Dear USO Colleagues:

Welcome to the refreshed brand of the USO!

At 75 years old, this iconic American brand was due for an update. This guidebook is designed to give you all the information, direction and resources you need to consistently bring the USO’s brand elements to life.

In this guide you will find a new expression of the USO as an organization on a singular mission of connection - keeping military service members connected to family, home and country, throughout their service to the nation. A new mission statement, as well as an updated logo and brand language, all reflect this new brand positioning.

A note on our brand colors: To give additional symbolism to our visual brand elements, we adopted the colors of the American flag (dubbed Old Glory Red and Old Glory Blue). This new logo, along with its vibrant, new colors, should replace all other logo versions, except our 75th-anniversary logo in use throughout 2016.

Great brands are strengthened by using their brand elements with absolute and unwavering consistency. Our logo, brand colors, design guidelines, mission statement and core brand language should be used exactly as prescribed in this guidebook.

Should you have any questions, or need clarity, our Brand and Creative Services team is here to support you. You may call a Brand and Creative Services colleague for help or email us at brand@uso.org. Either way, we are here as a resource and look forward to hearing from you.

As our 75th anniversary highlights, our deep history underscores the very temporary nature of our privilege as stewards of one of America’s great brands. To do the best job we can to support American service members for the next 75 years and beyond, it is up to us to leave our successors the strongest USO brand possible.

Making regular and consistent use of this guide is the first step.

Sincerely,

Paul G. Allvin
Senior Vice President, Brand Advancement
NEW Brand Language

The USO is on a mission of connection, keeping service members connected to the things they love and fight for – family, home, and country – throughout their time of service.

Mission Statement:

The USO strengthens America’s military service members by keeping them connected to family, home and country, throughout their service to the nation.

Core Brand Expression:

This new element is a comprehensive statement that frames how we talk about the USO. It need not be quoted directly, but its articulation should inform all written, spoken and visual characterizations of the USO. It may be quoted, paraphrased, or just used as a guide for original language:

The USO has kept our military men and women connected to family, home and country throughout their time of service – no matter where, how long, or under what conditions they serve. It was founded in preparation for World War II by national leaders who understood that maintaining high morale in a fighting force is vital to a nation’s military success. Over time, the USO has become the vital bridge between Americans and their military service members.

The USO is a family of volunteers, sustained by the charitable contributions of millions of generous Americans. We are united in our commitment to support America’s service members by keeping them connected to the people, places and things they love. We do this through countless acts of caring, comfort, connection and support. Our work is America’s most powerful expression of gratitude to the men and women who secure our nation’s freedoms.

Brand Framework

WE BELIEVE...
High morale is vital to the success of a nation’s military service community.
Service members draw strength from connecting to the things they love and fight for.
Service members should feel connected to family, home and country throughout their service, no matter the circumstances.

ABOUT US
We act as an extended family, with kindness, caring, comfort, compassion, encouragement, support and reassurance, for American service members everywhere.
We know that meaningful expressions of love and support have a powerful impact on those who serve.

THOSE WE SERVE
Are service members, not just “troops.”
Are pillars of American strength, not weakened by conditions of their service.

KEY BRAND WORDS
Connection » Family » Home » Country » Service

ATTITUDE
Welcome
Open
Kind
Caring
Smile

PLACE
Home
Comfort
Haven
Food
Snacks
Chair

OUTCOME
Release
Relief
Reassurance
Break

MOTIVATION
Gratitude
Support
Service
Giving Back

EMOTION
Family
Mom
Dad
Son
Daughter
Husband
Wife
Connection
Hug
Love
NEW Badge Logo

As part of the USO’s brand refresh, the logo has been optimized for reproduction across a wide range of materials and features a more modern design with cleaner lines and richer colors (our logo now features the official colors of the American Flag). By the start of 2017, all materials developed and distributed will be required to use the new USO Badge logo. We ask that over the course of 2016 you begin the process of exhausting your current supply of materials featuring older versions of the USO logo (see page 13 for expired logos).

The USO logo should be used in full color as the first option on all communications and products whenever possible. One color options are also available for use in either black or white.

The universal USO badge logo may be downloaded here: https://uso.box.com/badge-logo

Center logos may be downloaded here: https://uso.box.com/center-badge-logos

Program logos may be downloaded here: https://uso.box.com/program-badge-logos

The USO logo is the primary element of the organization’s visual identity and may not altered in any way. The registered trademark (®) on the bottom right side of the logo must always be visible. We have created logo files for use on both light backgrounds ( featuring a dark registered trademark symbol) and dark backgrounds ( featuring a white registered trademark symbol). If you have any questions about which logo file to use, please contact brand@uso.org. We're here to help!

Using the USO logo is the best way to communicate your official connection to the organization. In some instances, it may be important for your audience to know the specific center or program behind the communications.

Every USO center and national-level program has an official logo, created by Brand and Creative Services, which may be used to identify specific centers and/or programs on both web and printed materials. Center and program logos are made up of two elements (the USO logo and a wordmark), neither of which should be altered in any way.

2016 USO LOGOS

Individual Logo Files

USO BADGE FULL-COLOR (LIGHT BG)
For Use on Light Backgrounds

USO BADGE FULL-COLOR (DARK BG)
For Use on Dark Backgrounds

USO BADGE BLACK (WHITE BG)
For Use on Light Backgrounds. Only for use in black and white materials.

USO BADGE WHITE (DARK BG)
For Use on Dark Backgrounds. Only for use in black and white materials.

For the most accurate color reproduction of the USO Badge logo, please use the provided color formulas.

OLD GLORY BLUE
PMS: 282
CMYK: 108/83/53/51
RGB: 0/133/77
Hex: #002147

OLD GLORY RED
PMS: 193
CMYK: 81/100/77/1
RGB: 187/19/62
Hex: #BB133E

WHITE
PMS: 126
CMYK: 0/0/0/0
RGB: 255/255/255
Hex: #FFFFFF

Important note

The USO Badge logo is the primary element of the organization’s visual identity and may not altered in any way. The registered trademark (®) on the bottom right side of the logo must always be visible. We have created logo files for use on both light backgrounds ( featuring a dark registered trademark symbol) and dark backgrounds ( featuring a white registered trademark symbol). If you have any questions about which logo file to use, please contact brand@uso.org. We're here to help!
Spacing & Size

CLEAR SPACE

The USO Badge logo requires separation from the other elements around it. At a minimum, copy and images should stand clear of the logo in all directions by a factor equivalent to one half the height of the center panel that holds the stars and lettering.

SIZE

To ensure the USO logo is easy to read, minimum size requirements have been set to keep the USO letters legible.

Proper Logo Usage

**DO USE THE LOGO LIKE THIS**

- Use the logo on solid white (or navy) backgrounds with plenty of breathing room.
- Use the appropriate one-color logo for black and white printing.
- Use the logo on images with plenty of white space.
- Use the logo on solid white (or navy) backgrounds with plenty of breathing room.
- Use the appropriate one-color logo for black and white printing.
- Use the logo on images with plenty of white space.
- Use the logo on solid white (or navy) backgrounds with plenty of breathing room.
- Use the appropriate one-color logo for black and white printing.
- Use the logo on images with plenty of white space.

**DO NOT USE THE LOGO LIKE THIS**

- DO NOT use the color logo on a red background.
- DO NOT add any text to the logo.
- DO NOT tilt the logo.
- DO NOT use the logo with other USO logos.
- DO NOT use the logo over busy backgrounds.
- DO NOT change any colors in the logo.
- DO NOT place the logo too close to other design elements.
- DO NOT stretch the logo.

Important note: The Badge logo may not be altered in any way. For questions, please e-mail brand@uso.org.
In celebration of the USO’s 75th anniversary, we have created a distinctive logo to help us highlight this major milestone and increase awareness about our dedication to America’s service members for 75 years and counting. The use of a single logo during the anniversary year represents our shared commitment to keep America’s service members connected to family, home and country throughout their service to our nation. The 75 Years logo is the official anniversary logo of the USO from January 4, 2016 - December 31, 2016 and should be used in place of the USO badge logos on all communications highlighting the celebration. (*Please refer to page 12 for more information.)

NEW 75 Years Logo

Individual Logo Files

Four-color gold and one-color black or white options of the 75 Years logo are available for download here: uso.box.com/75-logo

- **75 YEARS LOGO (GOLD - LIGHT BG)** (Preferred) For use on light backgrounds.
- **75 YEARS LOGO (GOLD - DARK BG)** For use on dark backgrounds.
- **75 YEARS LOGO (WHITE)** For use when color printing is not an option.

For the most accurate color reproduction of the 75 Years logo, please use the provided color formulas.

- **DARK GOLD**
  - PMS: 2007
  - CMYK: 0/32/89/14
  - RGB: 224/165/38
  - Hex: #E0A526
- **LIGHT GOLD**
  - PMS: 2004
  - CMYK: 0/15/64/0
  - RGB: 254/216/128
  - Hex: #FBDD7A
- **OLD GLORY BLUE**
  - PMS: 282
  - CMYK: 100/87/37/51
  - RGB: 0/33/71
  - Hex: #002147

Important note

The anniversary logo may not be altered in any way. This includes the 75 Years text, as it is part of the logo.
Spacing & Size

CLEAR SPACE
The 75 Years logo requires separation from the other elements around it. At a minimum, copy and images should stand clear of the logo in all directions by a factor equivalent to one half the height of the center panel that holds the stars and lettering.

SIZE
To ensure the 75 Years logo is easy to read, minimum size requirements have been set to keep the “USO” letters and “75 Years” tag legible.

Proper Logo Usage

DO USE THE LOGO LIKE THIS

- DO use the logo on solid white (or navy) backgrounds with plenty of breathing room.
- DO use the appropriate one-color logo for black and white printing.
- DO use the logo on images with plenty of white space.
- DO use the appropriate amount of clear space between the logo and other design elements.

DO NOT USE THE LOGO LIKE THIS

- DO NOT use the logo on backgrounds without enough contrast.
- DO NOT tilt the logo.
- DO NOT use the logo over busy backgrounds.
- DO NOT place the logo too close to other design elements.
- DO NOT use the logo with another USO logo.
- DO NOT stretch the logo.

Important note: The 75 Years logo may not be altered in any way. For questions, please e-mail brand@uso.org.
There are four types of USO logos that are approved for use in 2016: The USO Badge (universal logo); 75 Years (anniversary logo); national-level program logos; and center logos. Please use the following chart to help determine when and where to use the approved logos.

