

Department of Defense

Captioning Style Guide

June 14, 2012

(Supersedes version of Oct. 2011)

ASD(PA)

SUBJECT: DoD Captioning Style Guide

References:

DoD Instruction 5040.02, "Visual Information (VI)," Oct. 27, 2011

PURPOSE

This publication provides a standard method of writing captions for DoD imagery. The guidance provided will help photographers, videographers and all who produce or manage DoD imagery write and edit captions that are accurate, clear, concise and meet DoD style standards.

This publication is written for all producers, editors and users of visual information (VI). It demonstrates how to address military terms descriptive of things, places and entities recorded by DoD camera operators, created by DoD graphic artists, or written about by DoD journalists. While based on the tenets of *The Associated Press Stylebook*, it is written specifically for use by DoD visual information and public affairs specialists. Refer to AP for guidance on items that do not appear within this publication.

This publication applies to OSD, the Military Departments, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities and all other organizational entities within the Department of Defense.

DoD Instruction 5040.02: <http://www.defenseimagery.mil/learning/vipolicy/dodi.html>

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Chapter 1

Captioning Basics

The ABCs

To write an effective caption, remember the ABC's of captioning: accuracy, brevity and clarity.

Accuracy. Ensure every piece of information within the caption is accurate and complete. This also includes ensuring the captions are grammatically and stylistically accurate, and that they adhere to the guidance contained in this guide and the AP Stylebook. An accurate caption helps ensure an image is newsworthy, is of historical value and can be more easily retrieved from databases.

Brevity. When writing a caption, be certain every word is necessary to tell the story of the image. Captions must convey a great deal of information in a few short sentences, so they must be written concisely to maximize their effectiveness. Do not use 15 words where five will do.

Clarity. To be understood by the end user, a caption must be clear in both intent and expression. Select language to make certain the reader will understand what is happening in the image. Remember that the audience for DoD imagery is global. Construct captions that can be understood by a nonmilitary reader.

The 5 W's

When gathering information to include in a caption, keep the following questions in mind: who, what, when, where and why. All questions must be answered to accurately communicate the story of a still image or video clip.

Who Who or what is the subject of the image?

If the subject of a sentence is a person or persons, provide the rank, first and last name, title and military unit for each person. List units from smallest to largest (e.g., *U.S. Marines from Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division*).

When identifying Service members, include the Service to which he or she belongs. This is not necessary when Service members are not individually identified. Every effort should be made to identify the subject of a photo. People appearing in the background need not be identified unless they are essential to the story of the image.

U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. John Brown inspects an aircraft.

U.S. Airmen prepare for an operational readiness inspection.

Do *not* include the names of minor dependents of military members. Do *not* include the names of American citizens, to include Service members, receiving medical treatment without the express written consent of the patient.

If the subject of the sentence is an object, provide the equipment name and model, name and ship hull number, or name and model of the aircraft or vehicle. Include both the name of the object (e.g., *C-5 Galaxy*) as well as what kind of object it is (e.g., *aircraft*).

A C-5 Galaxy aircraft taxis down the runway.

The aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) gets under way.

Note: Do not include a hyphen between the letters and numbers in the hull number.

To find the proper way to list a particular vehicle, weapon system or aircraft, refer to fact sheets available on Service-specific websites (see page 45). Also, see the list of selected vehicles in “Table 5. Selected Military Aircraft and Vehicles” on page 39 and the list of selected weapons in “Table 6. Selected Weapons” on page 40.

Active vs. Passive Voice

Active: U.S. Soldiers destroy confiscated ordnance.

Passive: Confiscated ordnance is destroyed by U.S. Soldiers.

What Describe the action captured by the imagery.

Use active voice when describing the action. When writing in active voice, the subject is doing something, while in passive voice, something is being done to the subject. To change from active to passive voice, make the object of the sentence (person or thing acting on

the subject) the subject and vice versa.



Incorrect: U.S. Navy Seabee Sparkole Dyeth, assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3, **helps refurbish a wooden cabinet as she removes a screw** with a cordless power drill at the Nazareth Boys Orphanage in Victoria, Seychelles, Dec. 26, 2005.

Correct: U.S. Navy Seabee Sparkole Dyeth, assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3, **refurbishes a cabinet** at the Nazareth Boys Orphanage in Victoria, Seychelles, Dec. 26, 2005.

When describing the *what*, do not over describe the action; let the image speak as well. For example, look at the following image and read the two sample captions.

In the first example, the *what* is “helps refurbish a wooden cabinet as she removes a screw” In the second, it is “refurbishes a cabinet.” Looking again at the image, nothing is lost by using the shorter description of the second caption. The information given in the first caption is also apparent in the image itself.

When Provide the date and, if pertinent, the time of day when the image was captured. Include the date within the caption. Do *not* use datelines, which are headers placed before the start of the caption, often containing the date and location of the image.

Use the following format: Aug. 21, 2011. Spell out months March through July and abbreviate months August through February.

When writing just a month and year with no day, do not abbreviate the month: “Feb. 27, 2011,” but “February 2011.”

Where Provide the geographic location as well as the name of the base, facility or organization, if applicable. Consult the *Associated Press Stylebook* “datelines” entry to determine if a city stands alone in captions.

Style Check: Dates

- Use month, day, year format.
- Do not include “on” before the date.
- Day of the week is not required.
- Do not use datelines.

- If there is no city, give a region or general area (e.g., “near the Syrian border” or “off the coast of Southern California”).
- If the imagery was captured on a ship, provide the ship name as well as where it is moored or under way. For example: “off the coast of ... ,” or “under way in the Pacific Ocean.”
- If it is an undisclosed location, state that within the caption and metadata.
- Do not use “here” in place of a location in a caption.

Spell out state names when they stand alone within the caption. Use abbreviations when paired with a city or base/installation. See “Table 2. State Names and Abbreviations” on page 34 for a list of state abbreviations. Do not use postal codes.

Why Explain the purpose of the event, exercise or operation depicted in the image. This gives context to the image and answers the question as to why the image matters. The explanation should be brief, in most cases no longer than one sentence. (See “Style Check: Sample Captions” on page 8.)

Constructing a caption

The first sentence contains the 5 W’s and is always written in the present tense using active voice. A caption describes the moment the image is captured, not what came before or after, so the first sentence will be written as if from that moment.

The second sentence should almost always be written in past tense. This sentence gives background information on the image. It explains why the image is significant and places it in a larger context. When providing background information in a caption, include information that explains the significance of the *action in the image*.

Example:

U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Art Brown demonstrates proper CPR techniques during his unit’s safety day July 5, 2011. *Brown’s unit was training in advanced first aid techniques in preparation for an upcoming deployment.*

Examine the following picture and sample caption:



Iraqi civilian contractors gather around display tables April 22, 2007, during the Ramadi Reconstruction Conference held in Ar Ramadi, Iraq to look at and sign up for the different reconstruction projects that will be going on in and around Ramadi. 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing is deployed with Multi National Forces-West in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in the Al Anbar province of Iraq to develop Iraqi Security Forces, facilitate the development of official rule of law through democratic reforms, and continue the development of a market-based economy centered on Iraqi reconstruction. (U.S. Marine Corps Photo by Sgt. Andrew D. Pendracki/Released)

In the caption, the background sentence describes the work of the 2nd MAW. While this is important information, it does not give background information on the action, which is contractors signing up for projects. A more appropriate background sentence would explain the presence and role of the U.S. military personnel at the event and connect the action to the 2nd MAW. Presuming that we know the

role, the caption could read:

Iraqi contractors gather around display tables April 22, 2007, during the Ramadi Reconstruction Conference in Ramadi, Iraq, to look at and sign up for the different reconstruction projects that will be going on in and around Ramadi. *U.S. Marines from the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing and U.S. Soldiers were present to provide security and information about the projects.*

Include the photographer's credit and the release status of the image at the end of the caption. Use the following format: (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. John Doe/Released) or (U.S. Army photo/Released)

Additional rules of construction

Define all acronyms upon first use within the caption. Spell out the term, and then place the acronym in parentheses. Use only the acronym upon second use.

- **Do not use acronyms for terms used only once within the caption.**
- Do not use apostrophes when using a plural acronym. For example: *MREs*, not *MRE's*; *F-15s*, not *F-15's*.
- Refer to the Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms for official definitions of abbreviations and acronyms (see "Chapter 8 Additional Resources" on page 45). Acronyms need not appear in the DoD dictionary to be used in a caption.

Avoid the use of jargon. Explain terms and practices that are not commonly known outside of military circles. Remember to write for a nonmilitary audience. For example, do not use shorthand references to military units unless they have been previously defined within the caption.

Incorrect: 2-8 Infantry Brigade
Correct: 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment

Do not editorialize. Stick to the facts as presented by the image and gathered at the scene. In the following example, the first caption contains editorializing.

Incorrect: An Iraqi family enjoys a picnic in a park near the Baghdad Zoo in the Karkh district of Baghdad, Iraq, March 30, 2007. Scenes like this one are becoming more prevalent in the city as life slowly returns to normal.

Correct: An Iraqi family shares a picnic in a park near the Baghdad Zoo in the Karkh district of Baghdad, Iraq, March 30, 2007.

When identifying people in an image, use the rule of three; provide the full name and rank and/or title of every person when there are three or fewer people in the image. It is not necessary to individually identify everyone should there be four or more people present, although there may be some cases (such as with high-level officials) where that would be appropriate.

Indicate position in a caption using commas, not parentheses. The following examples demonstrate two correct ways to indicate position.

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. John Brown, left, and Spc. Carl Anderson participate in a training exercise at Fort Pickett, Va.

From left, Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta, British Defense Secretary Philip Hammond and their aides meet at the Pentagon in Arlington, Va.

Do *not* quote people within the body of a caption. Direct quotations are best used in a press release, cover story or article.

Style Check: Sample Captions

U.S. Navy Chief Hospital Corpsman Kim Anderson examines a patient during a medical civic action program in Goubetto, Djibouti, March 30, 2010. Sailors and Marines assigned to the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit saw more than 500 patients during the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa humanitarian program. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Bill Smith/Released)

U.S. Soldiers with Charlie Company, 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 69th Armored Regiment conduct a mission briefing Jan. 10, 2011, at Forward Operating Base Rustamiyah in Iraq. The Soldiers were preparing for a humanitarian aid mission in Baghdad. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jody Call/Released)

A pair of E-2C Hawkeye aircraft attached to Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 116 fly over the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) March 30, 2011, during an air power demonstration while under way in the Pacific Ocean. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Ricky Jones/Released)

U.S. Marines conduct weapons training for Iraqi police officers and neighborhood watch members in Fallujah, Iraq, March 11, 2011. The Marines were assigned to Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Tiffany Davis/Released)

U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jose Perez, left, and Senior Airman Mary Patel, both loadmasters with the 737th Airlift Squadron, guide Service members into a WC-130J Super Hercules aircraft on a base at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia Feb. 16, 2011. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Patrick Smith/Released)

Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta, left, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey answer reporters' questions during a press conference at the Pentagon Oct. 18, 2011. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Robert Jones/Released)

Chapter 2

Grammar Review

Good captions are difficult to write without a solid foundation in the principles that govern sentence construction. The following review of basic grammar rules will help writers and editors produce clear, effective captions.

