *join together*, *merge together*, *might possibly*, *personal opinion*, *PIN number*, *plan ahead*, *reason why*, *regular routine*, *undergraduate student*, *unexpected surprise*, *unsolved mystery*, *usual custom*.

Dimensions, degrees, directions Use figures and spell out *inches*, *feet*, *yards*, etc., for depth, height, length and width: *He is 6 feet, 6 inches tall, the 6-foot-6-inch soldier, the storm left 8 inches of snow, the tank is 21 feet long, 12 feet wide and 10 feet tall, the post has 10,000 square feet of floor space.*

If mention of an academic degree is necessary, avoid abbreviations and instead use a phrase such as *John Smith, who has a doctorate in military history*. Use an apostrophe in *bachelor's degree* and *master's degree*, but there is no possessive in *Bachelor of Arts* or *Master of Science*. Also: *associate degree* (no possessive).

In general, lowercase *north*, *south*, *northeast*, *northern*, etc., when indicating compass direction: *they drove south*. Capitalize these words when they designate regions: *Temperatures remain high in the Western states*. With the names of nations, lowercase unless part of a proper name: *northern France*, *South Korea*. Also lowercase directional or area descriptions when referring to a section of a state or city: *western Montana*, *southern Atlanta*. Capitalize, though, when referring to widely known sections: *Southern California*, *the Lower East Side of New York*.

Gender-neutral language In general, use terms for jobs and roles that can apply to any gender. For example, *police officer* instead of *policeman*, *firefighter* instead of *fireman*, *door attendant* instead of *doorman*. Use terms such as *chair* or *chairperson*, *council member* and *spokesperson* unless the *-man* or *-woman* terms are specified by the organization. The terms *U.S. representative*, *representative*, *member of Congress* are preferred. *Congressman* and *congresswoman* are acceptable because of common use. Do not use *congressperson*.

Other examples of preferred usage: *business owner* or *business person* (not *businessman* or *businesswoman*); *crew*, *staff*, *workforce*, *workers* (not *manpower*); *hero* (not *heroine*); *host* (not *hostess*); *humanity*, *humankind*, *humans* (not *mankind*); *artificial*, *synthetic* (not *man-made*); *mail carrier*, *letter carrier* (not *mailman*); *salesperson*, *sales associate*, *sales clerk* (not *salesman* or *saleswoman*); *server* (not *waiter* or *waitress*).

American Legion frequently used terms

adjutant Do not abbreviate.

administration Lowercase: *the president's administration, the Biden administration.*

adviser Not *advisor*.

a.m., p.m. Lowercase, with periods.

amendment Capitalize when referring to a numbered amendment: *the 27th Amendment, the proposed flag amendment, a constitutional amendment.*

American Legion, The Always use *The American Legion* on first reference, capitalizing the "t." May use *the Legion* on second reference. Do not abbreviate *TAL*.

American Legion Auxiliary Also referred to as *the Legion Auxiliary* or *the Auxiliary*. Do not abbreviate *ALA*.

American Legion Baseball *ALB* acceptable on second reference.

American Legion Family Refers to the family of American Legion organizations: *The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, and the American Legion Riders*. Do not capitalize "the" except when starting a sentence.

American Legion Magazine, The *The American Legion Magazine* in all references.

American Legion National Headquarters Do not abbreviate *American Legion National HQ*. Call *American Legion National Headquarters in Indianapolis* to distinguish from *The American Legion's Washington, D.C., office*.

American Legion World Series *ALWS* acceptable on second reference.

amount, number Use *amount* for things that cannot be counted individually: *the amount of gasoline left in the tank*. For things that can be counted individually, use *number*: *The number of sailors in the Navy*. Use *less* for things that can't be counted – *less paper, less paint* – and *fewer* for things that can: *fewer days, fewer votes*.

app Short for *application* and acceptable on first reference. Typically used to refer to computer programs that run on phones, tablets and personal computers as part of a larger online service: *American Legion mobile apps, Facebook apps*.

Army, Navy, Air Force Veterans in Canada-United States *ANAVICUS* on second reference.

armed forces Do not capitalize unless *U.S. Armed Forces*.

article Do not abbreviate when referring to a section of a constitution.

assistant Do not abbreviate the word or title.

associate Do not abbreviate.

attorney general Do not abbreviate.

baby boom, baby boomer Reference to those born between 1946 and 1964, a span defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Hyphenated as an adjective: *baby-boom generation*.

Be the One No quotation marks. Refer to as *The American Legion's Be the One initiative*, not *campaign*.

benefit, benefited, benefiting

birthday Capitalize as part of the name of a holiday: *Washington's Birthday*. Lowercase in other uses.

blog, blog entry, blog post

Board of Veterans Appeals *BVA* acceptable on second reference.

Boys Nation No apostrophe. *American Legion Boys Nation* preferred.

Boys State No apostrophe. *American Legion Boys State* preferred, or department-specific name: *American Legion Buckeye Boys State, Hoosier Boys State*. Participants are *Boys Staters*.

bylaw

cabinet departments Department of Agriculture (*USDA* acceptable on second reference), Department of Commerce, 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. Preferable to list the subject first: *the Agriculture Department, the Commerce Department*.

capital Do not capitalize.

American Legion frequently used terms

Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services CARES on second reference.

Capitol Capitalize *U.S. Capitol* and *the Capitol* when referring to the building in Washington, D.C. Do the same for state capitol buildings: *the Iowa State Capitol*.

caregiver, caretaker

cellphone

chairman Do not abbreviate.