### Logo Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENERAL OFFICE USE</th>
<th>75 YEARS</th>
<th>PROGRAMS</th>
<th>CENTERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Cards</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letterhead</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Envelopes</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PowerPoint</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note Cards</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail Signature</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracts</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LONG TERM USE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Center Signage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle Wraps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARKETING MATERIALS</th>
<th>75 YEARS</th>
<th>PROGRAMS</th>
<th>CENTERS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information Sheets</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brochures</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ads (Print/Digital)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flyers</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Web, Print Promotions</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folders</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press Releases</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERNAL MATERIALS</th>
<th>75 YEARS</th>
<th>PROGRAMS</th>
<th>CENTERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Routing Slips</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fax Sheets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance Forms</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MERCHANDISE</th>
<th>75 YEARS</th>
<th>PROGRAMS</th>
<th>CENTERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessories (Hats, pins, ties, scarves, etc.)</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional Products</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENTS (Special Events/Program Events)</th>
<th>75 YEARS</th>
<th>PROGRAMS</th>
<th>CENTERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banners</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step and Repeat</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Signage</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invitations</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIGITAL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USO.org/Center Websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Expired USO Logos

**DO NOT USE HISTORICAL USO Logos**

Below are a few examples of historical USO logos that are no longer permitted for use on any communications. The only USO logos permitted for use in 2016 are the USO badge logos (universal, centers, national-level programs) and the 75 Years logo.

**Important note**

The 75 Years logo is not approved for use beyond December 31, 2016, please keep this in mind when you are purchasing items featuring this logo.

**Important note**

The 2003 USO logo — currently in use — will expire on December 31, 2016. (See page 4 for more details.)
COLOR PALETTE

The use of Old Glory Blue, Old Glory Red and White, creates a unified, recognizable appearance for the USO across all communications and materials.

The brand palette features the official brand colors of the USO and includes specifications for Pantone colors on coated stock (C); when reproduced using the four-color process (CMYK); and for digital presentations (RGB).

**Brand Palette**

- **OLD GLORY BLUE**
  - PMS: 282
  - CMYK: 100/87/37/51
  - RGB: 0/33/71
  - Hex: #002147

- **OLD GLORY RED**
  - PMS: 193
  - CMYK: 8/100/77/1
  - RGB: 187/19/62
  - Hex: #BB133E

- **WHITE**
  - CMYK 0/0/0/0
  - RGB 255/255/255
  - Hex: #FFFFFF

**Accent Color**

An accent color has been chosen to complement our primary palette if needed and should be used minimally.

- **BLUE**
  - PMS: 3691
  - CMYK 100/45/0/45
  - RGB 0/98/152
  - Hex: #006298

TYPOGRAPHY

**Primary Fonts**

Whitney is the official typeface of the USO and should be used on external print and digital communications whenever possible.

The consistent use of typography, as outlined here, will add strength and visual meaning to our communications. Whitney was selected for its warm, friendly personality and its legibility at all sizes and across multiple mediums.

- **Whitney Bold | ABC abc 123**
- **Whitney Bold Italic | ABC abc 123**
- **Whitney Semibold | ABC abc 123**
- **Whitney Semibold Italic | ABC abc 123**
- **Whitney Medium | ABC abc 123**
- **Whitney Medium Italic | ABC abc 123**
- **Whitney Book | ABC abc 123**
- **Whitney Book Italic | ABC abc 123**
- **Whitney Light | ABC abc 123**
- **Whitney Light Italic | ABC abc 123**

**Secondary Fonts**

When Whitney isn’t available for use, Calibri is an appropriate alternative and may be used by in-house teams for low production value communications, such as flyers, PowerPoint presentations, information sheets, etc.

- **Calibri Bold | ABC abc 123**
- **Calibri Bold Italic | ABC abc 123**
- **Calibri Regular | ABC abc 123**
- **Calibri Italic | ABC abc 123**
- **Calibri Light | ABC abc 123**

**PRINT AND WEB**

As a general rule, Whitney book is used for body text and semibold or light is used for headings and sub-headings. Whitney black should be avoided whenever possible. Body text should be set in normal case. Headings may be set in all caps and normal case (never small caps). All text should be left justified wherever possible.

Whitney may be purchased through Hoefler & Co. at typography.com.
PHOTOGRAPHY

When it comes to selecting the best photos for your project, keep the focus on the positive connections we create through our mission delivery and portray those we serve as pillars of American strength. Service members should never be weakened by conditions of their service. We are a forward-thinking brand united in our commitment to support America’s service members by keeping them connected to family, home and country throughout their service to the nation. This tenet should always be reflected in our imagery.

A few things to keep in mind when selecting photography for your print or digital communications...

Please use photos that are:

Topical — The most up-to-date photos relating directly to the content of what is being communicated.

Cultural — Highlighting the people, places and things at the heart of the USO. This may include: Volunteers, center staff, centers in use, service members utilizing centers and/or participating in USO programs.

Historical — Use only when illustrating our legacy. (Note: Historical photos should be used sparingly and only in a supporting role. When talking about our history, we prefer to give a nod to the past while shining the brightest light on the future.)

To request images for use in your next project or for recommendations where to purchase stock photography, please contact photos@uso.org.

⚠️ Important note
The DOD has strict guidelines about using service members in advertising, marketing and promotional materials. Before using images of service members on any external communications, please contact photos@uso.org for approval.
Before starting any video project, please contact the Brand Advancement department. A member of the department will need to approve any scripts and intent for video use and/or distribution prior to filming. If your video project is approved for production, a Brand Advancement team member will work with you to ensure that the message and branding are consistent with the organization’s standards. Here are a few guidelines to help you get started with your approved projects:

**INTRO**
Please use the USO logo animation at the beginning of your video. No modifications should be made to this intro. The intro files can be downloaded here: uso.box.com/vgcentersrollin

**CREDITS**
The end of video credits are constructed in Adobe After Effects and use Whitney or Calibri font. The template can be downloaded here: uso.box.com/vgcenters2016credits

Text should be set in all caps in either Whitney Semibold or Calibri Bold font and should be aligned into two columns and bolded/unbolded. All text should lie on a large black square as in the above photo. The black square, with text, should briefly fade in and fade out. We strongly discourage any graphics or animations in the credits.

**LOWER THIRDS**
Lower thirds are used to identify speakers and may also be used to communicate other information such as location or a call to action. The lower thirds are constructed in Adobe After Effects and use Whitney or Calibri font. The template can be downloaded here: uso.box.com/vgcenterslowerthirds

Text should be set in all caps in either Whitney Semibold or Calibri Bold font and should be left aligned on a black bar in the lower left or lower right corner of the video. Bars should briefly fade in and fade out. We strongly discourage any graphics or animations in the lower thirds.

**WATERMARK**
All USO videos should have a watermark placed in the bottom right hand corner of the video. You can download the watermark here: uso.box.com/vgcenterswatermark

For users building their videos in Adobe Premiere, the positioning of the logo should be: 1710.0 (X axis), 930.0 (Y axis), scaled to 12.0 percent. For users building their videos in another editing software, please eyeball the watermark to reflect the above image or existing videos on the USO’s YouTube channel.

**TRANSITIONS**
In video and film, transition effects have meaning. As such, transition effects should be used sparingly.

**ASPECT RATIOS**
We strongly suggest everything be shot in 16:9 wide screen. Vertical video is highly discouraged.

**LENGTH**
Videos should ideally be kept between 2-3 minutes long and no more than 5 minutes.

**VIDEO THUMBNAILS**
A video thumbnail is the image displayed in the video player when the video is not playing. By default, YouTube selects a thumbnail image for each video. However we recommend going to the Basic Info tab on each YouTube video you upload and adding a custom thumbnail to ensure the best possible image has been selected to represent your video. Your custom thumbnail image should be as large as possible, as the image will also be used as the preview image in the embedded player. We recommend your custom thumbnails: Have a resolution of 1280x720 (with minimum width of 640 pixels); Be sure to uploaded in image formats such as .JPG, .GIF, or .PNG.

**FILE REQUIREMENTS FOR PLAYBACK ON USO DIGITAL PROPERTIES**
- **Format:** .mp4, .mov  
- **Audio Codec:** AAC-LC  
- **Video Codec:** H.264

Need an example? Visit the USO’s YouTube channel to see a few examples in action. The video found here: https://youtu.be/QBSGXP6jRCc is a great example of how the USO’s standard video graphics should look.
APPLICATIONS

Here are examples of our brand applied on various promotional mediums, products and internal works.

Office Communications

E-MAIL SIGNATURE

The e-mail signature is a vital tool in presenting the USO as a unified brand while providing relevant information to help others communicate with us. Please choose from the following options for your @uso.org e-mail address to present a more unified, professional appearance for official USO communications.

E-mail signatures should be formatted using Calibri (color black) and the font size should be no larger than 14pt. For e-mail signatures on mobile devices, default fonts may be used. Your first and last name should be set in bold, all other lines should be regular (no italics).

*If you actively use social media as part of your job with the USO you have the option to include this information on the last line before the mission statement.

Important note

Do not add any personal information to your e-mail signature (such as inspirational quotes) as it distracts from the unified USO brand.
All official USO social media accounts must use either the USO Badge/Center logo or the USO 75 Years Logo as the profile image. If you need assistance setting up your profile images, please contact brand@uso.org. When posting photos to your social media accounts, please refer to the photography guidelines on page 20.

ABOUT OUR BRAND VOICE

The USO, much like the military community it serves, speaks a language all its own. Our mix of military speak and nonprofit nomenclature can make it challenging to keep our organizational voice clear and consistent. This stylebook is designed to help us maintain that clarity and consistency. It should be used as a guide for all USO written communication.

This is a guide to the mundane and obscure, to military jargon and only-at-the-USO language. From AAFES to “Your USO at Work,” it helps us keep our tongues untied and our expressed intentions clear. When do we use GWOT? When do we say “troops” versus “service members?” What’s the difference between “deactivate” and “inactivate?” It’s all in this guide.

There’s something else informing the USO Stylebook, as well: The brand voice of the USO. Our voice should carry our new brand positioning, as the 75-year-old American institution that today, as always, carries out its mission of connection. We strengthen America’s military service members by keeping them connected to family, home and country, throughout their service to the nation.

The voice of this mission should reflect the pride with which we pursue our mission, the esteem in which we hold the military community we serve and the warm, supportive, home-and-family atmosphere we seek to create for service members, whenever and wherever they seek us out.

Consider it a companion piece to the new Graphic Identity Guide. Together, these two books will help give the USO consistent visual and verbal consistency to ensure a strong, new brand positioning.

TWO NOTES ON BRAND LANGUAGE

• When we write about the USO, our expressions should reflect our three core beliefs that form the foundation of our new brand expression:
  • High morale is vital to the success of a nation’s military community.
  • Service members draw strength by staying connected to the things they love and fight for.
  • Service members should feel connected to family, home and country throughout their service, no matter their circumstances.

Also, we should characterize service members with language that reflects the feedback received directly from them. Most prefer being referred to generically as service members, not troops (particularly the airmen, sailors and members of the Coast Guard):

• They are not weakened by conditions of their service. They are pillars of strength for America.
• While they welcome our support, they don’t seek or welcome pity.

The goal of this stylebook is big and simple: Help us achieve our ideal of operating as one USO, speaking with one voice.