Sentence structure

A *sentence* is a group of words that contains a subject and a predicate. It is a complete thought that can stand alone. The *subject* is a noun or noun phrase, and is what the sentence is about. In captioning parlance, it is the “who.” The *predicate* is what is being written about the subject. This includes the verb, or action, of the sentence as well as other people or objects that the subject acts upon. When writing any sentence, begin with these building blocks: subject–verb–object. Place all supplementary information around this fundamental structure.

U.S. Soldiers patrol a neighborhood.

In the above sentence, the subject is “U.S. Soldiers” and the predicate contains both the action of the sentence, “patrol,” and the object of the action, “a neighborhood.”

Avoid sentence fragments. A *sentence fragment* is an incomplete sentence; it is usually either missing a subject or a verb or is not a complete thought. Fragments usually occur when captioning images that at first glance appear to show no action (for example, images of equipment, geographic locations, or local color). Assign an action, the “what,” to the image to ensure a complete sentence.

Fragment: The aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) during a training exercise in the Pacific Ocean June 22, 2011.

Sentence: The aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) participates in a training exercise in the Pacific Ocean June 22, 2011.

Avoid run-on sentences. A *run-on sentence* contains two or more independent clauses (word groups that can stand alone as a sentence) that are joined without either a semicolon or a comma and a linking word.

Run-on: The Sailors returned home from a six-month deployment and they celebrated when their ship moored pierside.

Fix the sentence with either a comma/linking word or a semicolon:

- The Sailors returned home from a six-month deployment, **and** they celebrated when their ship moored pierside.
- The Sailors returned home from a six-month deployment; they celebrated when their ship moored pierside.

Do not start a sentence with a number. The only exception to this rule is when starting a sentence with a year; however, avoid this when possible. Usually it can be fixed by adding a word at the start of the sentence.

Incorrect: 1st Marine Division is engaged in operations in the Anbar province of Iraq.

Correct: The 1st Marine Division is engaged in operations in the Anbar province of Iraq.

Punctuation

Apostrophes Use apostrophes to indicate possession or in contractions; do not use to indicate a noun is plural.

Incorrect: unexploded mortar's outside Kabul
Correct plural: unexploded mortars outside Kabul
Correct possessive: unexploded mortars' disposal date

With acronyms, use an apostrophe only to indicate a possessive. Add a lowercase "s" to make an acronym plural.

Plural: The COs met to discuss the mission.
Possessive: At the CO's request, they discussed the mission.

Remember that "its" indicates possession, while "it's" is a contraction of "it is."

Commas in a series The appropriate use of commas makes it easier to read a sentence. Comma placement is determined partially by grammar rules and partially through judgment.

Use commas to separate each element in a series. For example: *The flag is red, white and blue.* Use a comma before the conjunction (known as the serial comma) only when necessary to avoid confusion, such as in the following example: *The vessel performs utility boat functions such as submarine support, moving barges and floats, and personnel transfers.*

If any of the elements in a series contain commas, use semicolons instead. For example: *Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta; U.S. Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton meet to discuss defense policy.*

Commas and clauses When joining two word groups that can stand alone as separate sentences, use a comma before a coordinating conjunction or use a semicolon with no conjunction. Do not use a comma if one of the clauses is dependent (does not stand alone as a complete sentence).

The building is finished, but it has no furniture.
The building is finished; it has no furniture.
The building is finished but has no furniture.

Use a comma after introductory clauses or phrases. Such clauses usually tell when, where, why or how the main action of the sentence occurs. For example: *After sharing a meal, the Airmen will resume training.*

Not every clause that appears to be independent requires a comma. For example: *Jake does not realize that his injury is serious and that he will have to undergo therapy to get better.*

Note that a ship's name is not a clause; do not separate it from the sentence with commas.

Commas and adjectives Separate coordinate adjectives with commas (coordinate adjectives modify the noun in the same way). For example: *She was a strong, loyal, well-trained Marine.* Each adjective describes the Marine.

Do not separate cumulative adjectives (cumulative adjectives must stay in order to make sense). For example: *Three large brown camels moved toward the convoy.*

How to tell the difference? Put the word "and" between each adjective and reverse the order of the adjectives. If the sentence still makes sense, use commas.

That/which Use "that" for essential information; do not separate with a comma. Use "which" for

nonessential elements; use commas to set off the clause. For example:

The Airmen needed a uniform that was wash and wear.
The Airmen needed new boots, which are expensive.

How to tell the difference? If you were to remove a restrictive element from a sentence, it would significantly change its meaning. Use this rule in order to know which one to use. In the first example above, the fact that the uniform must be wash and wear is essential to understanding the sentence. In the second, the fact that the boots are expensive is additional information; the essence of the sentence is that the Airmen need new boots.

Commas and titles Titles and other identifying adjectives listed after a name should be separated with commas; those listed before the name are adjectives and do not require commas.

Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Raymond T. Odierno visits with troops.
Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, the chief of staff of the Army, visits with troops.

Commas and dates Do not automatically separate the date from the rest of the sentence. Comma usage is determined by what precedes the date (e.g., a state or a country). Remember to put a comma after the year in a complete date unless it ends the sentence.

U.S. Marines with Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment conduct a security halt July 9, 2010, in Zaidon, Iraq.
Secretary of Defense Robert Gates holds a press conference at the Pentagon Dec. 5, 2010.
The marine vessel Blue Marlin enters Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Jan. 9, 2011, with the Sea Based X-Band Radar aboard.

Commas and quantity Use a comma in numbers showing quantity (e.g., 1,200 troops, but 1200 hours).

Hyphens Use a hyphen to connect compound adjectives. A compound adjective is two terms that together act as one descriptor for a noun.

Note that the examples to the right are hyphenated only when used as compound adjectives. For example: *The troops were forward deployed.*

Use a hyphen to join some prefixes/suffixes and root words, such as anti-terrorism, anti-aircraft or DoD-wide.

If a unit number follows its unabbreviated name, then the name of that unit will generally be hyphenated in its abbreviated form. Some examples of unit types that are hyphenated in their abbreviated forms:

- Navy and Marine Corps squadrons (VAW-77, HMH-464, etc.)
- Marine Corps combat logistics battalions (CLB-6, etc.)
- Naval mobile construction battalions (NMCB-1, etc.)
- Navy explosive ordnance mobile units (EODMU-1, etc.)

Periods Use a period when abbreviating military titles. For example: *Tech. Sgt. James Cooper*. Refer to “Table 1. Military Rank Abbreviations” for more information. When typing copy, use only one space after the period at the end of the sentence.

Examples of compound adjectives

- Forward-deployed location
- Nuclear-powered aircraft carrier
- Rocket-propelled grenade
- Fixed-wing aircraft

Mechanics

Prefixes Refer to *The Associated Press Stylebook* or *Webster’s New World College Dictionary* for guidance on whether or not to hyphenate a word with a prefix. This section provides guidance for terms that commonly appear in DoD captions.

Common words with prefixes that do not take hyphens

- Resupply
- Noncommissioned
- Preflight
- Deworming
- Multinational
- Counterterrorism

In most cases, prefixes join with the root word without a hyphen (see box to the left).

Hyphenate words with the prefix “self-.” For example: *self-controlled, self-taught, self-defense*.

In most cases, hyphenate if the prefix ends in a vowel and the root word begins with a vowel (*de-ice, pre-exist, re-enlist*).

There are a few exceptions to these rules, such as: *cooperate, coordinate, pre-dawn, pre-position* (meaning to position personnel and equipment before acting), *pre-deployment, counter improvised explosive device* and *multi-Service*.

Take off/takeoff

Two F/A-18F Super Hornet aircraft prepare to take off.

A U.S. Air Force pilot prepares for takeoff.

Set up/setup

U.S. Soldiers set up for a medical operation.

U.S. Soldiers review setup procedures for a medical operation.

Suffixes Refer to *The Associated Press Stylebook* or *Webster’s New World College Dictionary* for guidance on whether or not to hyphenate a word with a suffix.

In general, adjectives with the suffix “-wide” are one word. For example: *basewide*, not *base-wide* or *base wide*. When attaching the suffix to an acronym, use a hyphen, as in *DoD-wide*.

Compound words Several terms can be either one or two words, depending on the use. In most cases, when used as a verb, it is two words, and when used as a noun or an adjective, it is one word. These rules apply to several other common terms, such as *stand down/standdown; line up/lineup; take out/takeout*.

The terms *onload* and *offload* are one word in all cases. However, the words are jargon, so use “load” or “unload” instead whenever possible.

The terms *check-in* and *checkout* are treated differently. Use “check-in” as a noun and adjective, “check in” as a verb. Use “checkout” as a noun and adjective, but “check out” as a verb.

U.S. personnel go over check-in and checkout procedures.

U.S. personnel check in to their new units after completing check out of their equipment.

Capitalization

U.S. and foreign military Capitalize service branch names when referring to U.S. forces; do not capitalize when referring to foreign military. For instance, it is *U.S. Army*, but *British army; Iraqi police*, not *Iraqi Police*.

Capitalize the proper names of foreign military branches: *British Royal Air Force*, not *British Royal air force*. However, in accordance with the rule above, the common noun would be *British air force*. In the same vein, it is *Afghan National Army*, yet *Afghan army*.

Capitalize Soldier, Sailor, Airman and Marine when referring to U.S. forces (*U.S. Soldiers*, but *Dutch soldiers*). However, “cadet” and “midshipman” are ranks, so capitalize them only when they’re used before a name.

Do not capitalize “airman” or “airmen” when referring to Navy personnel; in that case, the term is a rank/rate. For example: *U.S. Navy airmen stand in formation*.

Capitalize a rank or title when it precedes a name; but use lowercase when it follows a name, is set off by commas or stands alone.

U.S. Marine Corps Gen. John R. Allen, the commander of the International Security Assistance Force, arrives at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, March 22, 2012.

The Alpha Company commander, Capt. James Kirk, visits an outpost every Thursday.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Navy Adm. Mike Mullen speaks with Service members.