Child Welfare Foundation The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. *CWF* acceptable on second reference.

Citizens Flag Alliance CFA on second reference.

cleanup

colors Refers to the U.S. flag: *the honor guard posted the colors*. Do not capitalize.

combat, combated, combating

commission Capitalize only when referring to a specific commission: *the National Security Commission, the commission*. Do not abbreviate. Commissions with two or more subunits take an ampersand: *the Legion's Media & Communications Commission*.

compose, comprise, constitute *Compose* means to create or put together: *The United States is composed of 50 states*. *Comprise* means to contain, to include all or embrace: *The United States comprises 50 states*. *Constitute* means form or make up: *Fifty states constitute the United States*.

committee Capitalize only when referring to a specific committee: *the Aerospace Committee, the committee*. Do not abbreviate. Committees with two or more subunits take an ampersand: *the Military Benefits & Quality of Life Committee*.

community-based outpatient clinics CBOC on second reference.

Congress, congressional

congressman, congresswoman *U.S. representative, representative* and *member of Congress* are preferred.

constitution, constitutional amendment Use *the Constitution of the United States, the U.S. Constitution, the Constitution*, but *constitutional, constitutional amendment*.

Constitution of The American Legion Uppercase in formal references: *According to the Constitution of The American Legion, the Legion's constitution*.

convention Lowercase unless referring to a specific convention: *the upcoming department convention, The American Legion's national convention, the 103rd National Convention of The American Legion, the American Legion Department of Wisconsin convention*.

coronavirus, COVID-19 Coronaviruses are a family of viruses, some of which can cause the common cold, SARS, MERS and COVID-19. Referring to simply *the coronavirus* is acceptable on first reference in stories about the pandemic that began in 2019.

The term *coronavirus* is generally acceptable in references to the pandemic: *coronavirus cases, coronavirus variants*. Use *COVID-19* when referring specifically to the disease: *COVID-19 patients, COVID-19 deaths*.

When referring specifically to the virus, *the COVID-19 virus* and *the virus that causes COVID-19* are acceptable, as is simply *the coronavirus*. But because COVID-19 is the name of the disease, not the virus, it is not accurate to write *a virus called COVID-19*.

The shortened form *COVID* is acceptable if necessary for space in headlines and direct quotations.

Court of Veterans Appeals CVA on second reference.

daylong, dayslong

Day 1 Capitalize when summarizing multiday events such as *Day 1, Day 2*. Lowercase in casual or conversational references.

DD 214 Short for *Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty*. Acceptable in all references.

death, die Don't use euphemisms like *passed on* or *passed away* except in a direct quote.

Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency DPAA on second reference.

defense spending *Military spending* is preferred.

department Capitalize only when referring to a specific American Legion department: *the Department of Hawaii, five Legion departments*. May be referred to as state (*the Iowa American Legion*) or department (*The American Legion Department of Iowa*). Do not abbreviate.

American Legion frequently used terms

Department of Defense *DoD* or *Pentagon* acceptable on second reference. Not *DOD*.

department executive committee Capitalize when referring to a specific department: *Wisconsin's Department Executive Committee*. Avoid abbreviating DEC.

department service officer *DSO* acceptable on second reference.

direct message A private message sent via an online service such as Facebook or Instagram. *DM* acceptable on second reference.

Direct Membership Solicitation *DMS* on second reference.

Director for Veterans Employment and Training *DVET* on second reference.

disabled Do not describe a person as *disabled* unless it is pertinent to the article. Avoid descriptions such as *afflicted with*, *battling*, *suffers from*, or *overcame his disability*: *he has PTSD*, *she has cancer*. Avoid terms such as *handicapped*, *crippled*, *confined to a wheelchair*, *wheelchair-bound*. When possible, ask how a person prefers to be described.

Disabled Veterans Outreach Program *DVOP* on second reference.

district Spell out numbers fewer than 10: *the Department of Indiana's Third District*, *the 10th District*.

division Capitalize when referring to a specific American Legion division: *division chairmen*, *the Legion's Americanism Division*. Divisions with two or more subunits take an ampersand: *the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Division*.

email, esports

emcee, emceed, emceeing A phrase such as *she was the master of ceremonies* is preferred.

emigrant, immigrant One who leaves a country *emigrates* from it. One who comes into a country *immigrates* to it.

entitled Use it to mean *a right to do or have something*. Do not use it to mean *titled*.

executive Do not abbreviate.

Fall Meetings Capitalize when referring to the National Executive Committee's October meetings: *the National Executive Committee passed a resolution during its Fall Meetings in Indianapolis*, *the NEC's Fall Meetings*.

Family Support Network *FSN* on second reference.

federal Capitalize when part of a proper name: *the federal government*, *the Federal Trade Commission*.

firefight

first lady, first family Not official titles, always lowercase.

first responder(s) Acceptable in general references to police, fire, medical, hazmat and other professionals who respond to emergencies.

fiscal The 12-month period that a corporation or government body uses for bookkeeping. The U.S. government's fiscal year begins three months ahead of the calendar year, in October. Do not abbreviate *FY*: *fiscal year 2023*, *fiscal 2023*.

flag Lowercase in all references: *the flag*, *the U.S. flag*. Capitalize *Grand Old Flag*, *Old Glory* and the *Star-Spangled Banner*.

flag amendment Refers to proposed constitutional amendment that would return to states the right to pass laws protecting the U.S. flag from desecration. Lowercase unless referring to a specific bill.

flagpole

flyer Preferred term for handbills: *They handed out flyers around town*.