*If you have a question this style guide can’t answer, please consult AP (Associated Press) style or contact a member of the Brand Advancement department at brand@uso.org.
Army:
active duty
Hyphenated when used as a compound adjective. Examples: “Service members on active duty will receive a 3 percent raise Jan. 1” or “Active-duty service members will receive a 3 percent raise Jan. 1”

admiral
There are four grades of admiral in the Navy and Coast Guard. From lowest to highest, they are Rear Admiral, lower half (one star), Rear Admiral, upper half (two stars), Vice Admiral (three stars) and Admiral (four stars). There have been five-star admirals (Fleet Admiral), but none since WWII. In headlines, an admiral of any rank can be referred to simply as admiral; however, his/her exact rank must be clearly noted on first reference within the story. See general.

AFB
Do not use this abbreviation for a stateside Air Force base. Example: Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. See air base. Air Force base.

Afghan
A person from Afghanistan. Not to be confused with afghani, the currency of Afghanistan.

Afghani
The currency of Afghanistan. Not to be confused with Afghan, a person from Afghanistan.

Afghanistan War
Capitalize as part of the name of a specific conflict. Also, Iraq War, Vietnam War, etc.

AFCOM
See American Forces Network.

Air Force birthday
The Air Force is September 18, 1947.

Air Force Cross

Air Force Military Training Center
Located at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio. The center where most Air Force personnel undergo initial training. Do not abbreviate.

Air Force specialty code
Job codes for Air Force members. Example: 3A051 is information manager, 35051 is supply specialist and 3N071 is public affairs. Corresponds to Army military occupation specialty and Navy enlisted classification code. Use specialty, skill or code on second reference.

air station
A small Air Force overseas installation that has no flight line. Stories about air stations carry the name of the city their location as datelines. Do not abbreviate.

Airmen Battle Uniform

Airmen’s Medal

AK-47
A Soviet-designed 7.62 mm automatic assault rifle, produced in many countries and in common use by armies and insurgents around the world. Initially fielded in 1947, it was designed by Mikhail Kalashnikov. A modern derivative of the original design, the AK-74, was first fielded in the late 1970s.
American Red Cross operation on a U.S. military installation, overseas are located on military installations, such as in Singapore. Some American Red Cross operations in Japan, Macau, Hong Kong and other countries are affiliated with the International Red Cross societies.

A system that broadcasts information and entertainment to Defense Department personnel and their families stationed overseas. Core programming from U.S. commercial networks and other sources is furnished through the American Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS). Local programs are produced by AFRTS outlets to serve the needs of local audiences. AFRTS provides service on second reference. Do not abbreviate. Red Cross operates four European hub offices in Hanau, Ramstein and Mannheim, Germany, and in Naples, Italy. Many offices operating in foreign countries are affiliated with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Society; for example, national Red Cross societies exist in Japan, Macau, Hong Kong and Singapore. Some American Red Cross operations overseas are located on military installations, such as Misawa Air Base in Japan. When referring to a Red Cross operation on a U.S. military installation, always use American Red Cross to avoid possible confusion with other agencies, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross.

American Forces Network
AFN is acceptable on second reference and in headlines. AFN, an American Forces Radio and Television Service outlet, is funded by Congress to provide service members, families and Defense Department civilians with entertainment and information. AFN broadcasts TV and radio to Americans around the world, including Iraq and Afghanistan. http://myafn.DODmedia.osd.mil/

American Forces Radio and Television Service
A system that broadcasts information and entertainment to Defense Department personnel and their families stationed overseas. Core programming from U.S. commercial networks and other sources is furnished through the American Forces Radio and Television Broadcast Center at March Air Reserve Base in California. Local programs are produced by AFRTS outlets to serve the needs of local audiences. AFRTS acceptable in headlines and on second reference. Headquarters are in Alexandria, Virginia. Parent unit of American Forces Network. http://afrts.DODmedia.osd.mil/

American Red Cross
Red Cross permitted on second reference. Do not abbreviate. Red Cross operates four European hub offices in Hanau, Ramstein and Mannheim, Germany, and in Naples, Italy. Many offices operating in foreign countries are affiliated with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Society; for example, national Red Cross societies exist in Japan, Macau, Hong Kong and Singapore. Some American Red Cross operations overseas are located on military installations, such as Misawa Air Base in Japan. When referring to a Red Cross operation on a U.S. military installation, always use American Red Cross to avoid possible confusion with other agencies, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross.

American Human Resources Command
The personnel system of the Army. Headquarters moved to Fort Knox, Ky., in 2010 under Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC).

Asian regions
Geographic usage follows these popular divisions: Asian subcontinent: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sikkim and Sri Lanka. Far East: China, Japan, North and South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and eastern portions of Russia. Middle East (also called Southwest Asia by the military): Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and the Republic of Yemen. Also included are the island of Cyprus and the northeastern African nations of Egypt and Sudan. Southeast Asia: Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Pacific Rim: A less specifically defined reference to those nations of Asia that border the Pacific Ocean.

Army Air Corps
Take care with references in stories about World War II. The corps was established on July 2, 1926, before it was replaced by the Army Air Forces in June 1941—before Pearl Harbor. Hence, World War II articles should not call it the Army Air Corps. The Army Air Forces became the U.S. Air Force in September 1947, when the Department of the Air Force was established.

Army Air Forces
Established in June 1941 to replace the Army Air Corps. In September 1947, the Army Air Forces became a separate branch, the U.S. Air Force. See Army Air Corps.

Army and Air Force Exchange Service
AAFES is acceptable in all references, but make sure a first-reference use is followed by the full name. Acceptable to use exchange, exchanges or the exchange service on second reference. Headquarters are in Dallas. http://www.aafes.com/

Army birthday
The Army’s birthday is June 14, 1775.

Army Combat Uniform
Introduced in 2005 to replace the 1980s-era Battle Dress Uniform and Desert Camouflage Uniform. Known for its unique “digital pattern.” The ACM relies heavily on Velcro fasteners; another distinguishing feature is that the wearer’s rank is affixed to his/her chest. Use abbreviation ACM in headlines and on second reference. Generally speaking, combat uniform will suffice. Also see ACM and MultiCam. http://www.army.mil/symbols/combatunif.html

Army Corps of Engineers
The Army Corps of Engineers, with headquarters in Washington, D.C., has constructed major dams, levees, harvests, waterways and locks throughout the United States. In its military research and development role, it deals with such issues as rapid repair and restoration of bomb-damaged runways, computer-aided architectural and engineering design systems, and energy analysis systems for estimating fuel consumption in buildings.

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***B***

**barracks**

Formally called bachelor enlisted or bachelor officer quarters (BEQ or BOQ). The Air Force calls them dormitories; the other services call them barracks. Many lower-ranking single enlisted personnel or married personnel living apart from their families live in barracks or dormitories. Barracks also applies to Navy or Coast Guard quarters on land. Quarters aboard ship is called berthing. It’s always acceptable to use quarters.

**bases, camps, forts**

Most stateside Army bases are called forts, although there are a number of camps that generally host National Guard units for training exercises. Many Army facilities overseas are called camps, as are many Marine bases stateside. In all cases, use the proper name of the facility, but “base” is always acceptable in headlines and on subsequent references.

**base pay**

Basic salary, excluding food, housing, cost-of-living allowances and special duty pay. 2016 base pay (all ranks).

**Base Realignment And Closure**

A program of consolidation, reorganization and base closures undertaken beginning in 2005. Many major commands have relocated or will relocate under this program. Also, many adjoining military bases will be combined into a joint base. For example, Fort Lewis, Wash., and McChord Air Force Base, Wash., have been combined into Joint Base Lewis-McChord. BRAC is acceptable in a headline, but spell it out on first reference. http://www.brac.gov/

**basic training**

See recruit training.

**battalion**

Do not abbreviate. When used with a figure, it forms a name and should be capitalized, e.g., 1st Battalion. See echelons of command.

**battery**

An Army or Marine Corps unit of artillery equivalent to a company. Usually commanded by a captain and subordinate to a battalion. Proper style is “Battery A, 1st Battalion, 113th Field Artillery Regiment.”

**BDU**

See battle dress uniform. Abbreviation acceptable in headlines and on second reference.

**berthing**

Quarters for personnel aboard ship. See barracks.

**billet**

A particular job slot a service member is assigned to. Term most commonly used among Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

**Black Hawk**

Two words, both capitalized. The nickname for the Army’s UH-60 Black Hawk utility helicopter. There are several variants of the Black Hawk used by other services. See Pave Hawk (Air Force), Seahawk (Navy), Jayhawk (Coast Guard). https://safety.army.mil/ON-DUTY/Aviation/UH-60BlackHawk.aspx

**Blue Angels**


**body armor**

A fabric vest with inserted metal or ceramic plates, designed to protect the wearer from shrapnel or bullets.

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**awards**

See military decorations.

**BX**

Use base exchange or exchange for an story involving AAFES at an Air Force base or installation. An Army facility is a post exchange or PX. A Navy facility is a NEX.
Military casualty numbers include both people who are wounded, ill or injured service members or veterans. Caregivers often are family members such as a spouse or parent.

Caregivers Seminar

A USO program, Caregivers Seminars offer those providing care a variety of insights into how best to care for wounded, ill or injured service members, while caring for themselves and other family members. For more on Caregivers Seminars, visit: http://www.uso.org/caregivers

Casualty

Military casualty numbers include both people who are killed and those who are wounded.

cavalry

Capitalize in unit names. Historically, horse-mounted soldiers. In a modern sense, cavalry units are either armored (tank) or used in scout/reconnaissance roles. Cavalry is sometimes referred to as “cav,” but only use that in a direct quote. NOTE: Always check the spelling of C-A-V-A-L-R-Y, so that it is not confused with the Biblical Calvary, where Jesus was crucified. Rule of thumb: Cavalry is called “cav,” not “cal.”

cemeteries


center

See also USO center. Note “center” is lowercased. At more than 180 locations around the world, thousands of U.S. service members and their families walk through the doors of the USO every day. Inside the USO, they’ll find a place to relax, ways to connect with loved ones back home, snacks to enjoy and a wide range of USO programs and services. To locate a center, visit: https://www.uso.org/centers

Central Command

See U.S. Central Command. CENTCOM is acceptable in a headline.

Change of Command

A change of command is a formal military ceremony during which the outgoing commander passes the unit colors or guidon to the incoming commander. The assumption of command is the issuing of the orders that assigns a person the legal authority to command.

Chaplain

Use: Chaplain (Maj.) John Jones. Military chaplains are officers who are clergy and perform religious services for military units. Usually assigned by religious affiliation. Chaplain is a job title, not a military rank, but chaplains are routinely addressed as “Chaplain” (regardless of religion) rather than by their military rank. See doctor.

Chartered Center

See also USO chartered center. A chartered center receives a USO charter from USO, Inc. to operate under the USO’s brand. USO Inc. conducts periodic reviews of chartered centers to ensure that their operations are in keeping with USO’s Standard of Excellence (SOE). Chartered centers are independent organizations and receive the majority of their funding through their local community.