Proper nouns A proper noun names a particular person, place or thing. Capitalize all proper nouns, to include names of people, organizations, operations and exercises (e.g., *Sgt. Sharon Anderson*, *Department of Defense*, *New Dawn*, *Cobra Gold*).

Common nouns A common noun names categories of persons, places or things.

Capitalize common nouns only if they are part of a proper noun, such as a title or an organization (e.g., *U.S. Embassy*, *Operation New Dawn*).

Incorrect: They were overrun by Security Forces during an Operational Readiness Exercise.

Correct: They were overrun by security forces during an operational readiness exercise.

Incorrect: The Female Engagement Team leaders met with the new members of the Provincial Reconstruction Team.

Correct: The female engagement team leaders met with the new members of the provincial reconstruction team.

A general rule is if there is more than one of something, do not capitalize.

All caps Do not use all capital letters for anything but acronyms. Ship names, release status and other terms should all be regular text. For example:

The hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) moors off the coast of El Salvador. The ship was on a four-month humanitarian mission. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class John Smith/Released).

Incorrect: Forward Operating Base (FOB)

Correct: forward operating base (FOB)

Correct: Forward Operating Base (FOB) Walton

Acronyms Acronyms are capitalized, but the terms to which they refer are only capitalized if they are proper nouns. Do not capitalize a term solely because it is assigned an acronym.

Chapter 3

Captioning Motion Imagery

When writing captions for motion imagery, all the rules in the preceding chapters on style and content apply. The descriptive information provided will necessarily be broader since the caption must describe more than a single image. Provide captions for the sequence and for each shot.

Caption information will appear on both the slate and a caption sheet such as DD Form 2537 (Visual Information Caption Sheet) or in a similar format (also known as a run sheet).

Slate

All video sequences should include a slate at the front of the sequence that contains:

- VIRIN
- Videographer name and rank
- Videographer contact information (e-mail and/or phone)
- The release status of the video: Released, Not Released, FOUO or Not Reviewed
- The name, rank and contact information of the releasing authority
- A brief description of the sequence (examples follow)

U.S. Soldiers with the 3rd Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment collect biometric information from Afghan citizens in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, Feb. 7, 2010.

U.S. Sailors conduct flight operations aboard the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) while under way in the Indian Ocean July 21, 2011.

The placement of a slate on the video sequence does not replace the requirement to send a caption sheet with the video, either using DD Form 2537 or a text file.

A sample sequence caption slate:

:Unclassified and RELEASED: Dec. 26, 2010
101226-F-ZZ999-001 RT 02:17
2-12 Field Artillery On Patrol

U.S. Soldiers assigned to Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 12th Field Artillery Regiment conduct a routine foot patrol in Khost province, Afghanistan, Dec. 26, 2010. The unit routinely conducts joint patrols with their Afghan National Army counterparts. (U.S. Air Force video by Staff Sgt. Sarah Smith/Released)

VI Professional:
Staff Sgt. Sarah Smith
1st Combat Camera Squadron
DSN 318-855-5921
sarah.smith@address.mil

Cleared by:
Sgt. Rob Davis, MNCI
PAO/28th PAD
DSN 318-822-1111
rob.davis@address.mil

A sample shot caption slate:

:Unclassified and NOT RELEASED:

Dec. 26, 2010

101226-A-OU812-001

RT 02:17

Defense Language Institute graduates Arabic class 10-006

00:02:01 MS – U.S. Army Lt. Col. John Smith, the 229th Military Intelligence Battalion commander, presents a diploma to Pvt. Joe Dean. (Released)

00:02:08 MS – U.S. Army Col. John Smith presents a diploma to Seaman Frank Smith. (Released)

00:02:15 LS – Graduates march in review. (Not Released)

VI Professional:

Davy Jones

Presidio of Monterey Public Affairs Office

831-236-4230

davy.jones@address.mil

Cleared by:

Tom Jones

Presidio of Monterey PAO

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DD Form 2537 - Visual Information Caption Sheet

To view a properly filled-in DD 2537, see “Table 10. Sample DD Form 2537” on page 44.

Shot captions. Shot captions are shot-by-shot breakdowns of the video sequence. Include information that is pertinent only to that section of time code.

Place the time code in hour/minute/second format.

Include changes of camera field of view. Use the following abbreviations to indicate camera field of view: ES – Establishing Shot; LS – Long Shot; MS – Medium Shot; CU – Close Up; ECU – Extreme Close Up.

Place release status at the end of each shot caption.

Sequence caption. A sequence caption describes the contents of the entire video sequence. Clearly identify the documented activity. Include the date and place the video was shot.

Include the full name, rank, and title of the person or people featured only if included in the entire video sequence. Include the full name and model number of all featured equipment, vehicles, aircraft or ships if included in the entire video sequence. If not featured in the entire video sequence, place information about people, equipment, vehicles, aircraft and ships in the shot captions.

Briefly explain the purpose of the event, exercise or operation. Why is the documented action happening and/or why is it significant?

Include public release status and instructions at the end of the sequence caption.

Chapter 4

Still and Motion Imagery Metadata

All of the style guidance contained in this publication also applies to the metadata of motion and still imagery. It is important that this information is both complete and accurate to ensure that an image is searchable and of the utmost value to the end user.

Enter the metadata in the following manner: Excepting abbreviations, all entries should be in regular text, not in all capital letters. Table 3 lists the metadata fields and their corresponding names and placement in common imagery management software programs. These same guidelines apply if you are using a video editing program that allows for the modification of video metadata.

Additionally, form DD 2537 must be filled out for all motion imagery, either electronically or on paper. A sample form can be found in Chapter 7, Table 10.

Caption

Ensure that the caption is complete and adheres to the standards provided by this guide. Include the photographer credit line and the release status within the caption.

Operation/Exercise

This field should only be filled out with the name of an official operation or exercise. Official operations and exercises include *New Dawn*, *Enduring Freedom* and named exercises such as *Talisman Sabre* or *Cobra Gold*. Do not include “Operation” or “Exercise” in this field. Do not include the year or rotation number for recurring exercises.

Photographer’s Rank/Name

Include the rank and full name of the photographer. Because of space limitations in this field, use an abbreviated rank (using the Service rank style of the photographer, i.e. SGT for an Army sergeant, A1C for an Airman 1st Class) to ensure that the full name of the photographer appears (e.g., *MC1 John Smith* or *Pfc. Shannon Jones*).

Photographer’s Home Unit

Include the home unit of the photographer (e.g., *3rd Marine Division* or *1st Combat Camera Squadron*).

Photographer’s TDY/TAD Unit

Include the unit to which the photographer is assigned during the shoot (must be on official orders). If this information does not differ from that in the Photographer’s Home Unit field, or the photographer was not on official orders, leave this blank.

Visual Information Record Identification Number (VIRIN)

(Reference: Department of Defense Instruction 5040.02, Enclosure 6, October 27, 2011)

Assign each image a unique VIRIN. A VIRIN consists of 15 alphanumeric characters separated by hyphens into four fields organized in the alpha (A) numeric (N) format YYMMDD-A-AANNN-NNN.

Field one, the first six characters, is the date the imagery was shot, in YYMMDD format.

Field two, the seventh character, represents the Service of the photographer.

- A: Army, uniformed member or civilian employee
- D: Department of Defense, uniformed member, civilian employee, or contract employee of the Department of Defense not falling into one of the other categories
- F: Air Force, uniformed member or civilian employee
- G: Coast Guard, uniformed member or civilian employee

- H: Department of Homeland Security, not including Coast Guard
- M: Marine Corps, uniformed member or civilian employee
- N: Navy, uniformed member or civilian employee
- O: Any person not falling into another category, including foreign nationals
- S: Department of State
- Z: National Guard (either branch), uniformed member or civilian employee, even when on federal active duty status or deployed overseas

Field three is the photographer's VISION ID.

VISION ID

(Reference: Department of Defense Instruction 5040.02, Enclosure 7, October 27, 2011)

Field three (AANNN): In the case of all categories above except O, field three shall consist of the Visual Information Identification (VISION ID) of the image originator, which is assigned by DIMOC through the Defense Imagery website at www.defenseimagery.mil.

In the case of category O, such as a member of a foreign military not registered with a VISION ID, a civilian not affiliated with the Department of Defense, or for an image with undetermined or system-based origin, use the identifier ZZ999 in field three.

Field four, the last three digits, identify unique images and are assigned in the order in which the images were shot.

Image Source

Enter the medium used to capture the image, either digital or film.

Caption Editor

Any person who reviews a caption should enter his or her name here, whether or not he or she made any changes to the caption or the metadata.

At each stage in the imagery management cycle, each new editor should enter his or her name in this field, replacing the previous name.

Base/Locale

Enter the city, base, ship, installation or other location at which the image was captured, not the location to which the photographer is assigned and/or deployed. For example, if the photographer is assigned to Camp Victory, but the image is captured in a Baghdad neighborhood, this field should read "Baghdad."

Should the location not be this specific, the field may be left blank. For example, for an image captured "near the Syrian border," filling out the country/area field will be sufficient.

State/Province

Enter the state or province in which the image was captured, if applicable.

Country/Area

Enter the country or area in which the image was captured. Areas will usually be bodies of water such as the Persian Gulf or regions such as the Arctic Circle.

Should it be an undisclosed location, enter that information here as well.

File Name

Assign each image a unique file name. This should be the VIRIN.

Date Shot

Enter the date the image was captured.

Command Shown

Enter the command where the photo was taken (USPACOM, USNORTHCOM, USEUCOM, USCENTCOM, USAFRICOM, USSOUTHCOM). In the case of Afghanistan or Iraq, ISAF or USF-I, respectively; for Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, use CJTF-HOA. For all Coast Guard imagery, use USCG. **Do not** enter the command of the photographer.

Service Shown

Enter the most appropriate one-letter code for the Service depicted in the image, based on the main subject or subjects of the image. This information is essential for tracking imagery in the joint environment.

- A: Army
- C: Coalition
- D: DoD civilian (DoD civilians meeting with U.S. or foreign dignitaries fall under this as well)
- F: Air Force
- G: Coast Guard
- J: Joint/multi-Service (including active duty forces shown with a National Guard component)
- K: Foreign (service members or civilians, all from one nation)
- L: Multinational (service members or civilians from more than one nation)
- M: Marine Corps
- N: Navy
- O: Other (U.S. and/or foreign civilians not falling into one of the other categories)
- Z: National Guard (regardless of duty status, location or component)

Supplemental Category

This space contains the classification of the image, the classification authority and the contact information for the photographer at his or her current location. Enter *Unclassified*, *FOUO* or *Classified*. If the image is classified, enter the classification authority and downgrading schedule.