Foreign and Outlying Departments and Posts of The American Legion *FODPAL* on second reference.

former Always lowercase, but retain capitalization for a formal title used immediately before a name: *former President George W. Bush*.

Founding Fathers Capitalize when referring to the authors of the U.S. Constitution. Lowercase when referring to The American Legion's founders.

American Legion frequently used terms

four pillars Phrase refers to The American Legion's central missions: *Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth*. Sometimes shortened to *Veterans, Security, Americanism, Youth*. Lowercase preferred: *the four pillars upon which The American Legion was founded, the Legion's four pillars*.

Fourth of July, July Fourth, Independence Day Do not use *4th of July, July 4th*.

fundraising, fundraiser

Generation X The generation following the 1946 to 1964 baby-boom generation. *Gen X* acceptable on second reference. Members of this generation are *Gen Xers*.

GI Government issue. Do not spell out or use periods. Use *soldier* unless talking about the *GI Bill of Rights*.

global war on terrorism Lowercase. Do not abbreviate *GWOT*.

government Always lowercase, never abbreviate: *the federal government, the state government, the U.S. government*.

grassroots One word for uses such as *The candidate launched a grassroots campaign*.

Gulf War Illness *GWII* acceptable on second reference.

half-mast, half-staff On ships and at naval stations ashore, flags are flown at *half-mast*. Elsewhere ashore, they are flown *half-staff*.

hashtag A term starting with a number or hash sign (#) in a social media post. It conveys the subject of the post so that it can be easily found by users interested in that subject.

health care Two words, except when combined as part of a proper name: *the Miami VA Healthcare System*. Hyphenate when using as an adjective: *the state's health-care system*.

historic, historical A *historic* event is an important occurrence that stands out in history. Any occurrence in the past is a *historical* event.

homefront

homepage

House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Note the apostrophe. Avoid abbreviating *HVAC*. *House VA committee* preferred on second reference.

ID Acceptable abbreviation for *identification*.

injuries They are *suffered*, not *sustained* or *received*. Try to use simpler wording: *he was injured in the crash, not he sustained injuries in the crash*.

in spite of *Despite* means the same thing and is shorter.

internet

junior, senior Abbreviate when following a name but do not precede by a comma: *Martin Luther King Jr.*

Junior Shooting Sports Program *The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program* is preferred, or *Junior Shooting Sports*. *JSSP* is acceptable on second reference. The proper name of the program's annual championship is *the American Legion 3-Position Junior Air Rifle Championship*.

K-9

killed in action *KIA* acceptable on second reference.

Korean War Do not use *Korean conflict* or *Korea veteran*.

Legacy Run *American Legion Legacy Run* is preferred, and *Legacy Run* on second reference: *the American Legion Legacy Run, the 10th annual Legacy Run*.

Legacy Scholarship *American Legion Legacy Scholarship* is preferred, and *Legacy Scholarship* on second reference: *the American Legion Legacy Scholarship was created after 9/11, she received a Legacy Scholarship*.

legislature Capitalize when preceded by the name of a state: *the Colorado Legislature*.

livestream, livestreaming

Local Veterans Employment Representative *LVER* on second reference.

Local Veterans Outreach Representative *LVOR* on second reference.

Legionnaire A member of The American Legion.

LinkedIn

livestream, livestreaming One word in all uses.

login, logon, logoff Use two words for verb form: *I log in to my computer, I logged off*.

long time, longtime *They have known each other a long time. They are longtime friends*.

Membership Management Information System *MMIS* on second reference.

Membership & Post Activities *M&PA* acceptable on second reference.

American Legion frequently used terms

Memorial Day Formerly May 30. The federal legal holiday is the last Monday in May.

mental illness A general term. Specific conditions are disorders and should be used whenever possible: He was diagnosed with schizophrenia. She said she was treated for depression. Avoid terms such as *mentally ill*. Instead: *people with mental illness*. Also avoid descriptions that connote pity, such as *afflicted with*, *suffers from*, *victim of*, *battling* and *demons*.

military treatment facilities *MTFs* acceptable on second reference.

millennials Members of the generation following Generation X, or two generations after the 1946 to 1964 baby-boom generation. Also known as *Generation Y*. Definitions vary for the years this generation spans; the time period should be specified when possible.

missing in action *MIA* acceptable on second reference. *POW/MIA* acceptable in all references.

Montgomery GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve *MGIB, MGIB-SR* on second reference.

mount Spell out in all uses, including names of communities and of mountains: *Mount Pleasant, Mich., Mount Everest*.

National Association of Department Historians of The American Legion *NADHAL* on second reference.

national anthem Do not capitalize: *she sang the national anthem*. Proper title is *"The Star-Spangled Banner."*

national commander On first reference, include the organization: *American Legion National Commander Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola*. Uppercase only when preceding a person's name: *National Commander Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola, the national commander of The American Legion* or *Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola, national commander*.

National Emergency Fund *NEF* on second reference.

National Executive Committee, National Executive Committeeman *NEC, NECman* on second reference.

national judge advocate *NJA* acceptable on second reference.

National Personnel Records Center *NPRC* on second reference.