Chief

The unofficial form of address for the Army of Air Force chief of staff, but standard for an Air Force chief master sergeant, a Navy chief petty officer, a chief warrant officer or an Air Force crew chief. To prevent confusion, do not use “chief” in headlines to mean senior Navy leadership, e.g., Navy chief predicts slower promotions. Instead, use the person’s actual rank and/or job title.

Chief Warrant Officer

An officer in the pay grades of W-2 through W-5. Warrant officers tend to be technical experts in their chosen field, with more responsibility than enlisted personnel, but without the command responsibility of commissioned officers. While chief warrant officers are informally called “Mr. /Miss/Mrs. (name)” or “Chief (name)” by others, only use those terms in a direct quote. Otherwise, use the AP style. The Air Force does not have chief warrant officers. See warrant officer.

Chopper

Acceptable on second reference as a nickname for helicopter, but not recommended. Perhaps more appropriate for light features. Also see copter, helo.
of Dress Blues, known as the Army Service Uniform. The Army Class A Green uniform will not be worn after 2014.

**Combat Medical Badge**
Awards to medical personnel holding the rank of colonel or below, who are assigned or attached to ground combat units and perform medical duties under fire. Established in 1945. Do not abbreviate in headlines. http://www.army.mil/symbols/combattbadges/medical.html

**Combat Distinguishing Device**
The Army awards one gold stripe for each six months of combat duty. The stripes are worn on the lower right sleeves of service and dress uniforms. Other services have similar combat duty indicators.

**Combat V**
See V device.

**combined command**
Refers to operations and task forces comprised of military forces from more than one country. For example, an early command of the allied invasion and occupation of Iraq was called Combined Joint Task Force-7. See joint.

**Combined Federal Campaign**
The Defense Department’s annual charitable fundraising effort at military installations; similar to United Way in the United States. The only regular, officially sanctioned fundraising effort conducted among federal employees. This campaign usually occurs during a six-week period in September and October. CFC is acceptable on second reference. http://www.opm.gov/cfc/

**Comfort Crew for Military Kids**
The USO partners with the Comfort Crew for Military Kids – a USO Transition 360 Alliance member – to send award-winning author and motivational speaker Trevor Romain on tour to promote self-confidence and resiliency in military children ages 6 to 15 years old. For more on the Comfort Crew for Military Kids, visit: https://www.uso.org/programs/comfort-crew-for-military-kids

**command-sponsored**
Term for a family member who is authorized to accompany his or her sponsor to an overseas assignment and is eligible for all benefits. Non-command-sponsored family members are those who are not authorized to accompany their sponsors and who are not guaranteed any privileges except medical care. Sponsors must pay for their families’ transportation to the overseas location. Command, exchange, education and family housing privileges vary, depending upon the status of forces agreement in each country.

**commanding general**
Use commander. For example: “Maj. Gen. Rufus T. Clodhopper, commander of the 27th Cavalry Division, said...”

**commander**
1) An officer who commands a military unit, ship or installation. Can also be called the “commanding officer.” Lowercase. 2) A Naval officer rank, corresponding to the pay grade of O-5. AP abbreviation is Cmdr.

**commendation medal**
The Army, Navy, Coast Guard and Air Force award the commendation medal for outstanding service or achievement. The Joint Service Commendation Medal is awarded for outstanding performance of duty or meritorious achievement while assigned to a joint staff or joint activity of the Defense Department. Capitalize when referring to a specific branch’s medal. All commendation medals can be awarded with V device if heroism in combat was involved.

Army: http://www.foxfall.com/fmd-army-arcm.htm
Coast Guard: http://www.foxfall.com/fmd-uscg-cgcm.htm

**commissionary**
The Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) controls military commissaries worldwide. It operates 284 stores in 15 countries, as of 2010. DeCA’s headquarters are at Fort Lee, Virginia. http://www.commissaries.com/store_locator.cfm

**commissioned officer**
Air Force, Army or Marine Corps members holding ranks ranging from second lieutenant to general. Navy and Coast Guard officers range from ensign to admiral. Pay grades in all cases are from O-1 (lowest) to O-10 (highest). Their authority derives from commissions signed by the president and confirmed by Congress.

**commodore**
Obsolete as a U.S. Navy rank. The one-star rank is now designated as rear admiral (lower half). The term still applies to certain officers, but is a job title (such as seen with executive officer or chaplain).

**company**
An Army or Marine Corps unit, subordinate to a battalion. Do not abbreviate company in unit names. Use Company D, not D Company or Delta Company. Sometimes, nicknames such as “Danger Company” will pop up; only use this in quotes after the proper name of the unit has been used. When spelling out a unit’s full name, the company comes after platoon and before

**cost-of-living allowance**
A monthly tax-free allowance for active duty service members to help offset the costs of living in expensive areas overseas. The acronym COLA is acceptable in headlines and direct quotes. Do not use this wording to refer to similar adjustments to some civilian workers’ salaries, the Congressional Quarterly, 1st Congressional District.

**counter-martial, courts-martial**
Military trials. Authority, composition and procedures for courts-martial are outlined in the Manual for Courts-Martial. The three kinds of courts-martial in ascending severity are: summary, special and general. The word also is used as a verb, e.g., “Sgt. Jones was court-martialed for his crimes.” In the plural form, the “s” is attached to “court.” The courts-martial of the three soldiers concluded yesterday.

**Criminal Investigation Command**
Army command that investigates serious Army crime, provides personal security for senior Army and Defense Department officials, operates forensic crime labs and operates the Army crimes record center. Formerly called the Criminal Investigation Division. Do not abbreviate CID, an acronym that still lingers in military speech even though the name for which it stood, the Army’s Criminal Investigation Division, changed to Criminal Investigation Command many years ago. Headquarters are at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. http://www.cid.army.mil/

**currency**
All figures in currency other than U.S. dollars should be converted whenever practical. For a quick converter of the major currencies we deal with, see: http://www.DODcommunitybank.com/home/products/currency_exchange

**Cyber Command**
See U.S. Cyber Command. CYBERCOM is acceptable in a headline.

**D-Day**
The unnamed day on which an operation or offensive is to be launched. Most commonly associated with June 6, 1944, the day on which the Allied forces invaded Normandy, France, during World War II. Often used casually and informally for any significant future date. Always capitalize.

**deactivate, inactivate**
To deactivate a unit means it is forever retired. To inactivate means the unit may be activated again.

**DeCA**
See Defense Commissary Agency. The “e” does not stand for anything, and it should be lowercase.

**deck**
Used by sailors and Marines to describe different levels of ships and buildings. Use deck for ship levels, and floor for those in buildings.

**Defense Commissary Agency**
This agency manages military commissaries worldwide. The agency headquarters are located at Fort Lee, Virginia. Acronym DeCA (note the lowercase “e”) is acceptable in headlines and on second reference. http://www.commissaries.com/

**Defense Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools**
The branch of the Department of Defense Education Activity that oversees primary and secondary schools for military dependents at installations in the United States, Guam and Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

**Defense Finance and Accounting Service**
The service handles Department of Defense financial management through consolidation, standardization and integration of finance and accounting procedures, operations and systems. DFAS is acceptable in headlines and on second reference. http://www.dfas.mil

**Defense Information Systems Agency**
The Department of Defense’s agency that handles computerized information and data throughout DOD. Headquarters are in Arlington, Virginia. Do not use the abbreviation: http://www.disa.mil/

**Defense Intelligence Agency**
The Defense Department’s main intelligence agency. Headquarters are at the Pentagon. DIA acceptable in headlines and on second reference. http://www.dia.mil

**Defense Language Institute**
The U.S. military’s school for foreign language training at Presidio of Monterey, Calif. Do not abbreviate.

**Defense Logistics Agency**
This agency keeps Department of Defense activities supplied with goods and contracted services. DLA acceptable in headlines and on second reference. Headquarters are at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

**Defense Meritorious Service Medal**
Demilitarized Zone
The Demilitarized Zone, roughly along the 38th parallel North, separates the nations of North Korea and South Korea. It was established in 1953 by the truce that ended the Korean Conflict. Despite the name, the DMZ is heavily guarded by armed forces of North Korea on the north and by combined joint forces of South Korea and the U.S. on the south. DMZ acceptable in headlines and on second reference in copy.

Department of Defense
Also called the Defense Department. The acronym DOD (all caps) is permissible in headlines and on second reference. http://www.defense.gov

Department of Defense Dependents Schools
DODDS acceptable in headlines and on second reference. The Department of Defense Education Activity (DODDEA) operates the worldwide system of military schools, but it’s the Department of Defense Dependents Schools when referring to those schools overseas. On second reference, it should be DODEA and DODDS-Europe, or simply DODDS or school system. The system, with headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, has shrank through drawdown from five regions to three areas: Europe, Pacific and Domestic. DODDS Europe (DODDS-E) - European headquarters in Wiesbaden, Germany, is headed by the area superintendent. It oversees schools in Bahrain, Belgium, England, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, the Azores (Portugal), Spain. DODDS Pacific (DODDS-P) - Schools in Japan, Okinawa, Guam and Korea. DODDS Pacific headquarters are located in Okinawa, Japan. Regional offices also are maintained in Japan, Korea and Okinawa. Please note that schools in Guam, a U.S. territory, are under the supervision of the Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools, the DODEA division responsible for schools in the U.S. See Defense Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools. http://www.DODDea.edu/home/

Department of Defense Education Activity
DODEA is acceptable in headlines and on second reference. DODEA is the activity that oversees all U.S. and overseas military schools, which means the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DODDS) are under DODEA. Although the activity writes their acronym as “DODEA,” USD style is to use DODEA in headlines and on second reference. http://www.DODDea.edu/home/

dependent
Traditional term for the spouse and children of a service member. Family member is preferred unless writing about compensation or legal issues that require the use of dependent in the narrow legal sense.

detainee, detainees
Term used by the U.S. military to describe enemy fighters (foreign or American) apprehended or captured during conflicts in foreign lands. Term gained popular usage as an alternative to Prisoner of War (POW) in Afghanistan and Iraq, as they were not formally declared wars.

detention facility
A military confinement facility for either service members or detainees/POWs.

dining facility
The official term used to describe military cafeterias and other food preparation areas. Colloquially referred to as a chow hall or mess hall.

direct report center
See also USAO direct report center. Direct report centers are directly owned and operated by USAO, Inc., and are financially funded by their local community, where available, in addition to funds raised through USAO, Inc.

discharges
There are five grades of discharges given to enlisted military personnel. They are issued administratively: the honorable discharge; the general discharge (under honorable conditions); the other-than-honorable discharge; and two punitive grades that may result only from conviction by court-martial — the bad-conduct discharge and the dishonorable discharge.