Public Release Instructions

Enter the release status of the image (Released, Not Released, Not Reviewed, classified imagery) as well as the name, duty position, phone number and/or E-mail address of the releasing authority. Note: The releasing authority will be a person's name and contact information; just a title or unit name is unacceptable.

- Released: The image has been sent to DIMOC and is cleared for public release.
- Not Released: The image has been sent to DIMOC, but is not cleared for public release.
- Not Reviewed: The image has been sent to DIMOC, but there is no release authority assigned to operation / exercise. Note: Photographer should send amplifying information on their plan to get imagery reviewed.
- Classified imagery: Submitted to DIMOC via appropriate means and only available to authorized personnel, i.e. FOUO, SECRET.

Keywords

A keyword is a word or phrase that signifies the meaning or main ideas of an image. The primary function of keywords is to improve accessibility of the imagery. Using appropriate keywords will ensure that an image is more searchable, making it more readily available to the end user. Separate keywords with a semicolon (USAF; Airman; F-16 Fighting Falcon; Aircraft)

For more information on keywording, see "Chapter 5" on page 19 and "Table 9. Sample Keywords" on page 43.

Chapter 5 Keywording

Use the 5 W's to determine the most prominent elements within the image or video. Often, the who, what and where will be appropriate choices.

When selecting keywords for imagery, ask the following questions and choose keywords based on the answers:

- What is the message of the image or video?
- What person or object has the biggest impact?
- Why would someone want the image or video?
- What other major elements appear in the image or video but not in the caption?

Choose several keywords that best describe the visual content of the image or video. Using appropriate keywords will ensure that imagery is more searchable, making it more readily available to the end user.



A U.S. Marine with the 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion patrols an improvised explosive device training trail during jungle warfare training in Colombia Aug. 10, 2010. The unit was deployed in support of Partnership of the Americas/Southern Exchange, a combined amphibious exercise with maritime forces from 10 nations. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Ammon W. Carter/Released)

Example 1.

In Example 1, patrol is the primary action of the image. Therefore “Patrol” is a keyword. However, the concept of the image is training. “Training” is also a keyword. Inserting “patrol” as a keyword may appear redundant, since the word appears in the caption, but it allows for broader search capability and image accessibility if it is included.

Keywords for Example 1: Patrol; 3rd AAB; IED; M4 carbine; Training; Jungle warfare; USMC

Example 2.

A search looks for each individual word in a keyword for a match, therefore the keyword for an image of an F/A-18E Super Hornet aircraft needs to be its full technical name “F/A-18E Super Hornet”. This ensures that



no matter the terms the user enters into a search (i.e. 18C, Hornet) the search will return results with

those words or phrases in the keywords. It is important to also include “aircraft,” otherwise a user searching simply for “aircraft” or “aircrafts” will not return all the appropriate images.

The keywords for Example 2: F/A-18E Super Hornet; F-22 Raptor; Aircraft;

Keywords may actually be technical names or a phrase whose individual words are not separated by semi-colons. For example:

Standard Format for keywords

1. Treat the keyword field similarly to the caption field; proper spelling and capitalization is important.
 - For example: M1A1 Abrams tank; USAID; Secretary of Defense;
2. All technical names will be written as directed by the U.S. Military Services’ fact files and yearbooks.
3. Keywords are separated by semi-colons.
 - For example: M1A1 Abrams tank; F/A-18E Super Hornet; Aircraft;

Correct	Incorrect
F/A-18E Super Hornet; Aircraft;	F/A-18E; Super; Hornet; Aircraft;
M1A1 Abrams tank;	M1A1; Abrams; Tank;
M14 Enhanced Battle Rifle;	M14; Enhanced; Battle; Rifle;

4. Keywords may be phrases or full names and in these instances should not be separated.
5. The Photographer’s Service is a keyword, but only in its acronym/abbreviated form.
 - For example: USMC; USA; USN; USAF; USCG; RAF
6. Words that are NEVER keywords:
 - Photographer’s name (in any variation), unit or VISION ID
 - Release status
 - Classification status
 - Use of the image (i.e. publication)

Guidelines for selecting keywords

1. Consider and select from the broad categories list first (See the sample categories in “Table 9. Sample Keywords” on page 43).
2. What is the concept of the image?
 - Don’t forget to add the theme/message of the image.
3. What is in the image?
 - Vehicles? Weapons?
 - Technical names for all types of vehicles (aircraft, ships, tanks, etc) and all weaponry are keywords.
 - Ship names (including the hull number), classes and types are keywords.
 - » For example: USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69); Nimitz-class; Aircraft Carrier;

4. Who is in the image?
 - Titles and occupation fields (not ranks) are keywords. This applies only to U.S. personnel.
 - » For example: Human Intelligence Collector; Drill Instructor; Logistics Specialist; Ship's Boatswain; Platoon leader; Designated marksman
 - There are four individuals whose title and name will always be keywords. These four people are the President, Vice President, Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
5. Does the image represent an event?
 - Is the event an operation or an exercise?
 - If so, the name of either the Operation/Exercise is not a keyword. These names are to be entered in the Operation/Exercise metadata field.
 - If not, then the event's full name is a keyword.
 - » For example: 11th Annual Air Force Marathon;
6. Are there phrases, units, etc. that have acronyms/abbreviations that are not written in the caption? If so, the acronyms/abbreviations are keywords.
 - » For example: International Security Assistance Force is written in the caption but the acronym is not. "ISAF" is then a keyword.
 - » For example: The image is from Operation Enduring Freedom. OEF is then a keyword.
 - » For example: 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division is used in the caption once. Therefore, "6-1 CAV; 1 AD" are keywords.

Chapter 6

Matters Of Style

The following chapter provides the correct style for the terms, equipment and so forth, that are commonly misspelled or otherwise misused within DoD captions. The list is by no means comprehensive; if a term does not appear below, refer to *The Associated Press Stylebook* or *Webster's New World College Dictionary* for the appropriate style and spelling, the *National Geographic Atlas of the World* for place names, or to the Service-specific fact sheets for the correct spelling of aircraft, vehicles and equipment (see Chapter 8, "Additional Resources" on page 45).

Abu Ghraib Refers to a town, a palace, a prison and a chemical-biological laboratory. Specify which is referenced: the town of Abu Ghraib, the Abu Ghraib palace, the Abu Ghraib prison, the Abu Ghraib chemical-biological laboratory.

Afghan cities See "Table 7. Afghan provinces" on page 41 for the proper spelling for several major cities in Afghanistan.

alongside Alongside is one word. For example: *U.S. Soldiers walk alongside a Humvee while on patrol in Baghdad, Iraq, Dec. 12, 2010.*

American flag Note that *flag* is lower case.

amphibious assault ship Do not capitalize, even when referring to a specific ship. For example: *U.S. Sailors and Marines man the rails of the amphibious assault ship USS Nassau (LHA 4).*

aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF) The acronym is acceptable on second reference.

Arabian Gulf Do not use. See Persian Gulf entry on page 29.

Arabic names Follow AP style for Arabic names. See Chapter 7, Tables 7 and 8 for selected Afghan and Iraqi city and province names. Note that the spelling of "al-Faw" is an exception to AP style.

assistant secretary Capitalize before a name as part of a title; use lower case when the title appears after the name.

back blast Two words.

bounding overwatch Jargon. Use "maneuver," or another similar synonym.

casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) The acronym is acceptable on second reference.

cavalry Use lower case unless it is part of a proper name. Do not confuse with "Calvary," which is a religious term.

change of command ceremony Do not hyphenate the compound adjective.

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

Colombia/Columbia The South American country is spelled Colombia, and the adjective is Colombian. Columbia is the proper spelling for the university, the former space shuttle and several U.S. cities and private-sector organizations.

colors When referring to the flag of the United States, "American flag" or "U.S. flag" are the preferred styles. Do not use in reference to the flags of other nations. Acceptable when referring to unit flags and guidons. For example: *The battalion colors were furled during a transfer of authority ceremony.*

combined A multi-national activity, operation, organization, etc.

commander in chief Do not hyphenate; use lower case unless it appears before a name.

commands Write out the full name of all U.S. military commands on first reference; acronyms are acceptable on second reference.

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

contingency operating base Use lower case unless it accompanies the name of a specific location. It is appropriate to use the acronym (COB) upon second reference.

U.S. Marines set up checkpoints outside the contingency operating base.

U.S. Marines set up checkpoints outside Contingency Operating Base Speicher.

crew member Two words. For example: *The crew members prepare for takeoff.*

Department of Defense On second reference, use the acronym DoD.

dignified transfer Never a “dignified transfer ceremony.” Do not capitalize. For example: “... the dignified transfer of fallen Service members ...” or “... dignified transfer operations at Dover Air Force Base ...” or “... during the dignified transfer of his/her remains at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan ...”

distinguished transfer Do not use.

district Follow the AP style for “province.”

exercises Capitalize uniquely named exercises, but only capitalize the descriptive word “exercise” if it is part of the official title of the exercise. Do not capitalize generic descriptors for exercises (for example: operational readiness exercise, joint task force exercise, composite training unit exercise).

female engagement team Do not capitalize unless writing about a specific team.

“U.S. Marines with a female engagement team assigned to I Marine Expeditionary Force speak to Iraqi women during a cordon and search operation in Fallujah, Iraq, May 10, 2010.”

“U.S. Marines with Female Engagement Team 2, I Marine Expeditionary Force speak to Iraqi women during a cordon and search operation in Fallujah, Iraq, May 10, 2010.”

firefighter One word. For example: *A firefighter fights fires.*

fireman In the Navy, a Sailor specifically trained in an engineering or hull repair rating. While damage control is among the fireman ratings, the term “fireman” is not to be confused with “firefighter.”

flight line Two words. For example: *The aircrew prepares to take off from the flight line.*

forward operating base Use lower case unless it accompanies the name of a specific location. It is appropriate to use the established acronym (FOB) upon second reference.

U.S. Marines set up checkpoints outside the forward operating base.

U.S. Marines set up checkpoints outside Forward Operating Base Warrior.

Style Check: Unified Combatant Commands

Regional commands:

U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM)

U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM)

U.S. European Command (USEUCOM)

U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM)

U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM)

U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM)

Functional commands:

U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM)

U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM)

U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM)

groundbreaking One word. For example: *Local officials cut the ribbon at a groundbreaking ceremony for a new hospital.*

guided missile No hyphen in all uses.

hangar Aircraft are kept in a hangar, not a hanger. Capitalize only when part of a title (“Hangar 23”).

high speed vessel The correct way to identify a high speed vessel in a caption is as follows: “high speed vessel Swift (HSV-2).” In subsequent references, HSV-2 is appropriate. Note: This is the only Navy-operated vessel type for which a hyphen is appropriate in the designator. See the entry for *Military Sealift Command*.

homeport(ed) The term *home port* is two words, while *homeported* is one word.