911 Not 9-1-1.

No. Use when identifying a resolution or rule number. Do not use #.

noncombat, noncombatant

nonprofit No hyphen: *nonprofit groups*.

OCW On first reference, identify as *The American Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors program*. *OCW* acceptable on second reference.

OK, OK'd, OK'ing, OKs Do not use *okay*.

online

Operation Desert Shield *Desert Shield* acceptable on second reference: *veterans of Desert Shield*. Do not abbreviate.

Operation Desert Storm *Desert Storm* acceptable on second reference. Do not abbreviate.

Operation Enduring Freedom *OEF* on second reference. Also called *Afghanistan War*.

Operation Iraqi Freedom *OIF* on second reference. Also called *Iraq War*.

Paid Up For Life *PUFL* acceptable on second reference.

paraplegia/paraplegic, quadriplegia/quadruplegic *Paraplegia* is the loss of movement in the lower extremities and torso. *Quadriplegia* is the paralysis of all four limbs as well as the torso. Both are typically caused by a spinal cord or brain injury. Refer to the condition only when relevant to the story. Do not use the term as a noun (a *quadriplegic, paraplegics*) unless a person describes himself or herself that way. Do not use the shorthand *para* or *quad* unless someone uses those terms in direct quotations in reference to himself or herself.

past department commander Capitalize when the title precedes a name. Avoid abbreviating *PDC*.

past national commander Capitalize when the title precedes a name. *PNC* is acceptable on second reference, particularly when referring to a group: *PNCs Dellinger, Oxford and Helm*.

Persian Gulf War Also referred to as the *Gulf War*.

past national vice commander Capitalize when the title precedes a name. Avoid abbreviating *PNVC*.

peacekeeping, peacetime

American Legion frequently used terms

percent Use the % sign when paired with a numeral, with no space, in most cases: *Consumer prices rose 8.5% in March.* Avoid using this construction to start a sentence, but when doing so, spell out both: *Sixty-two percent of residents voted no.*

post Capitalize only when referring to a specific, numbered American Legion post: *the Chattanooga post, American Legion Post 95 in Chattanooga, Post 95, American Legion posts* or *Legion posts.*

post-9/11 *post-9/11 veterans, Post-9/11 GI Bill*

post-traumatic stress disorder *PTSD* on second reference.

preamble Capitalize when referring to the organization's constitution: *the Preamble of the Constitution of The American Legion, our constitution's preamble.*

Presidents Day

prisoner of war *POW* acceptable on second reference. *POW/MIA* acceptable in all references.

president Capitalize only as a formal title before one or more names: *President Joe Biden, former President Donald Trump, Presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush.* Use the first and last name of current and former U.S. presidents on first reference. On subsequent references, use only the last name.

Presidential Medal of Freedom The nation's highest civilian honor.

Puerto Rico Do not abbreviate.

re-elect, re-election

Regional Veterans Employment Representative *RVER* on second reference.

resolution Capitalize and abbreviate only when referring to a specific, numbered resolution: *the NEC passed a resolution, Res. No. 30.*

retired Do not abbreviate or capitalize as part of an individual's military rank: *retired Brig. Gen. Jane Smith, or Jane Smith, a retired brigadier general.*

Saddam Hussein *Saddam* acceptable on second reference.

Selective Service System *Selective Service* preferred. Do not abbreviate *SSS.*

Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs Note the apostrophe. Avoid abbreviating *SVAC.* *Senate VA committee* preferred on second reference.

sergeant-at-arms

servicemember One word. Preferred over *servicemen* and *servicewomen.*

Sept. 11, 2001 *Sept. 11* or *9/11* are acceptable.

smartphone

Sons of The American Legion Use *the Sons* or *SAL* on second reference.

Spring Meetings Capitalize when referring to the National Executive Committee's May meetings: *the National Executive Committee passed a resolution during its Spring Meetings in Indianapolis, the NEC's Spring Meetings.*

Stolen Valor Act A 2013 law making it unlawful to profit off fraudulent military service. People found simply wearing badges, rank or claiming service they did not earn are not subject to the law unless they profit in some way. The lowercase term *stolen valor* is sometimes used to describe a person's lies about military service. Avoid unless in a direct quotation.

subcommittee Do not abbreviate.

suicide Do not use *committed suicide*, which implies a criminal act. Use *killed herself, took his own life* or *died by suicide.*

survivor, victim Use these terms with care because they can be imprecise and politically and legally fraught. *Survivor* can denote someone who has lived through an injury, disease, or physical and emotional trauma, or someone who endured a threat but escaped injury altogether: a mass shooting survivor. Likewise, *victim* can create confusion because it can mean someone killed, injured or subjected to mistreatment.

Be specific to avoid confusion: *The ceremony honored people wounded in the mass shooting, not the ceremony honored victims and/or survivors of the mass shooting.*

Also be alert to potential biases and assumptions inherent in the word *victim.* *AIDS victim*, for example, not only makes it unclear if the person is alive or dead, but many AIDS patients do not consider themselves victims. Use neutral, precise descriptions: *He has AIDS. She has cancer.*

taps Lowercase without quotation marks for the bugle call sounded at "lights out" and military funerals.