Distinguished Service Cross

division
Do not abbreviate. Capitalize in unit names.

doctor
Dr. (Capt.) John Jones is correct, but preferred style is: “Dr. John Jones, an Army captain, treated the patient.” or “The doctor, Capt. John Jones, was present.”

Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools
The school system that educates some children of U.S. service members stationed in the United States and its territories, including Guam. Use DDESS on second reference if necessary, although the school system is preferable. Note that DDESS is one of two school systems grouped under a parent organization, the Department of Defense Education Activity. The other system, which supervises schools outside the U.S. and its territories, is the Department of Defense Dependents Schools. Thus: “DDESS has decided to make geography classes mandatory in all its high schools.” But: “Students in DOD schools are above the national average in test scores.”

dormitories
The Air Force’s name for bachelor enlisted quarters. See barracks.

drawdown
One word. A reduction in force throughout the armed services or from a particular theater of operations.

DUSTWUN
Duty Status - Whereabouts Unknown. Newer (post-9/11) DOD term that indicates a service member is missing, but a determination has not been made on whether that person is injured, killed, captured or otherwise. Do not use the acronym in headlines or without a full explanation.

E

Eagle, Globe and Anchor
Emblem of the U. S. Marine Corps. Marine Corps recruits do not wear the Eagle, Globe and Anchor on their uniform until completing recruit training. Spell it out, capitalized, on first reference. Use EGA only in direct quotes. https://www.marines.com/history-heritage/icons

early out
Informal term for voluntary early-release or early-retirement programs, generally implemented to reduce payroll. The program is generally called an early-out plan. Only use the term in context, with explanation as needed.

echelons of command
Each service has a system of defining levels of command, with usually more than one smaller unit subordinate to the next higher level. For a basic rundown on how each service is structured in this fashion, refer to http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/intro/org.htm

EGA
Acronym for Equal Employment Opportunity, not “Equal Employment Office.” The name of the program for Department of Defense civilian personnel; it deals with
items that shoot, explode or use fire; “ordinance,” with O-R-D-N-A-N-C-E, which generally means military. Spell it out on first reference in copy. Note spelling of acceptable in headlines and second reference in copy.

Explosive ordnance disposal. Abbreviation EOD

Other factors.

college credits, participation in a JROTC program and E-2, E-3 or E-4, depending on previous job experience, commitment will be served in his/her service’s reserve will be served on active duty. The remainder of that the enlistee’s chosen military occupational specialty)

A person who joins the military as an enlisted person does so with an initial eight-year commitment to the military, some of which (two to six years, depending on the enlistee’s chosen military occupational specialty) will be served on active duty. The remainder of that commitment will be served in his/her service’s reserve component or on Inactive Ready Reserve. Most enlistees join at the pay grade of E-1, but some come in as an E-2, E-3 or E-4, depending on previous job experience, college credits, participation in a JROTC program and other factors.

Equal Opportunity (EO)


EOC

European Command

See U.S. European Command. EUCOM is acceptable in a headline.

exchange


executive officer

Second in command of a military unit. Use the shorthand “XO” only in headlines or on second reference. At higher levels, the second in command may be called the “deputy commander.” Note that executive officer is a job title, not a rank.

elements

Military practice maneuvers. CPX stands for command post exercise, which involves the headquarters or command staff. FTX stands for field training exercise, involving service members in the field and headquarters staff. Do not use either abbreviation.

Marine

See former Marine.

A Navy or Coast Guard admiral of any grade. Equivalent Navy and Coast Guard ranks (lieutenant commander, commander and captain) are known as mid-grade officers. Use AP style for the specific ranks.

Fifth Corps

Use V Corps. An Army three-star command with headquarters in Heidelberg, Germany. All numbered Army corps and Marine Expeditionary Forces use Roman numerals (i.e., XVIII Airborne Corps, II MEF).

fireman

In the Navy, an enlisted sailor who specializes in engineering, propulsion and other shipboard systems. Not a specifically a person who fights fires (although they are trained in damage control). It’s not a rank. The term applies to both men and women.

flag officer

A Navy or Coast Guard admiral of any grade. Equivalent to Army, Air Force or Marine Corps general officers. Always use AP style for a specific rank.

flak jacket/flak vest

An older term for projectile-resistant outer coverings. Usually refers to Vietnam-era and earlier attempts to protect individuals from shrapnel. Modern systems, with ceramic plates and higher projectile resistance, are generally referred to as body armor. Use flak jacket/flak
Airborne Division.” Army post in North Carolina is home to the 82nd
When not using the formal name on later reference, abbreviate. Examples: Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Bragg, N.C.
A large Army installation in the United States. Do not
former Marine
The preferred term for Marines who are no longer
The services infrequently allow a service member who
frogged, frocking
The services infrequently allow a service member who has been selected for promotion to wear the insignia of grade before the promotion is official. Frocking is usually restricted to senior officers. Use judiciously, be sure to explain as needed.
Front Lines
Front Lines was a quarterly hard copy USO newsletter designed to engage our major donors and encourage further giving by informing them how their donor dollars are directly supporting the USO’s mission. It was discontinued beginning 2016.

**forward**
Advance detachment or main battle element of a deployed unit. Units deployed close to or in the battle area. Do not abbreviate; capitalize if part of a unit name.

**forward-deployed**
A term used by the military to describe elements or vessels normally assigned to a foreign country. Avoid this term, whenever possible, except in quotations. Acceptable substitutes are based and assigned, as in “The 3rd Battalion, based at Camp Swampy, Mont., was assigned to FOB Bernstein for a year,” or “The 3rd Battalion was based out of FOB Bernstein for a year.”

**FPO**
Fleet post office. Navy equivalent to Air Force or Army Post Office (APO). See APO. (Note: APO addresses and FPO addresses also carry the two-letter abbreviation AP, for all-Pacific; AE, for all-Europe or AA, for the Americas.) In this case, Navy post office always works.

**frocked, frocking**
The services infrequently allow a service member who has been selected for promotion to wear the insignia of grade before the promotion is official. Frocking is usually restricted to senior officers. Use judiciously, be sure to explain as needed.

**front**
A large Army installation in the United States. Do not abbreviate. Examples: Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Bragg, N.C. When not using the formal name on later reference, “Army post” is acceptable. For example, “The sprawling Army post in North Carolina is home to the 82nd Airborne Division.”

**flight deck**
Refers to the visible deck of an aircraft carrier, where aircraft operations are carried out. Sometimes also refers to the forward compartment of an aircraft, where the pilots sit, commonly referred to as a cockpit, especially in civilian passenger aircraft.

**flight line**
A parking and servicing area for airplanes. Has broader usage referring to any space that might be occupied by aircraft taking off and landing. Acceptable in all references, with explanation as needed.

**flight pay**
Technically called aviation career incentive pay, this monthly supplementary pay compensates aviators for the extra hazards they face. Officers’ flight pay is based on rank, time in service and flying experience. Enlisted flight pay is based on rank. On second reference and in headlines, flight pay is acceptable.

**former Marine**
The preferred term for Marines who are no longer serving. Do not use “ex-Marine” unless “former Marine” just won’t fit in a headline. Marines and former Marines have been known to take issue with the term “ex-Marine.” Marines like to say, “Once a Marine, always a Marine,” hence the opposition to “ex-Marine.” If the former Marine is a retiree, use “retired Marine.”

**G**
See USO Gala.

**Golden Knights**
The Army’s official aerial demonstration parachute team, based at Fort Bragg, N.C.

**good conduct medal**
Each military branch awards its own medal for exemplary behavior, fidelity and efficiency. Active-duty, enlisted service members receive a new award of the Good Conduct Medal for every three years of qualifying service. Not awarded to officers.

**Gitmo**

**Global War on Terrorism**
Term coined after Sept. 11, 2001, to describe operations in Afghanistan, Iraq and other locations against al-Qaeda and other state/non-state organizations. The term has fallen into disfavor with the Obama administration, but is still in common use. The armed forces have two medals for service in the global war on terrorism: The GWOT Expeditionary Medal and the GWOT Service Medal.

**GS**
General Schedule rating of government jobs. GS is acceptable on first reference, as in GS-9, but explain early in the story.

**Guantanamo Bay, Cuba**
Officially referred to as Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, it is a 45-square mile area in the southeastern shore of Cuba, and has been occupied by the United States since 1898. Now best known for housing detainees from the}

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43
Global War on Terrorism. The Navy slang “Gitmo” is acceptable in headlines, but spell it out in copy. Do not use the Navy abbreviation “GTMO.”

guardsman
See also National Guardsman. When referring to an individual in a National Guard unit, use either National Guardsman or, when it stands alone, guardsman.

guidon
A small flag carried by company- or platoon-sized units, indicating the unit name and type (cavalry, infantry, etc.). In a formation, the guidon bearer is posted in front of the rest of the unit members.

GWOT
Properly, it is the Global War on Terrorism, which began in 1990-1991. Use Gulf War advisedly in headlines. Do not use the term to refer to the 2003 invasion of Iraq and subsequent conflict. Use Iraq War or war in Iraq in that case.

GWOT Service Medal
Awarded to members of the armed services who directly supported military efforts in the Global War on Terrorism on or after Sept. 11, 2001. Those who support overseas efforts in an active or reserve status from the United States are eligible, as are service members who deploy outside the U.S. to participate in such efforts.


H

hail and farewell
A social event that welcomes new members of a military unit and honors departing ones.

hash marks
Army, Navy and Marine Corps personnel wear longevity stripes, informally called hash marks, on dress uniforms. Army personnel wear gold stripes, awarded for each three years of service, on their lower left sleeves. Navy hash marks, awarded for each four years of service, are worn on lower left sleeves. The first two hash marks are red. The third and subsequent marks can be either red or yellow depending upon the person’s conduct. Yellow hash marks are awarded for service with good behavior. Marine Corps personnel wear their hash marks, awarded for each four years of service, as sets on both sleeves. Only use in direct quotes, with explanation.

head
U.S. Navy jargon for toilet. Avoid using the word in print without explanation.

headquarters, headquartered
See “headquarters” entry in The Associated Press Stylebook, which advises against using the word as a verb. Capitalize and spell out in unit names; HQ can be used in headlines (as in: “Division HQ staff officers under scrutiny”).

headquarters company
In unit names, capitalize and do not abbreviate. Unlike lettered companies (Company A, etc.), ‘Headquarters’ is spelled out before ‘Company.’

here
Do not use as a reference to dateline. Use name of location (i.e., “at Fort Bragg”). Watch wire copy carefully and change as needed.

hero, heroes
These are terms that should be used sparingly and not without careful consideration with regards to our service members. While we thing of them in these terms, they don’t always appreciate the sentiment because, as we’ve often heard, “I’m just doing my job.”

Hesco barriers
Collapsible, metal-framed and fabric-lined blast barriers that are opened and filled with dirt to provide protection of buildings and other facilities from IEDs, suicide bombs and other attacks. Name taken from Hercules Engineering Solutions Consortium of Dubai. Extensively used in Iraq, Afghanistan and other places where attacks on buildings are common. Hesco barriers is acceptable in direct quotes, but refer to them as blast barriers otherwise.