The ship is headed for her home port of San Diego, Calif.

The ship is homeported in San Diego, Calif.

hometown Do not include the hometowns of Service members in captions.

hospital ship Do not capitalize. For example: *The hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) was originally an oil tanker.* Note: This is a Military Sealift Command ship, therefore a hyphen is appropriate in the ship designator. See the entry for *Military Sealift Command*.

Humvee When referring to a high-mobility, multipurpose wheeled vehicle (HMMWV), *Humvee* is permitted on first reference; the word is capitalized. It is not necessary to spell out the entire term or use the abbreviation. However, the abbreviation can be used in keywords.

hull numbers Hull numbers will be included in parentheses after ship names on first reference. United States Ships (USS) and U.S. Coast Guard Cutters (USCGC) are not hyphenated; U.S. Naval Ships (USNS) with a classification beginning with “T” will receive a hyphen between the “T” and the remaining letters, but not between the letters and the numbers.

Hull number examples:

USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77)

USNS Alan Shepard (T-AKE 3)

USCGC Diligence (WMEC 616)

in situ No hyphen, no quotation marks.

insure/ensure “To insure” means to take out insurance on something, while “to ensure” means to make certain or guarantee. For example: *People should insure their vehicles to ensure they can get a replacement in case of an accident.*

Iraqi cities For consistency, drop the article from the front (for example, Al Fallujah becomes Fallujah; Ar Ramadi becomes Ramadi). The town of al-Faw is an exception to this rule. See “Table 8. Iraqi governorates (provinces)” on page 42 for a list of Iraqi provinces, capitals and major cities.

joint A multi-service activity, operation, organization, etc.

joint combined exchange training A multi-service and multi-national exchange of skills and knowledge between U.S. forces and their host nation counterparts.

landing zone Use lower case unless it accompanies the name of a specific location. LZ is acceptable on second usage.

U.S. Soldiers gather their gear after parachuting onto Landing Zone Tombstone.

The landing zone was not cleared, so the mission was aborted.

LCAC The correct term is *landing craft, air cushion*. Use lower case unless identifying an individual, numbered LCAC (e.g., *Landing Craft, Air Cushion 8*). The acronym is acceptable on second reference.

local Use this word only when it is necessary to differentiate a local leader or organization from a foreign one. Most of the time it will be an unnecessary word. In the following example the use of the

word adds nothing to the meaning of the sentence, as is demonstrated by removing it.

U.S. Soldiers talk to local Iraqi citizens at a local market in Baghdad.

U.S. Soldiers talk to Iraqi citizens at a market in Baghdad.

In the following sentence, however, the word adds context:

Local leaders and charitable organizations have joined the U.S. effort to provide disaster relief to affected areas.

locations Follow AP style rules when listing geographic names, directions and regions. The names of airports, hospitals, etc., should not be listed like cities. For example: *Beaumont Airport, Texas*. There is no such city in Texas, so the correct way to refer to this in a caption is *Beaumont Municipal Airport in Beaumont, Texas*. Do not write “here” in place of a location name.

loose/lose “Loose” means not tight, while “lose” means to misplace something or to fail to win. For example: *The lug nuts were loose, causing the Humvee to lose its wheels.*

man the rails

marine vessel (MV) The acronym is acceptable on second reference.

mass casualty exercise no hyphen

medical civic action program (MEDCAP) The acronym is acceptable on second reference.

military titles Abbreviate all military titles in accordance with AP style. On second reference, drop the title and use just the last name. See “Table 1. Military Rank Abbreviations” on page 32 for the appropriate abbreviations for each rank.

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

Military Sealift Command Ships operated by the Military Sealift Command carry the designation “USNS” (United States Naval Ships) and are not commissioned ships. Also, they are crewed by civilians. Some MSC ships have military departments assigned to carry out specialized military functions such as communications and supply operations. MSC ships carry the prefix “T-” before their normal hull numbers. For example: *The salvage ship USNS Grasp (T-ARS 51) was formerly a U.S. Navy ship designated ARS 51.*

military units Use upper case only when referring to the name of a specific unit. Use the full name of the unit on first reference, and the acronym on all subsequent references. Include the acronym only if the term is used more than once within the caption. In that case, spell out the name and then include the acronym in parentheses. (See “Table 4. Force Structure” on page 38 for the force structure of the Services.)

When not part of a title, ranks appearing in captions are lower case and are not abbreviated. For example: *U.S. Marine Corps staff sergeants participate in a training exercise.*

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Joe Smith, assigned to 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, prepares for a convoy training mission at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Jan. 15, 2010.

U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgts. Anne O’Connor and James Laughlin prepare for an operational readiness inspection at Joint Base Andrews, Md., Dec. 12, 2010.

Note: When writing Navy ranks, use the **rate** before the name. For example: *U.S. Navy Boatswain’s Mate 1st Class Pete Rodriguez* instead of *U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Pete Rodriguez, a boatswain’s mate*. This differs from the Associated Press Stylebook.

When including a professional title with a rank, place the professional title after the name, separated by commas.

U.S. Army Capt. Brenda Johnson, a physician, examines a patient.
U.S. Navy Cmdr. Jason Andrews, a chaplain, conducts a service.

When referring to retired military personnel, use the word “retired” before the rank and name. Do not use the abbreviation “ret.” For example: *The guest of honor was retired U.S. Marine Corps Gen. Peter Pace.*

When placing Service members, ships, aircraft or units in a specific place, use the following terminology:

A Service member is “stationed on,” “stationed at,” “with,” “serving with” or “assigned to” a unit or a ship. (Do not use “from,” as that implies hometown or place of birth.) The preferred term for a person physically located on a ship is “aboard.”

- A ship is “based at” or “homeported at” a specific place.
- An aircraft “belongs to” or is “assigned to” a particular unit and is “deployed with” that unit to a certain location. It is “stationed at” a base or is “stationed at” or “aboard” a ship; it is “deployed with” or is “operating from” a ship.
- A unit is “stationed at” a particular base and is “deployed to” a certain location or “deployed with” a larger unit. Squadrons are “stationed at” Air Force bases, air bases or air stations. Navy and Marine Corps air wings and other units may be “deployed with” ships.

Air Force Abbreviate Air Force units using standard acronym rules; note if it is a National Guard unit. List units from smallest to largest.

U.S. Airmen with the 375th Security Forces Squadron (SFS) man a checkpoint in Anbar province, Iraq Oct. 24, 2010. The 375th SFS was operating in support of Operation New Dawn.

U.S. Air Force staff sergeants with the 142nd Fighter Wing, Oregon Air National Guard participate in an exercise at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., Nov. 14, 2011.

Army Abbreviate Army units using standard acronym rules; note if it is a National Guard unit. List units from smallest to largest.

U.S. Soldiers with 1st Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 10th Mountain Division provide security during a humanitarian mission outside of Kabul, Afghanistan, March 4, 2010. The 1st BCT was supporting Operation Enduring Freedom.

A U.S. Soldier with the 197th Special Troops Company, Utah Army National Guard, gathers his parachute after a static line jump in Fairfield, Utah, March 15, 2012.

Joint/combined The following list shows the correct format of some common joint and/or combined organizations and how to abbreviate them. ‘Joint’ means more than one branch of the U.S. Armed Forces are involved; ‘combined’ means forces from more than one nation are involved.

- Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA)
- Combined Task Force 150 (CTF 150)
- International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)
- Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC)

Marine Corps Formats for Marine Corps units and their acronyms appear below. List units from smallest to largest.

Air wing: The Marines are assigned to the 2nd Marine Air Wing (MAW). The 2nd MAW deployed from Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., in support of Operation New Dawn.

Combat logistics battalion: The Marines are deployed with Combat Logistics Battalion (CLB) 6 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. CLB-6 is based at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Marine expeditionary force: The Marines are assigned to II Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF). II MEF deployed from Camp Lejeune, N.C., in support of Operation New Dawn.

Marine expeditionary unit: The Marines are assigned to the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). The 31st MEU was participating in bilateral exercises while aboard the USS Essex (LHD 2).

Regiment: Do not use the shorthand for these units. Instead of writing 7th Marines, write the full name: 7th Marine Regiment.

Regimental combat team: The Marines are assigned to Regimental Combat Team (RCT) 1. RCT-1 deployed from Camp Pendleton, Calif., in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Squadron: Spell out the full name of the squadron on first reference. Since the full names and abbreviations of squadrons do not follow normal acronym rules of assignment, include squadron abbreviations even if used only once. *The Marines are assigned to Marine Wing Communications Squadron (MWCS) 38. MWCS-38 was supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.*

Marine Corps Squadrons	
HMH—Marine heavy helicopter squadron	VMA—Marine attack squadron
HMLA—Marine light attack helicopter squadron	VMAQ—Marine tactical electronic warfare squadron
HMM—Marine medium helicopter squadron	VMFA—Marine fighter attack squadron
HMX—Marine helicopter squadron	VMGR—Marine aerial refueler transport squadron
MWCS—Marine wing communications squadron	VMM—Marine medium tiltrotor squadron
MWSS—Marine wing support squadron	VMR—Marine transport squadron
VMU—Marine unmanned aerial vehicle squadron	

Navy Formats for Navy units and their acronyms appear below. List units from smallest to largest, where applicable.

construction battalion center: CBC	naval air facility: NAF
naval air station: NAS	naval amphibious base: NAB
naval facility: NAVFAC	naval station: NAVSTA
naval weapons station: NWS	commander fleet activities: CFA

Activities: Spell out the full name of the naval activity on first reference and capitalize only when part of a proper name. For example: *Naval Station Rota, Spain*. On second reference, abbreviate as follows:

Detachment: Do not abbreviate on first reference. *The Sailors are assigned to Detachment 5, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 2.*

Fleet: When referring to a numbered fleet, always use numerals and precede with “U.S.” For example: *U.S. 7th Fleet*.

Naval mobile construction battalion: On first reference, spell out and use a numeral. Use the acronym on second reference. *U.S. Sailors with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 1 construct a school in Honduras. NMCB-1 is participating in exercise New Horizons.*

<p>Incorrect: U.S. Navy Seabee John Smith is assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 1.</p> <p>Correct: U.S. Navy Builder 1st Class John Smith is a Seabee assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 1.</p>

SEAL: Sea, Air, Land. “SEAL” is acceptable on first reference. If plural, use “SEALs.”

Seabee: When identifying an individual Sailor as a Seabee, list the Sailor’s rank as usual and add the designation as you would a job description.