American Legion frequently used terms

teen, teenager, teenage

3D

time Use *a.m.* and *p.m.* Small letters and no spaces.

time zones Abbreviations such as *EST*, *CDT* and *MST* are acceptable on first reference for zones within the continental United States when accompanied by a clock reading: 1 p.m. EST. Otherwise, spell them out, and lowercase all but the region in short forms: *Chicago is in the Central time zone, Eastern time.*

toxic substances, toxins A toxic substance is one that is likely to be poisonous, depending on the amount of exposure to it. Toxins are poisonous substances that comes from plants and animals.

traumatic brain injury *TBI* on second reference.

TRICARE Capitalize all letters.

twin towers The two tallest buildings in the World Trade Center complex destroyed in the 9/11 attack. Also lowercase *north tower* and *south tower*.

undersecretary One word.

underway

unique One of a kind. Do not describe something as *rather unique*, *most unique* or *very unique*.

United Nations Abbreviate on second reference: *the U.N.*, *U.N. officials*. *UN* permitted in headlines.

United States Abbreviate on second reference: *the U.S.*, *U.S. forces*. *US* permitted in headlines.

unprecedented Means having no precedent, unheard of. Often misused.

VA The Department of Veterans Affairs. *VA* on second reference (no periods). Do not use *the VA*.

versus Spell out in ordinary speech and writing: *proposals to privatize VA versus proposals to reform the cabinet-level agency*. In short expressions, abbreviation is permitted: *the guns vs. butter debate*.

veteran, veterans Do not capitalize: *Vietnam War veterans*. Avoid using *vets*.

Veterans & Children Foundation On first reference, the American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation. *V&CF* on second reference.

Veterans Affairs Medical Center *VAMC* on second reference.

Veterans Affairs Regional Office *VARO* on second reference.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation *VA&R* acceptable on second reference.

Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service *VAVS* on second reference.

Veterans Benefits Administration *VBA* on second reference.

Veterans Day No apostrophe. Formerly Armistice Day, Nov. 11, the anniversary of the armistice that ended World War I in 1918. The federal legal holiday, observed on the fourth Monday in October during the mid-1970s, reverted to Nov. 11 in 1978.

Veterans Employment & Education *VE&E* acceptable on second reference.

Veterans Employment and Training Service *VETS* on second reference.

Veterans Health Administration *VHA* on second reference.

Veterans Integrated Service Network *VISN* on second reference.

veterans service organization No apostrophe. *VSO* acceptable on second reference.

video game

Vietnam One word. Do not use *Viet Nam*.

Vietnam War era When referring to veterans who did not serve in theater, use *Vietnam War-era veteran*.

vice chairman, vice commander, vice president No hyphen.

voicemail

wartime

website, webcam, webcast, webmaster, webpage, the web, web address, web browser

Wi-Fi

women veterans Preferred over *female veterans*.

World War I, World War II Do not abbreviate *WWI*, *WWII*.

youth Applicable to a boy or girl from age 13 until the 18th birthday. Use *man* or *woman* for individuals 18 and older.

ZIP code

Military terms

active-duty training *ADT* acceptable on second reference.

Air Force *U.S. Air Force* or *Air Force*. Do not abbreviate *USAF*. In 1941, Congress established the U.S. Army Air Forces. Prior to that, the air arm was called the U.S. Army Air Corps. The U.S. Air Force was created in 1947.

Air Force base Do not abbreviate *AFB*. Per the U.S. Air Force, bases in the United States use *Air Force base* in their title and *air base* for overseas installations: *Lackland Air Force Base*, *Aviano Air Base*.

Air National Guard Do not abbreviate *ANG*.

aircraft Use a hyphen when changing from letters to figures. No hyphen is necessary when adding a letter after figures: *F-15 Eagle*, *C-17A Globemaster III*.

allies, allied Capitalize only when referring to the combination of the United States and its allies during World War I and World War II.

al-Qaida

anti-aircraft

anti-ballistic missile *ABM* acceptable in all references, but the term should be defined in the story. Avoid *ABM missiles*.

anti-war

Army *U.S. Army* or *Army*. Do not abbreviate *USA*.

Army and Air Force Exchange Service *AAFES* acceptable on second reference.

Army Commendation Medal Do not abbreviate.

Army Reserve Do not abbreviate *USAR*.

AWOL Acceptable in all references for *absent without leave*.

battalion Capitalize when referring to a numbered group: *the 10th Battalion*.

battlefield, battlefront, battleground, battleship But *battle stations*.

basic allowance for housing *BAH* acceptable on second reference.

basic allowance for quarters *BAQ* acceptable on second reference.

battle dress uniform *BDU* acceptable in all references.

bioterrorism

Bradley fighting vehicle

cadet Proper title for men and women enrolled at West Point Military Academy, the Air Force Academy, Coast Guard Academy and Merchant Marine Academy.

caliber Use hyphen when giving a measurement: *a .22-caliber rifle*, *a .45-caliber pistol*.

casualties Avoid using the word, which is vague and can refer to injuries or deaths. Be specific.

cavalry Do not abbreviate.

cease-fire Verb form is *cease fire*.

chief of naval operations Do not abbreviate *CNO*.

Coast Guard *U.S. Coast Guard* or *Coast Guard*. Do not abbreviate *USCG*.

Coast Guardsman Lowercase *guardsman* when it stands alone.

Cold War

Combat Infantry Badge *CIB* acceptable on second reference.

commander in chief No hyphens.

company Capitalize only when part of a proper name: *D Company*. Do not abbreviate.

continental United States *CONUS* acceptable on second reference.

court-martial, court-martialed, courts-martial

cyberattack, cybersecurity, cyberspace

D-Day Refers to June 6, 1944, the day the Allies invaded Western Europe in World War II.

decorated Do not use this term broadly in describing someone's military background unless it is merited by the nature of the award. Some awards, badges and ribbons are routine (for example, annual weapons qualification). Be specific.

demilitarized zone *DMZ* acceptable on second reference.