Honor flight
Refers to an effort by nonprofit organizations to transport veterans to see the memorials of their respective wars, often in Washington, D.C., at no cost to the veterans.

hooah
The Army’s all-purpose term of determination and spirit, hollered during rallies, sporting events, runs, etc. Also used as an acknowledgement of a statement, order and so forth. Use quote marks around the term. Do not confuse with the similar Marine Corps term “oorah.”

hooch
Informal term for military housing in a combat area. It can be a tent, a bunker, a CHU or any other permanent/semi-permanent structure. Try to use only in direct quotes, with explanation if needed. See CHU.

hospital corpsman/hospital corpsmen on first reference, otherwise.

Honor flight
USO Holiday Care Packages include decorations, snacks, DVDs and games to help service members serving in remote corners of the world celebrate American holidays. For more about this program, visit: https://www.uso.org/programs/holiday-care-packages

Holiday Care Packages
Acceptable in reference to ships. For example: “The USS George Washington, home-ported at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, patrolled the Pacific,” or “Yokosuka Naval Base, the homeport of the USS George Washington…”

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hooch
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hospital corpsman
Enlisted Navy medical personnel. The Marine Corps does not have its own medical facilities or personnel, so male hospital corpsmen are assigned to Marine fighting units as field medics. Hospital corpsmen assigned to Marine Corps combat units wear the same battle uniforms (MARPAT) as Marines. Use hospital corpsman/hospital corpsmen on first reference, corpsman/corpsmen thereafter.
In Session
In Session was a quarterly printed USO newsletter designed to inform all members of Congress and all congressional committees and key Capitol Hill influencers about the good works of the USO in order to foster stronger relationships. It was discontinued in 2016.

inspector general, inspectors general
Each military service and brigade-level or higher unit has an inspector general system that determines the state of the economy, efficiency, discipline, morale, and esprit de corps through inspections and investigations. Do not abbreviate as “IG” except headlines or direct quotes.

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America
Founded in 2004 to provide support to veterans of the post-Sept. 11 conflicts, as well as lobby for increased medical care, college benefits and resources for veterans. Abbreviation can be used in a headline and on second reference in copy. Do not confuse this group with Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW). http://www.ivava.org

Iraq War
Capitalize as part of the name of a specific conflict. Also, Afghanistan War, Vietnam War, etc.

International Security Assistance Force
The NATO command of all allied forces in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014, often led by a U.S. four-star general who reported to U.S. Central Command. Use ISAF only on second reference in a story, and sparingly in headlines. http://www.isaf.nato.int/

J
J-1 to J-6
Do not use the military codes for offices at a joint command headquarters. Use these titles: personnel directorate instead of J-1; personnel directorate; intelligence directorate instead of J-2; operations instead of J-3; logistics instead of J-4; plans and policy instead of J-5; and communications and electronics instead of J-6.

JAG
See judge advocate general. Abbreviation acceptable in headlines and second reference.

jail
The military does not have “jails.” It has confinement facilities for prisoners awaiting trial, also known as a brig in Navy/Coast Guard/Marine Corps lingo.

Jane’s
A series of military reference books, such as Jane’s All the World’s Aircraft or Jane’s Fighting Ships. The reference book for nonmilitary ships is Lloyd’s Register of Shipping. Use Jane’s materials as first reference for all military ships/planes/equipment/weapons questions.

jarhead
Slang term for a Marine. Do not use except in direct quotes, and with appropriate context.

JASDF
Japan Air Self-Defense Force. The aviation branch of Japan’s military. Do not abbreviate. “Japanese air forces” is acceptable.

JCS
Acronym for Joint Chiefs of Staff. Do not use.

J.D. Crouch II
J.D. Crouch II is his proper name. In documents, he should be referred to as J.D. Crouch II, CEO and President of the USO. He also has a doctorate, and that can be used in specific instances usually at his request - but not for USO press releases or our provided quotes.

joint
Refers to operations and other groupings comprised of two or more military branches from the same country. For example, the invasion of Iraq was a joint operation in which all branches of the military took part. See combined.

joint base
Under the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) plan of 2005, a number of adjoining military bases were combined to form a single complex. An example is Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., formed by the merger of Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base. Uppercase when referring to a specific base.

JROTC
Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps. Basic military education for high school students. Abbreviation is acceptable in headlines and on second reference. When
judgement
For a military officer serving as a court-martial judge, use “Lt. Col. Jane Jones, the military judge,” or “the military judge, Lt. Col. Jane Jones.”

judge advocate general
The senior military legal officer responsible for administering military justice throughout a service. Abbreviation JAG acceptable in headlines and on second reference.

junior officer
An Army, Air Force or Marine Corps lieutenant or captain; a Navy or Coast Guard ensign, lieutenant junior grade or lieutenant. Ranks equivalent to the O-1 through O-3 pay grades. See company grade.

Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps
Basic military education for high school students. Abbreviation is acceptable in headlines and on second reference. When referring to a branch-specific (Army, Air Force, etc.) JROTC program, be sure to indicate as such. See ROTC.

kilo-

kilo-

kilometer
Metric system term for 1,000 meters. In many areas, distances and speeds are measured in kilometers. Convert distances to feet and miles in copy. Multiply kilometers by .62 to convert to miles. Where wire copy gives both measures, remove the metric distances. See metric measurements. Exception: in military-specific stories, use the metric measurement and also convert to miles as needed. Do not use the military term click for kilometer unless in a quote, with explanation.

knot
A measure of nautical movement. One knot equals one nautical mile, the equivalent of 6,076.10 feet, or 1.15 land miles per hour. Ship speeds are measured in knots. See nautical mile.

Korea
Peninsula of Asia jutting into Sea of Japan and the South China Sea. Divided into nations of North Korea and South Korea, officially called, respectively, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea. Do not use either “Korea” or “Korean” unless referring to the Korean peninsula as a whole, or to its culture or language. In other instances, use North Korea, North Korean, South Korea or South Korean, as the case may require. N. Korea or S. Korea can be used in headlines, but not “NK” or “SK.”

K-town
Slang for Kaiserslautern, Germany. Do not use except in direct quotes (with explanation if needed) or sports headlines.

L

leatherneck
Nickname for a member of the U.S. Marine Corps. It is derived from the leather lining that used to be part of the collar on the Marine uniform. If used, provide context, and only use lowercase. Can be used in headlines for feature stories with appropriate context.

Legion of Merit
A medal awarded for exceptionally meritorious service. Rarely presented to anyone other than a senior officer. There are several degrees of the Legion of Merit: Chief Commander, Commander, Officer and Legionnaire. http://www.foxfall.com/fmd-common-lom.htm

Liberty Bells
See USO Show Troupe.

machine gun
A fully automatic weapon capable of firing hundreds, even thousands, of rounds per minute. In most cases, it’s a crew-served weapon, meaning one person is the gunner while the other carries and feeds ammunition. Most machine guns fire a 7.62 mm round or larger. Examples of American machine guns are the M2 (.50-caliber) and the M240 (7.62 mm). Not to be confused with rifles such as the M16 or AK-47. See rifle, weapon, gun, small arms, cannon.

Manual for Courts-Martial

Marine
1) Any member of the U.S. Marine Corps. Do not refer to a U.S. Marine as a “jarhead,” except within a direct quote, with explanation. Marines are NOT soldiers. Leatherneck (lowercase) is permitted in feature stories or in direct quotes, also with explanation. Uppercase when referring to U.S. Marines, lowercase when referring to marines of other nations. 2) Marine is the name of the German navy. Use “German navy.” Marine is also always capitalized when referring to a U.S. Marine.

Marine Corps
The amphibious arm of the Department of the Navy; primary role is invasion from the sea. Formed as the Continental Marines at Tun Tavern in Philadelphia in
Expeditionary Force typically consists of a Marine Corps' principal warfighting unit, the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), around a reinforced infantry regiment, a composite air-land task force, and a support element. Such units are usually commanded by a major general. MEU is OK in a headline, but spell it out on second reference.

Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) is a Marine Corps force of roughly 2,200 Marines, a colonel. MEU is OK in a headline, but spell it out on first reference in copy: “Elements of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, based at Camp Lejeune, N.C. …” Only use the acronym on second reference and in headlines, provided it is spelled out in copy.

Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) is a Marine air-ground task force that is constructed around a reinforced infantry regiment, a composite Marine aircraft group and a combat logistics regiment. Consists of about 15,000 Marine Corps and Navy personnel. Usually commanded by a major general, though sometimes a brigadier general. Use MEB very sparingly, and spell it out on first reference.

Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) is the Marine Corps' principal warfighting unit, a Marine Expeditionary Force typically consists of a Marine division, with an air wing and support elements, and numbers about 45,000 Marine Corps and Navy personnel. Marine Expeditionary Forces use Roman numerals, as in I MEF, II MEF and III MEF (but pronounced “First MEF” and so on). Only use the acronym on second reference and in headlines, provided it is spelled out in copy.

Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) converts surplus military clothing, equipment and supplies into retail stores operated by the Marine Corps. Similar to AAFES (Army and Air Force Exchange Service) and NEX (Navy Exchange).

Military uniforms consist of a military uniform for occasions of the highest formality. The term “dress uniform” is perishable. Use instead: "Mess dress uniform." In your wardrobe, you probably use the term “dress uniform” to mean “dress uniform” or “dress uniform.” In the military, it is more specific, and you should use it with the same precision. It is the term used in the military to refer to the uniform that is worn on work uniforms such as fatigues, battle dress uniforms, dungarees or medical, food service or maintenance uniforms. Note that military decorations are never "won," they are earned, presented or awarded. http://www.tioh.hq.dla.mil/Default.aspx

MREs are individual, single-meal rations with a very long shelf life, packaged in foil containers and designed to be prepared and eaten by field service members. http://foxfall.com/gcrm-dod-arm.htm

Service ribbons (e.g., for longevity of service or good conduct) and ribbons representing awarded medals are worn on other uniforms. No ribbons or medals are worn on work uniforms such as fatigues, battle dress uniforms, dungarees or medical, food service or maintenance uniforms. Note that military decorations are never "won," they are earned, presented or awarded. http://www.tioh.hq.dla.mil/default.aspx

Military Bowl is a postseason NCAA football game. Presently held in Washington, D.C.’s RFK Stadium since 2008. Organized by the DC Bowl Committee & Events DC, the Military Bowl serves as a premier regional event benefiting the USO. With first-rate participants and events, the Military Bowl seeks to generate broad support for the USO, positively impact the regional economy, honor the U.S. military and solidify the nation’s capital as a leading college football destination.