Ship: List the type of ship (e.g., destroyer, aircraft carrier), full name of the ship and hull number (in parentheses) for each ship on first reference. On second reference, drop the designator and “USS.” It is permitted to refer to a ship using the pronoun *her*. All ship names appear in regular type, not in all caps. *U.S. Sailors man the rails as the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63) departs Yokosuka, Japan, June 27, 2011. Kitty Hawk was embarking on a six-month deployment.*

Squadron: Spell out the full name of a squadron on first reference. **Include the abbreviation whether or not the squadron appears again in the caption.** *Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 97 deployed aboard USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70). During its deployment, VFA-97 maintained a perfect safety record.*

Navy Squadrons

HC—helicopter combat support squadron	VAW—carrier airborne early warning squadron
HM—helicopter mine countermeasures squadron	VF—fighter squadron
HS—helicopter anti-submarine squadron	VFA—strike fighter squadron
HSC—helicopter sea combat squadron	VFC—fleet fighter composite squadron
HSM—helicopter maritime strike squadron	VP—patrol squadron
HSL—helicopter anti-submarine (light) squadron	VRC—carrier fleet logistics support squadron
HT—helicopter training squadron	VQ—fleet air reconnaissance squadron
VA—attack squadron	VR—fleet logistics support squadron
VAQ—electronic attack squadron	VS—sea control squadron
VT—training squadron (fixed wing)	

modular airborne firefighting system (MAFFS) Do not capitalize.

MRAP The correct term is *mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicle*. The appropriate use, with acronym, is *MRAP vehicle*. On first use, spell it out, and do not capitalize. Also: mine-resistant, ambush-protected all-terrain vehicle, second reference M-ATV.

U.S. Airmen load mine-resistant, ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles Aug. 27, 2011. The MRAP vehicles will be transported to the Central Command area of responsibility.

MRE The correct term is either *meal, ready to eat* or *meals, ready to eat*. The acronym is MRE (singular) or MREs (plural).

nation Use lower case unless at the start of the sentence.

nationality Refer to the CIA World Factbook to determine the proper adjective for a citizen of a specific nation. (For example, a citizen of Afghanistan is an Afghan).

national anthem

NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization. NATO is acceptable on first reference.

Nigerian/Nigerien The adjective *Nigerian* means a person from Nigeria, while *Nigerien* means a person from Niger.

noncommissioned officer Do not hyphenate; use lower case unless it appears at the start of a sentence. NCO is acceptable on second reference.

officer in charge Do not hyphenate; use all lower case unless it appears before a name.

OIF/OEF Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. Spell out on first reference. Do not add any rotation numbers to these titles.

operations Capitalize uniquely named operations, but capitalize the word “operation” only if it is part of the official title of the operation (e.g., Operation Enduring Freedom). Do not capitalize generic descriptors for operations.

ordinance/ordnance An *ordinance* is a local law, while *ordnance* is explosive material. In addition, *ordnance* is both singular and plural. Do not use “ordnances.”

over vs. more than *Over* refers to physical placement of an object (above). *More than* is used with quantities. (See entry *under vs. less/fewer than*.)

The flag flies over the capitol building.
More than 50,000 Service members were stationed in the area.

pass in review Not “pass and review.”

Persian Gulf Do not use “Arabian Gulf.” Note that the Arabian Sea is its own body of water and should not be confused with references to the Persian Gulf.

pierside Pierside is one word. For example: *U.S. Sailors unload the ship pierside in Norfolk, Va.*

POW/MIA Prisoner of war/missing in action. POW/MIA is acceptable on first use.

pre-commissioning unit (PCU) Capitalize when used before the name of a ship before it is commissioned. For example: *Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) Mississippi (SSN 782)*.

president On first reference, capitalize before the name of the president. Do not use the acronym “POTUS” at any time. On second reference, use the capitalized title and last name. When listed without a name, use lower case.

President Barack Obama addresses U.S. Military Academy cadets April 4, 2011. In his speech, the president thanked military personnel for their service.

provincial reconstruction team (PRT) Spell out this term on first reference; the acronym is appropriate on second reference. This term is lower case unless it is a specific, named PRT, such as “Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team.”

replenishment at sea Do not hyphenate; use all lower case.

reserve units Capitalize “Reserve” when referring to military organizations. For example: *U.S. Army Reserve* (not “U.S. Army Reserves”). For the Navy, the correct term is “Navy Reserve,” not “naval reserve.” When referring to a reserve Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine, do not capitalize “reserve.” Do not use the term “reservist.” Only use the term “reserves” when referring collectively to the reserve components.

Roman numerals U.S. Army corps and U.S. Marine Corps expeditionary forces are designated with Roman numerals. For example: XVIII Airborne Corps, I Marine Expeditionary Force.

Sept. 11 When referring to the terrorist attacks of this day, use “Sept. 11 attack” or “Sept. 11 terrorist attack.” Use *2001* only if needed for clarity. 9/11 is also acceptable in all references.

Service member The term is two words; capitalize “Service” when referring to a U.S. Service member.

sight/site A *sight* is something that is seen or is worth seeing, or a device that helps the eye to aim or find something. A *site* is a location.

U.S. Soldiers clear weapons cache sites. A U.S. Marine sets her sights on a target during an exercise. While in port, U.S. Sailors took in the sights.
--

Southwest Asia Both words are capitalized.

special operations forces Use this term to describe U.S. special warfare units or members of those units when their exact service or unit affiliation is not clear, or when special warfare units of multiple services are conducting joint operations. Do not use “special operator” or “commando.” For example: 1) *A member of U.S. special operations forces patrols in a field near Kandahar, Afghanistan, April 5, 2012.* 2) *President Barack Obama praises the actions of U.S. special operations forces in Afghanistan while speaking at the National Press Club in Washington, Dec. 30, 2011.*

strongpoint One word. Use lower case unless it accompanies the name of a specific location.

U.S. Soldiers stationed at Strongpoint Tarnak clean their weapons following a patrol.

U.S. Marines search for a position to use as a strongpoint in a planned ambush of Taliban forces.

task force Use lower case unless referring to a specific task force. Example: *Task Force Tarawa was a U.S. Marine air-ground task force attached to the I Marine Expeditionary Force during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.*

threat and vulnerability assessment

under vs. less/fewer than *Under* refers to physical placement (below). *Less than* and *fewer than* are used with quantities. See entry *over vs. more than* and the *Associated Press Stylebook fewer, less* entry.

The ship sailed under the bridge. The ship carried fewer than 50 passengers. I have less than three days left on my tour.

under secretary Two words; capitalize before a name as part of a title and lower case when the title appears after the name. If you are giving the entire title, it is capitalized: Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

under way Under way is two words unless it is used as an adjective.

The strike group is under way in the Pacific Ocean.

U.S. Sailors conduct an underway replenishment in the Pacific Ocean.

urban operations (UO) Replaces “military operations on urban terrain” (MOUT) in most uses. See entry for *military operations on urban terrain*.

USO United Service Organizations. USO is acceptable on first reference.

vehicle-borne The correct term is a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED). The acronym is appropriate on second reference.

war on terrorism This is the appropriate term to use; it is all lower case. Do not use “global war on terrorism” or “war on terror.”

warfighter One word; use lower case.

weapons Use the following formats for weapons and weapon systems; note the appropriate hyphenation, spacing and capitalization. See “Table 6. Selected Weapons” on page 40 for a more comprehensive list of weapons.

- .50-caliber
- M119 105 mm howitzer
- M4 carbine
- GBU-12 Paveway II laser-guided bomb
- AIM-9 Sidewinder missile

weapons cache The term, correctly used, is either weapons cache (singular) or weapons caches (plural). Do not say “hidden weapons cache.” *Cache* implies hidden, so to say both is redundant.

Chapter 7 References

Table 1. Military Rank Abbreviations

Army Commissioned Officers		
Grade	Rank	Abbreviation
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.
Warrant Officers		
Grade	Rank	Abbreviation
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	warrant officer	Warrant Officer
Enlisted Personnel		
Grade	Rank	Abbreviation
E-9	sergeant major of the Army	Sgt. Maj. of the Army
	command sergeant major	Command Sgt. Maj.
	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.
	specialist	Spc.
E-3	private first class	Pfc.
E-2	private	Pvt.
E-1	private	Pvt.

Navy Commissioned Officers		
Grade	Rank	Abbreviation
O-10	admiral	Adm.
O-9	vice admiral	Vice Adm.
O-8	rear admiral	Rear Adm.
O-7	rear admiral	Rear Adm.
O-6	captain	Capt.
O-5	commander	Cmdr.
O-4	lieutenant commander	Lt. Cmdr.
	lieutenant commander	
O-3	lieutenant	Lt.
O-2	lieutenant junior grade	Lt. j.g.
	lieutenant junior grade	
O-1	ensign	Ensign
Warrant Officers		
Grade	Rank	Abbreviation
W-5	chief warrant officer 5	Chief Warrant Officer
W-4	chief warrant officer 4	Chief Warrant Officer
W-3	chief warrant officer 3	Chief Warrant Officer
W-2	chief warrant officer 2	Chief Warrant Officer
Note: The grade of W-1 is not used.		
Enlisted Personnel		
Grade	Rank	Abbreviation
E-9	master chief petty officer of the Navy	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy
	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
	petty officer	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	Seaman
	apprentice	Apprentice
E-1	seaman recruit	Seaman Recruit

Table 1 (Cont.). Military Rank Abbreviations

Marine Corps Commissioned Officers		
Grade	Rank	Abbreviation
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.
Warrant Officers		
Grade	Rank	Abbreviation
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	warrant officer	Warrant Officer
Enlisted Personnel		
Grade	Rank	Abbreviation
E-9	sergeant major of the Marine Corps	Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps
	sergeant major	Sgt. Maj.
	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 Commissioned Officers		
Grade	Rank	Abbreviation
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.
Warrant Officers		
Note: Warrant officer ranks are not used in the Air Force.		
Enlisted Personnel		
Grade	Rank	Abbreviation
E-9	chief master sergeant of the Air Force	Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force
	command chief master sergeant	Command Chief Master Sgt.
	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

Table 2. State Names and Abbreviations

Alabama	Ala.	Montana	Mont.
Alaska	Alaska	Nebraska	Neb.
Arizona	Ariz.	Nevada	Nev.
Arkansas	Ark.	New Hampshire	N.H.
California	Calif.	New Jersey	N.J.
Colorado	Colo.	New Mexico	N.M.
Connecticut	Conn.	New York	N.Y.
Delaware	Del.	North Carolina	N.C.
Florida	Fla.	North Dakota	N.D.
Georgia	Ga.	Ohio	Ohio
Hawaii	Hawaii	Oklahoma	Okla.
Idaho	Idaho	Oregon	Ore.
Illinois	Ill.	Pennsylvania	Pa.
Indiana	Ind.	Rhode Island	R.I.
Iowa	Iowa	South Carolina	S.C.
Kansas	Kan.	South Dakota	S.D.
Kentucky	Ky.	Tennessee	Tenn.
Louisiana	La.	Texas	Texas
Maine	Maine	Utah	Utah
Maryland	Md.	Vermont	Vt.
Massachusetts	Mass.	Virginia	Va.
Michigan	Mich.	Washington	Wash.
Minnesota	Minn.	West Virginia	W.Va.
Mississippi	Miss.	Wisconsin	Wis.
Missouri	Mo.	Wyoming	Wyo.