Distinguished Flying Cross Do not abbreviate.

Distinguished Service Cross Do not abbreviate.

drill instructor Do not abbreviate *DI*.

fort Do not abbreviate for cities or military installations.

front line Hyphenate when using as an adjective: *front-line forces*.

Guardians

guerrilla

gunbattle, gunboat, gunfight, gunfire, gunpoint

improvised explosive device *IED* acceptable on second reference. *Roadside bomb* preferable.

infantry division Do not abbreviate *ID*: *he commanded an infantry division, the 3rd Infantry Division*.

intercontinental ballistic missile *ICBM* acceptable on second reference. Avoid *ICBM missiles*.

jeep Lowercase the military vehicle.

Joint Chiefs of Staff Also *the Joint Chiefs*, but lowercase *the chiefs* or *chiefs of staff*.

leatherneck Lowercase this nickname for a member of the Marine Corps.

LST Landing Ship Tank. Do not spell out.

LCI Landing Craft Infantry. Do not spell out.

LCVP Landing craft, vehicle, personnel. Do not spell out. Commonly known as *Higgins boat*.

M1, M16 No hyphens when referring to these rifles.

Marines *U.S. Marines, the Marines, the Marine Corps*. Do not abbreviate *USMC*. Do not refer to Marines as *soldiers*. Use *troops* if a generic term is needed.

Marine Amphibious Unit *MAU* acceptable on second reference.

Marine Corps Reserve Do not abbreviate *USMCR*.

Medal of Honor The nation's highest military honor. There is no *Congressional Medal of Honor*. Use *Medal of Honor recipient*, not *winner*.

medevac Short for *medical evacuation*.

Merchant Marine Capitalize when referring to the organization or the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. Members are *merchant mariners* or *merchant crewmen*, but not *marines*. Lowercase when referring to the ships of a nation used in commerce.

midshipman Proper title for men and women enrolled at the Naval Academy.

MiG The *i* in this designation for a type of Russian fighter jet is lowercase because it is the Russian word for *and*.

military occupational specialty *MOS* acceptable in all references.

millimeter May be abbreviated when referring to weapons: *a 105 mm artillery piece, a 105 mm cannon*.

MRE Meals Ready to Eat. Do not spell out.

National Guard Capitalize when referring to U.S. or state-level forces: *the National Guard, the Guard, the Indiana National Guard*. When referring to an individual, use *National Guardsman* or *guardsman*.

Navy *U.S. Navy* or *the Navy*. Do not abbreviate *USN*.

Navy Reserve Do not use *Naval Reserve* or abbreviate *USNR*.

no man's land No hyphens.

noncommissioned officer *NCO* acceptable on second reference.

North American Air Defense Command *NORAD* on second reference.

Officer Candidate School *OCS* acceptable on second reference.

officer in charge/ noncommissioned officer in charge *OIC, NCOIC* acceptable on second reference.

port, starboard Nautical for left and right (when facing the bow, or forward). *Port* is left. *Starboard* is right. Change to *left* or *right* unless in direct quotes.

post exchange *PX* acceptable on second reference.

PT boat Acceptable in all references for *patrol torpedo boat*.

reduction in force *RIF* acceptable on second reference.

45reference.

reserve, reservist Capitalize when referring to a specific branch of the military: *the Guard and reserves, the Navy Reserve, Army reservists*.

Reserve Officers' Training Corps *ROTC* acceptable in all references. When service is specified, use *Army ROTC, Navy ROTC* or *Air Force ROTC*, not *AROTC, NROTC* or *AFROTC*.

rocket-propelled grenade *RPG* acceptable on second reference.

SEALs A special operations branch of the Navy. The acronym stands for *sea, air, land*. Do not spell out.

she Do not use this pronoun in references to ships. Use *it* instead.

SOS

special forces Capitalize when referring to *U.S. Army Special Forces*, also known as Green Berets. Others, such as Navy SEALs and Army Rangers, should be called *special operations forces*.

Special Operations Command *SOC* acceptable on second reference.

Strategic Air Command *SAC* acceptable on second reference.

surface-to-air missile *SAM* acceptable on second reference. Avoid *SAM missiles*.

temporary duty *TDY* on second reference.

Thrift Savings Plan *TSP* acceptable on second reference.

21-gun salute True 21-gun salutes are conducted not with rifles but with artillery batteries. In the United States, they are reserved for the arrivals and departures from military installations of the president, president-elect or former presidents, and for their funerals. Visiting heads of state also receive 21-gun salutes. The firing of rifles three times at a military funeral is often incorrectly described as a 21-gun salute. Properly, it should be called a *rifle salute* or *three volleys*.

U-boat

unmanned aerial vehicle *UAV* acceptable on second reference.

USCGC United States Coast Guard Cutter. Do not spell out: *USCGC Healy, the Coast Guard cutter Healy*.

USS United States Ship. Do not spell out or use periods, and drop on second reference: *USS Nimitz, the Nimitz*.

WMD Acceptable on second reference to *weapons of mass destruction*.

West Point Acceptable on second reference to *U.S. Military Academy*.

Women's Army Corps *WAC* acceptable on second reference.

Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service *WAVES* acceptable on second reference.

Military titles

Use AP style for military rank rather than the service branches' system of abbreviation (e.g. COL for colonel, CDR for commander). On first reference, use the title, and on subsequent references use the person's last name only.

ARMY, MARINE CORPS, AIR FORCE, SPACE FORCE COMMISSIONED OFFICERS

O-10	general	Gen.
O-9	lieutenant general	Lt. Gen.
O-8	major general	Maj. Gen.
O-7	brigadier general	Brig. Gen.
O-6	colonel	Col.
O-5	lieutenant colonel	Lt. Col.
O-4	major	Maj.
O-3	captain	Capt.
O-2	first lieutenant	1st Lt.
O-1	second lieutenant	2nd Lt.

NAVY, COAST GUARD COMMISSIONED OFFICERS

O-10	admiral	Adm.
O-9	vice admiral	Vice Adm.
O-8	read admiral (upper half)	Rear Adm.
O-7	rear admiral (lower half)	Rear Adm.
O-6	captain	Capt.
O-5	commander	Cmdr.
O-4	lieutenant commander	Lt. Cmdr.
O-3	lieutenant	Lt.
O-2	lieutenant junior grade	Lt. j.g.
O-1	ensign	Ensign

Note: The special ranks of general of the Army, general of the Air Force and fleet admiral (Navy, Coast Guard) are reserved for wartime only.

WARRANT OFFICERS

W-5	chief warrant officer 5	Chief Warrant Officer 5
W-4	chief warrant officer 4	Chief Warrant Officer 4
W-3	chief warrant officer 3	Chief Warrant Officer 3
W-2	chief warrant officer 2	Chief Warrant Officer 2
W-1	chief warrant officer 1	Chief Warrant Officer 1

Note: The Air Force and Space Force do not have warrant officers. The Navy and the Coast Guard no longer use the grade of Chief Warrant Officer 1, and the Coast Guard does not have a Chief Warrant Officer 5.

Military titles

ARMY ENLISTED

E-9	sergeant major of the Army	Sgt. Maj. of the Army
E-9	command sergeant major	Cmd. Sgt. Maj.
E-9	sergeant major	Sgt. Maj.
E-8	first sergeant	1st Sgt.
E-8	master sergeant	Master Sgt.
E-7	sergeant first class	Sgt. 1st Class
E-6	staff sergeant	Staff Sgt.
E-5	sergeant	Sgt.
E-4	corporal	Cpl.
E-4	specialist	Spc.
E-3	private first class	Pfc.
E-2	private	Pvt.
E-1	private	Pvt.

MARINE CORPS ENLISTED

E-9	sergeant major of the Marine Corps	Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps
E-9	sergeant major	Sgt. Maj.
E-9	master gunnery sergeant	Master Gunnery Sgt.
E-8	first sergeant	1st Sgt.
E-8	master sergeant	Master Sgt.
E-7	gunnery sergeant	Gunnery Sgt.
E-6	staff sergeant	Staff Sgt.
E-5	sergeant	Sgt.
E-4	corporal	Cpl.
E-3	lance corporal	Lance Cpl.
E-2	private first class	Pfc.
E-1	private	Pvt.

AIR FORCE ENLISTED

E-9	chief master sergeant of the Air Force	Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force
E-9	command chief master sergeant	Command Chief Master Sgt.
E-9	chief master sergeant	Chief Master Sgt.
E-8	senior master sergeant	Senior Master Sgt.
E-7	master sergeant	Master Sgt.
E-6	technical sergeant	Tech. Sgt.
E-5	staff sergeant	Staff. Sgt.
E-4	senior airman	Senior Airman
E-3	airman first class	Airman 1st Class
E-2	airman	Airman
E-1	airman basic	Airman

SPACE FORCE ENLISTED

E-9	chief master sergeant of the Space Force	Chief Master Sgt. of the Space Force
E-9	chief master sergeant	Chief Master Sgt.
E-8	senior master sergeant	Senior Master Sgt.
E-7	master sergeant	Master Sgt.
E-6	technical sergeant	Tech. Sgt.
E-5	sergeant	Sgt.
E-4	specialist 4	Spc. 4
E-3	specialist 3	Spc. 3
E-2	specialist 2	Spc. 2
E-1	specialist 1	Spc. 1

Note: In the Army, Marines, Air Force and Space Force, all ranks of sergeant are termed noncommissioned officers, or NCOs, as are corporals in the Army and Marine Corps. NCOs in the top three enlisted grades (E-7, E-8 and E-9) are considered senior noncommissioned officers, or SNCOs; in the Marine Corps, senior NCOs are called staff noncommissioned officers and include the rank of staff sergeant (E-6).

COAST GUARD ENLISTED

E-9	master chief petty officer	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard
E-9	master chief petty officer	Master Chief Petty Officer
E-8	senior chief petty officer	Senior Chief Petty Officer
E-7	chief petty officer	Chief Petty Officer
E-6	petty officer first class	Petty Officer 1st Class
E-5	petty officer second class	Petty Officer 2nd Class
E-4	petty officer third class	Petty Officer 3rd Class
E-3	seaman	Seaman
E-2	seaman apprentice	Seaman Apprentice
E-1	seaman recruit	Seaman Recruit

NAVY ENLISTED

E-9	master chief petty officer of the Navy	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy
E-9	master chief petty officer	Master Chief Petty Officer
E-8	senior chief petty officer	Senior Chief Petty Officer
E-7	chief petty officer	Chief Petty Officer
E-6	petty officer first class	Petty Officer 1st Class
E-5	petty officer second class	Petty Officer 2nd Class
E-4	petty officer third class	Petty Officer 3rd Class
E-3	seaman	Seaman
E-2	seaman apprentice	Seaman Apprentice
E-1	seaman recruit	Seaman Recruit

Note: In the Navy and Coast Guard, all ranks of petty officer are designated noncommissioned officers, or NCOs. Chief petty officers (the grades of E-7, E-8 and E-9) are considered senior noncommissioned officers.