Military decorations worn on uniforms consist of medals and/ or ribbons for heroism, meritorious service, longevity and campaign participation. The terms “medal” and “ribbon” are not interchangeable. Medals are worn on dress uniforms. Service ribbons (e.g., for longevity of service or good conduct) and ribbons representing awarded medals are worn on other uniforms. No ribbons or medals are worn on work uniforms such as fatigues, battle dress uniforms,
Military exercises
Military exercises that occur regularly in the Pacific theater include Cobra Gold, Cope North, Foal Eagle, Keen Edge, Keen Sword, North Wind, Orient Shield, Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC), Tandem Thrust and Ulchi Freedom Guardian.

Military occupational specialty
Army job code. Do not abbreviate as MOS, unless in a quote, with full explanation. Use skill, code or specialty on second reference. An example MOS is 11B, Infantryman.

Military police
MP is acceptable in headlines and on second reference in stories referring to Army military police in general. However, in the name of specific units (i.e., 3rd Military Police Company), spell it out and capitalize. The Air Force equivalent unit is security police. The Navy counterpart is shore patrol. Do not use "MP" when referring to non-Army police.

Mobile Entertainment Gaming System (MEGS)
Mobile Entertainment Gaming System on first reference, MEGS on second and subsequent references. MEGS is a portable, self-contained and highly durable multimedia platform created to provide service members with various entertainment options. For more about MEGS, visit: https://www.uso.org/programs/mobile-entertainment-gaming-system-megs

Mobile USO
This "USO on wheels" is designed to support service members serving in remote areas and locations throughout the U.S. not served by a USO center. The Mobile USOs provide a comfortable place for men and women in uniform to relax and connect online with family and friends during downtime. Each Mobile USO offers laptops, large screen televisions, video game consoles, Wi-Fi access, casual seating, refrigerators, coffee makers and microwaves. For more about Mobile USO, visit: https://www.uso.org/programs/mobile-uso

Month of the Military Child
A Defense Department-sponsored observance in April that focuses on issues affecting children of service members. Do not abbreviate.

MOPP
An acronym standing for Mission-Oriented Protective Posture, referring generally to special clothing used to shield military personnel from chemical or biological weapons. Rather than "MOPP gear," use protective suits or protective clothing.

Morale, Welfare and Recreation
Self-sustaining welfare and recreation programs such as bowling alleys, golf courses, gyms, crafts shops and libraries. Can be abbreviated as MWR on first reference, with full name used on first reference in copy.

Mortar
A portable short-range (less than five miles, in most cases) artillery system that fires small projectiles at high angles. Generally used as an anti-personnel weapon. Common American mortar systems are the 60 mm, 81 mm and 120 mm. Mortar systems are crew-served weapons, in that it takes more than one person to carry the weapon and ammunition as well as employing the system.

MOS
See military occupational specialty.

MRE
See Meals, Ready to Eat. Acronym is acceptable in headlines and on second reference.

MultiCam
A new camouflage pattern issued to soldiers deploying to Afghanistan beginning in early 2010. The uniform itself is very similar to the Army Combat Uniform, but with some improvements in its construction as well as different boots. MultiCam is a commercial product, and is capitalized. See also ACU.

National Military Family Association
An unofficial organization promoting the needs and views of U.S. military families. Headquarters are in Alexandria, Virginia. Do not abbreviate.

Nautical mile
One nautical mile equals approximately 1.15 land miles. A nautical mile is based on a minute of an arc (1/60 of a degree) of a great circle on a globe of the earth. Nautical miles are used for measuring distances in sea and air navigation. A knot is one nautical mile per hour.

Naval Air Station
A U.S. Navy installation with an aviation mission. Naval air stations are large enough to warrant their own datelines. When referring to a specific naval air station: Naval Air Station (name) on first reference, NAS (name) subsequently (and in headlines). Other terms such as base or installation are fine as well.

Naval Criminal Investigative Service, NCIS
Acronym is acceptable in headlines and on second reference, but spell it out on first reference in copy. This command, with headquarters at Marine Corps Base, Quantico, Virginia, provides criminal investigation, counterintelligence, law enforcement and physical security, as well as information and personnel security support to the Navy and Marine Corps, both ashore and afloat. http://www.ncis.navy.mil/Pages/publicdefault.aspx

Naval Oceanography Office
This office, part of the Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command, is responsible for the science, technology, engineering and operations necessary to explore the ocean and the atmosphere. It also provides astronomical data and time for naval and related national objectives. The office is located at Stennis Space Center, Bay St. Louis, Mississippi.

Naval station
A land-based naval installation that has no aviation mission. Example: Naval Station Rota, Spain.
naval, Naval
Lowercase when used as an adjective, such as “naval officer.” Capitalize when used as a proper noun, such as “Naval Air Systems Command.”

Navy birthday
The Navy birthday is October 13, 1775.

Navy Cross

Navy enlisted classification
Job codes for sailors. Do not abbreviate. Use job or skill second reference. Corresponds to Army military occupational specialty and Air Force specialty code.

Navy Exchange
The Navy’s equivalent of the base exchange or the post exchange. Often abbreviated NEX, which should be used with caution in headlines and quotations. NEX is acceptable in headlines if it’s clear the story refers to the Navy Exchange. Use “the exchange” or simply “exchange.”

Navy Federal Credit Union
Only abbreviate on second reference in copy.

Navy Working Uniform

NCIS
See Naval Criminal Investigative Service. Abbreviation acceptable in headlines and second reference.

NCO
See noncommissioned officer, staff noncommissioned officer. Abbreviation acceptable in headlines and second reference. Do NOT use simply “officer” to refer to NCOs under any circumstances.

NCOIC
Noncommissioned officer in charge. Do not abbreviate except within direct quotes and with explanation.

NEO
See noncombatant evacuation order. Do not abbreviate.

newspapers
Make sure you are using the full name of a newspaper in bylines and text; paper names in stories are often missing a preceding article that is part of the paper’s name. If the name of the newspaper’s city is not included in the paper name, include the city name using parenthesis, e.g., The (Norfolk, Virginia) Virginian-Pilot.

NEX

NMFIA
See National Military Family Association.

no-fly zone
Generally used to describe areas of Iraq after the Persian Gulf War and before the Iraq War that Iraqi military aircraft were prohibited from flying over. Also a slang term for something that a person has been prohibited from doing, or just should not do in general. Only use in a historical context or in direct quotes.

nonappropriated funds
Funds generated by Defense Department personnel and their families and used to augment funds appropriated by Congress. Bowling centers, golf courses, craft shops and the military club system are examples of nonappropriated fund activities. Do not use the abbreviation, as it can be confused with Naval Air Facility.

noncommissioned officer
An enlisted Army, Navy or Marine Corps member in pay grades E-4 through E-9, or E-5 through E-9 in the Air Force. (NOTE: Army Specialist E-4s are not NCOs. Army Corporal E-4s are NCO permissible on second reference and in headlines. Do not use “non-com” except within direct quotes. Do NOT refer to a noncommissioned officer as simply “officer.”

nonjudicial punishment
Punishment not imposed by a court of justice. Article 15 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice authorizes commanders to impose punishment for minor offenses upon military members under their command. Common forms of nonjudicial punishment include loss of rank and pay, extra duties for a set period of time, restriction to quarters, and in certain circumstances a short period of confinement with reduced rations. Use nonjudicial punishment rather than the service-related common terms of Article 15 (Army/USAF), office hours (Marine Corps) or captain’s mast (Navy/Coast Guard). For example, “Spc. Joe Snuffy received nonjudicial punishment, including reduction to private first class, for missing a formation.”

North Atlantic Treaty Organization
Abbreviation NATO is universally acceptable.

North Korea
A totalitarian country occupying the northern half of the Korean peninsula, bounded by China on the north, Russia in the extreme northeast, South Korea to the south and by water on the east and west. See Korea.

Northern Command
See U.S. Northern Command. NORTHCOM is acceptable in a headline and on second reference.

OCS
See Officer Candidate School. Abbreviation is acceptable in headlines and on second reference. Do not confuse with the Air Force’s Officer Training School.

Office of Personnel Management
Only abbreviate on second reference in copy. This office administers a merit system for federal employment, ensures that the federal government provides personnel services to applicants and employees and provides benefits to employees. Headquarters are in Washington, D.C. http://www.opm.gov/

Office of Special Investigations
An Air Force agency, with headquarters at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, that investigates crimes, fraud, counterintelligence and conducts other investigations requested by the commander of any Air Force activity. OSI permits on second reference, but Air Force investigators, USAF investigators or just investigators is preferred.

Officer Candidate School
A program of initial training for Army, Navy and Marine Corps commissioned officers drawn from the enlisted ranks or the civilian world. The Air Force equivalent is Officer Training School. Army OCS is at Fort Benning, Georgia; Navy OCS is at Naval Station Newport, Rhode Island; Marine Corps OCS is at Quantico, Virginia.
Acceptable in a headline, but spell it out on first reference.

**officer**
A service member in the pay grades of O-1 through O-10 (commissioned officer) or W-1 through W-5 (warrant officer). These personnel can be referred to as officers. Do not refer to noncommissioned officers (sergeants and petty officers) as simply “officers.” See commission, warrant

**officer in charge**
Do not abbreviate as “OIC” except in direct quotes.

**Officer Training School**
A program of initial training for Air Force commissioned officers drawn from the enlisted ranks or the civilian world. Air Force OTS is at Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Alabama. Acceptable in a headline as long as it’s clear it’s Air Force (Air Force OTS or USAF OTS). Spell out on first reference in copy.

**officers’ clubs**
Facilities that usually include a bar and restaurant, rooms for private parties and musical entertainment. They are part of a club system. Government funds are appropriated for their construction but not for their operation.

**Officers’ Wives Club**
Use carefully. Many clubs are now called Officers’ Spouses Clubs. An unofficial club that has traditionally focused on charitable work. Many clubs have formal programs to help the disabled, hospitals and youth organizations. Some offer scholarships for service members’ children. When dealing with stories about such clubs at a specific installation, be sure to verify the official name.

**orah**
The Marine Corps’ all-purpose term of determination and spirit, hollered during rallies, sporting events, runs, etc., etc. Can also be used as an affirmative answer to a question, as in “Oorah, sir!” Use quote marks around the term. Do not confuse “oorah” with the Army’s hooah.

**Operation Enduring Care**
The USO initiated Operation Enduring Care, a fundraising effort to raise money to dedicate to non-medical care from the time of the injury through the journey to recovery. The effort resulted in the construction of two Warrior and Family Centers – one at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, the second at Naval Support Activity Bethesda, Maryland – which offer wounded, ill and injured service members and their families a place to relax while receiving treatment as well as programming to help them plan for the future. Also referred to as OEC, but no longer and active campaign.

**Operation Phone Home**
Operation Phone home delivers prepaid international phone cards to deployed service members free of charge. The phone cards are distributed through USO centers overseas and, most often, are delivered directly to military units abroad. For more on Operation Phone Home, visit: https://www.uso.org/programs/operation-phone-home

**OPM**

**ordnance**
Usually used to refer to military weapons, explosives, artillery and other things that go boom. Do not abbreviate ordnance in units. Note spelling of O-R-D-N-A-N-C-E, which deals with ammunition and artillery, as opposed to ordinance, which is a statute or regulation.