The following states are not abbreviated: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.

Write the nation's capital as Washington, D.C.

Table 3. Metadata Cross References

The following provides a cross reference for the field names in four commonly used captioning software programs. Captioning for video, which provides instructions on what to include in each field, uses the MediaGrid field names as subchapter titles. If you have no captioning software, include this information in a Word file.

SCC	Photoshop	Photo Mechanic	Nikon View	Field Contents for DoD Imagery
MediaGrid				
PH Rank & Name	CS2/CS3/CS4/CS5 - IPTC/IPTC Contact/ Creator	PH Rank/ Name	Author	The photographer's rank and full name. (32 character limit)
PH Home Unit	CS2/CS3/CS4/CS5 - IPTC/IPTC Contact/ Creator's Job Title	PH Home Unit	Author's Position	The photographer's home unit. (32 character limit)
Date Shot	CS2/CS3/CS4/CS5 - IPTC/IPTC Image/ Date Created	Not Used	Date Created	The date the image was taken. This date must match the date in the VIRIN. (8 character limit)
Base/Locale	CS2/CS3/CS4/CS5 - IPTC/IPTC Image/ City	Base/Locale	City	The base locale or city of the shoot. (32 character limit)
State/Prov.	CS3 - IPTC/IPTC Image/State CS2/CS4/CS5 - IPTC Image/State/Province	State/Prov.	State/ Province	The state or province of the shoot. (32 character limit)
Country/ Area	CS2/CS3/CS4/CS5 - IPTC/IPTC Image/ Country	Country/Area	Country	The country or area of the shoot; for aerials, use either the country or the ocean area being flown over. (64 character limit)
Operation/ Exercise Name	CS2/CS3/CS4/CS5 - IPTC/IPTC Content/ Headline	Operation/ Exercise Name	Headline	The name of the operation or exercise. If not part of an official operation or exercise, leave blank.
Caption	CS2/CS3/CS4/CS5 - IPTC/IPTC Content/ Description	Caption	Caption	The caption block should contain a caption and tag line written in accordance with this guide.
Keyword	CS2/CS3/CS4/CS5 - IPTC/IPTC Content/ Keywords	Keywords	Keywords	Insert appropriate keywords as instructed in Chapter 5.
Caption Editor	CS2/CS3/CS4/CS5 - IPTC/IPTC Content/ Description Writer	Caption Editor	Caption Writer	The name of the individual editing the caption, if different than the photographer. (32 character limit)

SCC MediaGrid	Photoshop	Photo Mechanic	Nikon View	Field Contents for DoD Imagery
VIRIN	CS2/CS3/CS4/CS5 - IPTC/IPTC Status/ Title	VIRIN	Title	Enter the Visual Information Record Identification Number Example: 060515-M-AB123-001 VIRIN Components: - 060514 - Date the image was shot (in YYMMDD format) - M - Photographer's branch of Service (see Service shown field below) - AB123 - Photographer's Vision ID - 001 - Sequence number (Sequence numbers restart at 001 each day, not each shoot)
Command Shown	CS2/CS3/CS4/CS5 - IPTC/IPTC Status/Job Identifier	Command Shown	Trans-mission Reference	Enter the combatant command where the image was taken (USPACOM, USEUCOM, etc.).
Public Release Instructions	CS2/CS3/CS4/CS5 - IPTC/IPTC Status/ Instructions	Public Release Instructions	Instructions	Enter the public release authority information. - If an approved public release authority has released the image, insert "Released" and the name, rank, unit, phone and e-mail contact information of the release authority. - If the image is explicitly not cleared for public release, insert "Not Released" and the name, rank, unit, phone and e-mail contact information of the release authority. - If a release authority has not reviewed the image, insert "Not Reviewed." - If the image is sensitive, insert "For Official Use Only" or "Sensitive But Unclassified" and the name, rank, unit, phone and e-mail contact information of the release authority.

SCC MediaGrid	Photoshop	Photo Mechanic	Nikon View	Field Contents for DoD Imagery
PH TDY Unit	CS2/CS3/CS4 - IPTC/IPTC Status/Provider CS5 - IPTC/IPTC Status/Credit Line	PH TDY	Credit	The unit to which the photographer was temporarily assigned during the shoot (must be on official orders). If not assigned, then leave blank.
Image Source	CS2/CS3/CS4/CS5 - IPTC/IPTC Status/ Source	Image Source	Source	The medium used to capture the image; either digital or film is entered here (do not enter the film type or camera model).
Service Shown	CS2/CS3/CS4/CS5 - Categories/Category	Service Shown	Category	Enter the code for the Service branch of the subjects in the image. A: Army C: Coalition D: Department of Defense F: Air Force G: Coast Guard J: Joint/multi-Service K: Foreign L: Multinational M: Marine Corps N: Navy O: Other Z: National Guard
Supplemental Category	CS2/CS3/CS4/CS5 - Categories/ Supplemental Categories	E-mail/Phone	Supplemental Categories	This field contains three pieces of information: The classification of the image; the classification authority; and contact information for the photographer at his/her current location. - Most images have a classification of Unclassified. If the image is unclassified but For Official Use Only, insert FOUO. If classified, enter the classification. - If the image is classified, enter the classification authority and downgrading schedule. - Always enter e-mail or telephone contact information at the temporary duty location.

Table 4. Force Structure

The following table provides the basic force structure of the four Services, listing units of demarcation from smallest to largest groupings of Service members. Other organizational groupings do occur within each Service. This table is designed only to act as a guide to help the writer list unit designations within a caption.

Branch	Element	Consists of
U.S. Army	Soldier	individual
	Squad/section	9 to 10 Soldiers
	Platoon	16 to 44 Soldiers; 2 to 4 squads
	Company (or Battery/Troop)	62 to 190 Soldiers; 3 to 5 platoons
	Battalion (or Squadron)	300 to 1,000 Soldiers; 4 to 6 companies
	Brigade (or Group/Regiment)	3,000 to 5,000 Soldiers; 2 to 5 battalions
	Division	10,000 to 15,000 Soldiers; 3 brigades
	Corps	20,000 to 45,000 Soldiers; 2 to 5 divisions
	Army	50,000+ Soldiers
U.S. Air Force	Airman	individual
	Section	2 or more Airmen
	Flight	2 or more sections
	Squadron	2 or more flights
	Group	2 or more squadrons
	Wing	2 or more groups
	Numbered Air Force (NAF)	2 or more wings
	Major Command (MAJCOM)	1 or more NAFs
	Air Force	MAJCOMs report to Headquarters, Air Force
U.S. Marine Corps	Marine	individual
	Team	4 Marines
	Squad	3 teams
	Platoon	3 squads
	Company/Battery	3 platoons
	Battalion	3 companies/batteries
	Regiment/Brigade	3 battalions
	Division	3 regiments/brigades
	Marine Corps	3 or more divisions
USMC Aviation	Squadron	4-24 aircraft
	Group	3 or more squadrons
	Wing	3 or more groups

U.S. Navy

The Navy does not list unit designations in the same way as the other Services. While a Sailor may be assigned to a ship, which belongs to a carrier strike group, which falls under a fleet, all of those levels are not listed within a caption.

Identify the ship or onshore unit to which a Sailor is assigned. Also identify lower-level unit demarcations, such as squadrons or detachments.

Identify the strike group to which a ship is assigned only if it is currently deployed with the strike group.

Table 5. Selected Military Aircraft and Vehicles

Bombers	B-52 Stratofortress; B-1B Lancer; B-2 Spirit
Cargo planes	C-130 Hercules; C-17 Globemaster III; C-5 Galaxy
Combat search and rescue (CSAR)	HC-130 King; HC-130E; HC-130 Hercules; HC-130J; HC-130P/N
Fighter and attack aircraft	F-16* Fighting Falcon; F/A-18 Hornet; F/A-18 E or F Super Hornet; F-15 Eagle; F-15E Strike Eagle; F-22 Raptor; A-10 Thunderbolt II
Helicopters	AH-1Z Viper (USMC); AH-64D Apache Longbow; UH-60* Black Hawk; CH-47 Chinook; MH-47 Special Operations Aircraft; OH-58 Kiowa Warrior; UH-1* Huey; UH-1Y Venom (USMC); CH-53D Sea Stallion; CH-53E Super Stallion; H-3 Sea King; SH-60 Seahawk; VH-3D Sea King; HH-60G Pave Hawk; MH-53J/M Pave Low
Special mission	E-2 Hawkeye; E-3* Sentry; EA-6B Prowler; E-8 Joint STARS; EC-130*; P-3C Orion; MC-130E/H Combat Talon I/II; MC-130P Combat Shadow; MC-130J Commando II; CV-22* Osprey (USAF); MV-22* Osprey (USMC); MQ-1 Predator; RQ-11 Raven; A-10/OA-10 Thunderbolt II; U-2; P-8A Poseidon
Tankers	KC-10 Extender; KC-135 Stratotanker; KC-130J Super Hercules
Amphibious	AAV7A1 assault amphibious vehicle (USMC)
MRAP vehicles	Category 1 (small): MaxxPro; Cougar H 4x4; Cheetah; RG-33; M1117 Guardian Armored Security Vehicle Category 2 (medium): MaxxPro; Cougar H 6x6; Golan; RG-33L mine-protected vehicle Category 3 (large): Buffalo mine-protected vehicle
Tracked vehicles	M1/M1A1/M1A2* Abrams tank; M2/M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle; M88A2 Hercules recovery vehicle; M113 Armored Personnel Carrier
Wheeled vehicles	Humvee; Stryker armored vehicle; mine-resistant, ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicle
*Indicates that there is more than one version of this aircraft or vehicle; this is not the full designator.	