For **officer and enlisted rank insignias**, go to www.defense.gov/resources/insignia.

Common abbreviations/acronyms

In the case of most acronyms, **spell out the term on first reference and use the acronym on second and all further references.** Per AP, avoid following an organization's full name with the acronym in parentheses or set off by dashes. If an acronym wouldn't be clear on second reference without doing so, don't use it.

Acronyms marked with asterisks do not need spelled out; they are allowed in all references, though context should be considered.

A&A	Aid & Attendance
ABMC	American Battle Monuments Commission
ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AFL-CIO*	American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations
AFRH	Armed Forces Retirement Home
AI	artificial intelligence
ALS	amyotrophic lateral sclerosis
AMVETS*	American Veterans
AP	The Associated Press
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
ATV	all-terrain vehicle
BAMC	Brooke Army Medical Center
BRAC	Base Realignment and Closure
BSA	Boy Scouts of America
BVA	Blind Veterans Association
CASA	court-appointed special advocate
CBO	Congressional Budget Office
CBT	cognitive behavioral therapy
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CEO*	chief executive officer
CFO	chief financial officer
COO	chief operating officer
CHAMPUS	Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services
CHAMPVA	Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs
CIA*	Central Intelligence Agency
CMN	Children's Miracle Network
COLA	cost-of-living adjustment
COO	chief operations officer
COPD	chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

Common abbreviations/acronyms

COTA	Children's Organ Transplant Association
CPA	certified public accountant
CPR*	cardiopulmonary resuscitation
CQ	<i>Congressional Quarterly</i>
CR	continuing resolution
CRS	Congressional Research Service
CTE	chronic traumatic encephalopathy
CWT	Compensated Work Therapy
DAV	Disabled American Veterans
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DMZ	demilitarized zone
DNC	Democratic National Committee
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea (commonly known as North Korea)
EEOC	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
EMS	emergency medical services
EMT*	emergency medical technician
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ER	emergency room
ESGR	Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve
EU	European Union
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FAQ*	frequently asked questions
FBI*	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
GAO	General Accounting Office
GDP	gross domestic product
GPS*	Global Positioning System
GOP*	Grand Old Party (use only on second reference to Republican Party)
HHS	Health and Human Services

Common abbreviations/acronyms

HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICE	Immigrations and Customs Enforcement
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service
IOM	Institute of Medicine
IRA	individual retirement account
IRS*	Internal Revenue Service
IT	information technology
JAG	Judge Advocate General's Corps
LA	Los Angeles
LGBTQ+*	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning
LOST	Law of the Sea Treaty
MAD	mutual assured destruction
MOU	memorandum of understanding
MPH	miles per hour
MRI*	magnetic resonance imaging
MVP*	most valuable player
NATO*	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NASA*	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NCA	National Cemetery Administration
NEA	National Education Association
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NGAUS	National Guard Association of the United States
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NIH	National Institutes of Health
NLRB	National Labor Relations Board
NPR*	National Public Radio
NPS	National Park Service
NRA	National Rifle Association
NRC	National Research Council
NSA	National Security Agency
NTSB	National Transportation Safety Board

Common abbreviations/acronyms

NVA	North Vietnamese Army
NVLSP	National Veterans Legal Services Program
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OPEC*	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
OTJ	on-the-job training
PAC	political action committee
PAY-GO	Pay-As-You-Go
PC*	personal computer
PC	political correctness
PRC	People's Republic of China
PSA	public service announcement
PVA	Paralyzed Veterans of America
RNC	Republican National Committee
RN	registered nurse
ROK	Republic of Korea (South Korea)
SBA	Small Business Administration
SCHIP	State Children's Health Insurance Program
SCRA	Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act
SDI	Strategic Defense Initiative
SDVI	Service Disabled Veterans Insurance
SF 80	Standard Form 80
SGLI	Servicemen's Group Life Insurance
SMC	Special Monthly Compensation
SSDI	Social Security Disability Insurance
SSN	Social Security number
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Talks
STEM*	science, technology, engineering and math
SUV*	sport utility vehicle
SWAT*	Special Weapons and Tactics
TAPS	Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors

Common abbreviations/acronyms

TSA	Transportation Security Administration
U.S.C.	United States Code (U.S. Code on first reference)
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UCMJ	Uniform Code of Military Justice
UFO*	unidentified flying object
UK*	United Kingdom
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USERRA	Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act
USO*	United Service Organizations
USPS	U.S. Postal Service
VC	Viet Cong
V-E	Victory in Europe
VFW	Veterans of Foreign Wars
VGLI	Veterans Group Life Insurance
VIP*	very important person
V-J	Victory Over Japan
VVA	Vietnam Veterans of America
WMD	weapons of mass destruction
WRNMMC	Walter Reed National Military Medical Center
WHO	World Health Organization