Table 6. Selected Weapons

Antiarmor	Javelin shoulder-fired anti-tank missile; TOW missile system; M136E1 AT4-CS confined space light anti-armor weapon
Bombs	GBU-12 Paveway II laser-guided bomb; GBU-31 joint direct attack munition; GBU-15 guided weapon system; GBU-87 cluster bomb; GBU-43/B MOAB
Indirect fire	M102/M119 105 mm howitzer; M120/M121 120 mm mortar system; M198 155 mm howitzer; M224 mortar system; M252 81 mm mortar system; M109A6 Paladin howitzer; M777 towed 155 mm howitzer
Individual	M4* carbine, M9 Beretta pistol; M14 rifle; M16* rifle; MK19-3 40 mm grenade machine gun; M203/M203A1 grenade launcher; M240B machine gun; M249 light machine gun
Missiles	AGM-65 Maverick missile; AGM-86* air-launched cruise missile; AGM-88 high-speed anti-radiation missile (HARM); AGM-129A advanced cruise missile; AGM-130 air-to-surface missile; AGM-154 joint standoff weapon; AGM-158 joint air-to-surface standoff missile; AIM-7 Sparrow missile; AIM-9 Sidewinder missile; LGM-30G Minuteman III ICBM; Tomahawk cruise missile
*Indicates that there is more than one version of this weapon; this is not the full designator.	

Table 7. Afghan provinces

Province	Provincial Center	Location	Notable cities/towns
Badakhshan	Fayzabad	northeast	
Badghis	Qala-e-Naw	west	
Baghlan	Pul-e-Khomri	northeast	
Balkh	Mazar-e-Sharif	northwest	
Bamiyan	Bamiyan	west	Panjab, Waras
Daykundi	Nili	southwest	
Farah	Farah	west	
Faryab	Meymaneh	northwest	Pashtun Kot, Qaysar
Ghazni	Ghazni	southeast	
Ghor	Chaghcharan	west	
Helmand	Lashkar Gah	southwest	Garmsir, Gereshk, Marjah, Musa Qala, Nawa-i-Barakzai, Sangin
Herat	Herat	west	Gulran, Guzara, Injil, Kushk, Sabzawar
Jowzjan	Sheberghan	northwest	
Kabul	Kabul	central	Paghman, Surobi
Kandahar	Kandahar	southwest	Daman, Shorabak, Spin Boldak
Kapisa	Mahmud-i-Raqi	central	Alasai, Mahmud-i-Raqi, Nijrab, Tagab
Khost	Khost	southeast	
Kunar	Asadabad	east	
Kunduz	Kunduz	northeast	Archi, Imam Sahib, Khan Abad, Qalay-i-Zal
Laghman	Mehtar Lam	east	
Logar	Pul-e-Alam	central	Padkhab Shana
Nangarhar	Jalalabad	east	Bihsud, Khogyani
Nimroz	Zaranj	southwest	
Nuristan	Parun	east	
Paktia	Gardez	southeast	Jaji, Zurmat
Paktika	Sharan	southeast	Margah
Panjshir	Bazarak	central	
Parwan	Charikar	central	Bagram, Pul-e-Sayad
Samangan	Aybak	northwest	
Sar-e Pul	Sar-e Pul	northwest	
Takhar	Taloqan	northeast	
Uruzgan	Tarin Kowt	southwest	
Wardak	Meydan Shahr	central	Saydabad
Zabul	Qalat	southeast	

Note: **Afghan** is the term for the people and culture of Afghanistan.
Afghani is the Afghan unit of currency.

Table 8. Iraqi governorates (provinces)

Province	Capital	Notable cities
Anbar	Ramadi	Fallujah, Habaniyah, Haditha, Hamdania
Babil	Hillah	Musayyib, Iskandariyah
Baghdad	Baghdad	Abu Ghraib, Mahmudiyah, Mansour, Sadr City, Taji, Thawra
Basra	Basra	al-Faw, Qurnah, Umm Qasr, Zubayr
Dahuk	Dahuk	Zakho
Dhi Qar	Nasiriyah	Qalat Sukkar, Rifai, Shatra
Diyala	Baqouba	Khanaquin, Muqdadia
Irbil	Irbil	Rawanduz
Karbala	Karbala	
Kirkuk	Kirkuk	
Maysan	Amarah	Majar Al-Kabir
Muthanna	Samawah	
Najaf	Najaf	Kufah
Ninevah	Mosul	Sinjar, Tal Afar
Qadisiya	Diwaniyah	Shamiyah
Salahuddin	Tikrit	Balad, Beiji, Samarra, Tuz Khurmatu
Sulaimaniyah	Sulaimaniyah	Chamchamal, Kalar, Rania
Wasit	Kut	Azeeziaya, Hai, Suwaira

Table 9. Sample Keywords

Concepts	Activities	Events	People	Places	Weapons & Vehicles
Religion	Recreation	Homecoming	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff	United States Naval Academy (USNA)	All weapons and vehicles that are easily identifiable (i.e., prominent) in the imagery should be identified in the keywords using full technical names.
Cultural awareness	Replenishment at sea	Head of state visit	Midshipman	Pentagon	
Health and wellness	Community outreach	Parade	Medics	United States Air Force Academy	
Intelligence	Meeting	Retirement ceremony	Military working dog (MWD)	Joint Security Academy Shorabak (JSAS)	
Communication	Demolition	Vote	Veterans	School	
Morale	Medical aid	Deployment	Aircraft loadmaster	Traffic control point (checkpoint)	
Recreation	Maintenance	Missions (full name, e.g. HALO Mission)	Navy SEALs	United States Military Academy (West Point)	
Security	Construction	Press conference	President of the United States	Security post	
Safety	Disaster relief	Holidays	Secretary of Defense	Combat outpost	
Education	Athletics (when not Exercise-PT)	Change of command	Security forces	Forward operating base	
Agriculture	Emergency response	Black history month	Seabee (CB)	Contingency operating base	
Entertainment	Humanitarian aid	Testimony	Pilot		
Logistics	Refueling	Dignified transfer	Culinary specialist		
Research and development	Weapons training	Joint forcible entry exercise	Foreign military		
Navigation	Land navigation training		Afghan National Army (ANA)		
Aviation	Airdrop		Afghan National Police (ANP)		

Table 10. Sample DD Form 2537

CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified		
VISUAL INFORMATION CAPTION SHEET		
1. PROJECT/EXERCISE/EVENT TITLE Rim of the Pacific - F/A-18 Aerial Refueling	2. VIRIN 100709-F-ZZ999-002	3. DATE RECORDED (YYMMDD) 100709
4. CAMERA OPERATOR (Rank/Name/Home Unit) MSgt John Yossarian / Hickam AFB, HI	5. MEDIA/FILM TYPE Mini DV	6. TAPE/ROLL/DISC NUMBER 001
7. CLASSIFICATION OF MEDIA Unclassified	8. CLASSIFICATION OF CAPTION Unclassified	9. CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY Capt Bill Aardvark 43AF PA, DSN 555-1212 bill.aardvark@hickam.af.mil
10. SYNOPSIS/COVER STORY		
a. LOCATION Hickam AFB, HI		b. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT/ACTIVITY/EXERCISE/EVENT Members of the 465th Aerial Refueling Squadron refuel Navy F/A-18 Hornets in support of Rim of the Pacific Exercise 2010. B-ROLL ONLY. Released by: Capt Bill Aardvark 43AF PA, DSN 555-1212 bill.aardvark@hickam.af.mil
11. INDIVIDUAL IMAGERY DESCRIPTIONS		a. CAMERA NUMBER
b. TIME CODE: HR:MIN:SEC/NEG-SLIDE NUMBER	c. DESCRIPTION (Who, what, when, where, how, and why)	d. CLASSIFICATION OF SCENE/IMAGE
00:00:06:00	Slate	Unclassified
00:00:35:01	Seq; 465th ARS crewmembers conduct crew brief	
00:00:56:24	Seq; 465th ARS crewmembers conduct pre-flight inspection on KC-135R	
00:01:15:11	Seq; Taxi and takeoff of shot from jump seat on flight deck	
00:02:54:12	Seq; Climb out over Diamond Head and refueling ops over pacific	
DD Form 2537, FEB 94		CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified
Previous edition is obsolete.		

Chapter 8

Additional Resources

The following publications are useful tools when writing captions for still or motion imagery. Use these sources for items not listed in this guide.

The Associated Press Stylebook, Basic Books, New York

DD Form 2537, "[Visual Information Caption Sheet](http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd2537.pdf)." www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd2537.pdf

DoD 4120.15-L, "[Model Designation of Military Aerospace Vehicles](http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives)." www.dtic.mil/whs/directives

Jane's All the World's Aircraft; Jane's Yearbooks, London, and Franklin Watts Inc., New York

Jane's Fighting Ships; Jane's Yearbooks, London, and Franklin Watts Inc., New York

JP 1-02, "[Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/)." www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/

[The World Factbook. Central Intelligence Agency](http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html). www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html

Webster's New World College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, Wiley, Hoboken, N.J.

[How to submit to DIMOC:](http://www.defenseimagery.mil/learning/howto.html) http://www.defenseimagery.mil/learning/howto.html

[DoD Style Guide:](http://www.defenseimagery.mil/learning/captionstyle.html) http://www.defenseimagery.mil/learning/captionstyle.html

[Policies:](http://www.defenseimagery.mil/learning/vipolicy.html) http://www.defenseimagery.mil/learning/vipolicy.html

Grammar and Writing

[Newsroom 101, AP style help:](http://www.newsroom101.com/) http://www.newsroom101.com/

[AP Stylebook online](http://www.apstylebook.com/) http://www.apstylebook.com/

[Poynter's News University:](http://www.newsu.org/) http://www.newsu.org/

Service-specific fact sheets:

Army

[Equipment:](https://peosoldier.army.mil/equipment) https://peosoldier.army.mil/equipment

[Fact file:](http://www.army.mil/factfiles/) http://www.army.mil/factfiles/

[Dictionary \(AR 310-25\):](http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/army/ar310-25.pdf) http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/army/ar310-25.pdf

Navy

[Equipment:](http://www.navy.com/about/equipment.html) http://www.navy.com/about/equipment.html

[Fact file:](http://www.navy.mil/navydata/fact.asp) http://www.navy.mil/navydata/fact.asp

Air Force

[Equipment:](http://www.af.mil/information/factsheets/index.asp) http://www.af.mil/information/factsheets/index.asp

[Dictionary \(AFDD 1-2\):](http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/usaf/afdd1-2.pdf) http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/usaf/afdd1-2.pdf

Marine Corps

[Equipment:](http://www.marcorsyscom.usmc.mil/SITES/PMICE/default.asp) http://www.marcorsyscom.usmc.mil/SITES/PMICE/default.asp

[Dictionary \(MCRP 205-12C\):](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents) http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents

References to non-DoD websites are provided as a service and do not constitute or imply endorsement of these organizations or their programs by the U.S. Department of Defense. DoD is not responsible for the content of pages found at these sites. URLs listed in this reference were current as of the date of publication.