**OSI**
See Office of Special Investigations.

**OTS**
See Officer Training School. Specifically an Air Force term. See also Officer Candidate School.

**overfly, overflight**
Generally used to describe an operational flight over a specific targeted area, usually for reconnaissance purposes. Not to be confused with flyover, a term used to describe a ceremonial flight of one or more military aircraft over a funeral, sporting event or other public display.

**P**

**Pacific Command**
See U.S. Pacific Command. PACOM acceptable in a headline and on second reference in copy.

**Pacific Fleet**
This organization’s headquarters are at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. Use Pacific Fleet unless confusion with other nations’ navies may arise. In such cases, use U.S. Pacific Fleet. Do not use the acronym PACFLEET. http://www.cfp.navy.mil/

**Pacific Rim**
Acceptable on first reference for all nations, in some context (e.g., vulcanology) including the United States, that have a coast on the Pacific Ocean, but used more frequently and popularly to designate developing nations of Asia with a coast on the Pacific Ocean. See Asian regions.

**PAO**
Public affairs officer. Abbreviation acceptable in headlines and second reference.

**parade rest**
A service member at the position of parade rest, which is only executed from the position of attention, stands with his/her feet about 10-12 inches apart and hands behind the small of the back, with thumbs interlocked so that the palm of the right hand is exposed. Salutes and marching movements are not executed from this position; the service member must be commanded back to attention before doing so. See attention http://usMilitary.about.com/ad/theorderlyroom/l/blest.htm

**paraservice member**
Army Airborne soldiers. See service member, service members for clarification of singular and plural forms.

**parentheses**
Brackets are used when words of the quote are missing: “Bush said [Cheney] was at an undisclosed location.” Parentheses are used to add explanatory words to the quote: “Bush said Cheney (the vice president) was at an undisclosed location.”

**partner**
See also USO partner. The USO relies on the generosity of its partner corporations, clubs and organizations. The contributions of such partners are vital to advancing the mission of the USO. For more about USO partners, visit: http://www.uso.org/become-a-partner.aspx

**pay grade**
This is more of an administrative/personnel term. The term pay grade does not necessarily refer to one’s actual rank. For example, a Navy E-1 is a Seaman Recruit, while an Army E-1 is a Private. Furthermore, a pay grade within a service can have more than one rank. For example, a soldier in the E-4 pay grade can be a Corporal or a Specialist. Both are paid the same, but the Corporal is considered senior. In all cases, use a person’s rank instead of pay grade, unless in a quote. Only use pay grades in headlines when it’s necessary for clarity and space (example: “Air Force needs more E-5s”). Pay grades are hyphenated. See rank, rating...
PCS
See permanent change of station. Abbreviation acceptable in headlines and on second reference. Avoid using the acronym as a verb (EG: PCSed, PCSing).

peacetime
One word. This refers specifically to the time when a nation is not at war. Distinguish carefully from peaceful times.

per diem
A daily allowance to cover costs of food and lodging for government employees and service members on temporary duty.

permanent change of station
A reassignment (by location) in the military. Do not use the acronym as a verb, as in “PCSED” or “PCSing,” except in direct quotations.

Persian Gulf War
Refers to Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm (1990-1991), and is acceptable in headlines and copy.

petty officer
General term for a Navy or Coast Guard noncommissioned officer in the pay grades of E-4 through E-9, inclusive. When referring to individuals, be sure to include their specific rank or rating.

phone numbers
Never allow mnemonic phone numbers (such as 1-800-FLOWERS) to appear without interpreting the word into numbers. Our style for phone numbers in text: For German commercial numbers, use: civilian 06155-601255. Japanese commercial numbers put a city name. Do not abbreviate.

platoon
Capitalize in unit names. Lowercase when not in a unit name. Do not abbreviate.

platoon leader
A commissioned officer, usually a 2nd or 1st Lieutenant, directly responsible for one of the subordinate units of a company. The platoon is the smallest unit commanded by a commissioned officer. Not to be confused with platoon sergeant.

platoon sergeant
A noncommissioned officer, usually Sergeant First Class (Army) or Staff Sergeant (Marine Corps), who is the highest ranking enlisted person in one of the subordinate units of a company. He/she reports directly to the platoon leader, and is generally entrusted with ensuring the platoon’s members are ready to perform their mission. Squad leaders report directly to the platoon sergeant.

port, starboard
Nautical terms for left and right, respectively.

post allowance
This term should refer only to adjustments to civilian U.S. government employees’ pay to compensate them for the difference between the local cost of living and that of the United States. Do not use this wording to refer to similar alterations to military pay, referred to officially as a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA).

post-traumatic stress disorder
The term used to describe an anxiety disorder caused by the psychological wounds of war, traumatic experiences and/or long-term exposure to highly stressful situations. The symptoms of PTSD are widely varied, including - but not limited to - anger, paranoia, anxiety and withdrawal from society. PTSD is acceptable in headlines. Do not use outdated terms like “battle fatigue” or “shell shock.”

POW
Prisoner of war - missing in action. POW-MIA can be used in headlines and copy when referring to the movement to recover American prisoners and missing in combat, or the black flag associated with the movement.

POW Network
An organization run by Chuck and Mary Schantag in Skidmore, Missouri, dedicated to exposing phony claims of combat decorations, veteran status, POW status and the like. One of the leading players in the fight against Stolen Valor. http://www.pownetwork.org

provost marshal
The supervising officer of a command’s or installation’s military police. Plural form is provost marshals. Either Office of the Provost Marshal or Provost Marshall’s Office are correct.

PSYOP
Psychological Operations. Renamed MISO (Military Information Support Operations) in June 2010. The use of various media to influence or change a target audience’s attitudes. PSYOP can be used in a headline, but spell it out in copy, except in a direct quote. NOTE: Always PSYOP, not “PSYOPS.” As the military transitions away from PSYOP, use of various media will vary. Do not use this wording to refer to similar activities in the civilian community, such as marketing or advertising. If used, always provide a brief explanation of the concept.

PT
Physical training. PT can be used in headlines and on second reference.

PT boat
Spell out on first reference within a story. A small, speedy, armed patrol craft capable of launching torpedoes (PT stands for “patrol torpedo”), especially associated with World War II. A PT boat typically carried a crew of 14 and was distinguished as the swiftest and most heavily armed warship per pound in the military. Similar boats used by other navies should simply be called “patrol boats.”

PTSD
See post-traumatic stress disorder.

Purple Heart
A U.S. military decoration awarded for wounds or death as a direct result of combat action. The Purple Heart is not an award for valor. https://www.hrc.army.mil/ TAGD/Purple%20Heart

PX
Use PX only in headlines or direct quotes. Use post exchange or exchange for an AAFES department store at Army installation. BX, or base exchange, is used on Air Force installations. NEX, or Navy Exchange, is found on naval facilities; MCX, or Marine Corps Exchange, is found on Marine facilities. “Exchange” is acceptable on subsequent references. See also ship’s store.

quartermaster
Do not abbreviate in unit names. NOTE: In the Army, “quartermaster” refers to units or individuals who process and distribute supplies. In the Navy, a quartermaster is a sailor trained in navigation and other functions associated with the bridge of a ship.

query
Often used by public affairs officers in response to questions from reporters and editors. Reporters are asked to provide written queries, to which the PAO office will respond. Generally viewed as a delaying tactic, but can sometimes provide legitimate background information. Reporters and editors should not disregard such requests out of hand.
rating
Navy and Coast Guard term describing an enlisted person's occupational specialty. Not to be confused with rate, which is used to describe rank for enlisted personnel. For example, you have a Navy E-6 who holds the rating of Boatswain's Mate. However, a person's rate describes his/her hierarchical status within the organization. If that Boatswain's Mate holds the rate of Petty Officer 1st Class, he/she would be referred to as a Boatswain's Mate 1st Class. A more in-depth reference can be found at http://bluejacket.com/usn_ratings.html

re-enlist, re-enlistment
Hyphenate. Do not use informal "re-up," unless in a direct quote with context.

reconnaissance
Uppercase and spelled out in unit names. Do not abbreviate. Lowercase when referring to the action of conducting reconnaissance, or to equipment used in reconnaissance.

recruit training
Initial military training for enlisted service members. The length of training varies, depending upon the service. Army recruit training centers (nine weeks, 14 for infantry): Fort Jackson, South Carolina; Fort Knox, Kentucky; Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; Fort Sill, Oklahoma; Fort Benning, Georgia. Navy recruit training center (eight weeks): Great Lakes, Illinois. Marine Corps recruit training centers (13 weeks): Parris Island, South Carolina; San Diego. Air Force recruit training center (eight weeks): Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

Red Cross
Use American Red Cross on first reference (when dealing specifically with the American Red Cross); Red Cross permitted on second reference.

redeployment
The transfer of a unit, individuals or supplies deployed in one area to another area. Typically used to refer to the return of units in the field to their home base. Avoid in favor of "return" or similar non-jargon terms when possible.

reduction in force
Government term for layoffs, generally because of the elimination or consolidation of forces, commands or facilities. Do not use RIF in headlines; second reference is permitted. "Reductions" or "drawdown" is always a good alternative.

regiment
In unit names, capitalize and do not abbreviate. See also regimental system.

regimental system
1) While the Army still uses the word “Regiment” in unit names and history, there are (with very few, specific exceptions) no more “regimental commanders.” Specific battalions, formerly subordinate to a regiment, are now subordinate to a brigade (again, in almost all cases). For example, the 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment is a part of the 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team. (NOTE: There are several combat outfits that still adhere to the regimental system in name and practice. 75th Ranger Regiment and 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment are prime examples.) 2) The Marine Corps very much still uses the regimental system, with regimental commanders (usually a colonel). Capitalize when referring to U.S. armed forces, as in Army Reserve. Lowercase in reference to members of these backup forces: reserves, or reservists.

re-enlist, re-enlistment
Hyphenate. Do not use informal "re-up," unless in a direct quote with context.

Ranger, ranger
Uppercase in reference to an Army Ranger. Use lowercase for forest ranger.

rate
Navy and Coast Guard term used to describe rank for enlisted personnel. For example, a Navy E-6 holds the rank of Petty Officer 1st Class. However, a person’s rating describes his/her occupational specialty. If that Petty Officer 1st Class holds the rating of Boatswain’s Mate, he/she would be referred to as a Boatswain’s Mate 1st Class. A more in-depth reference can be found at http://bluejacket.com/usn_ratings.html

RCP
Rocket-propelled grenade. Specifically used to describe Soviet-designed, tube-fired portable rockets with a variety of warhead types. The term is usually used to describe the most common variant in use, the RPG-7. Use RPG in headlines and copy, but spell it out on first reference in copy.

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Red Cross
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readers cannot know or understand what a person in a story thinks, believes or feels unless that person said it. Thus, attribution is required, and the attribution should be something similar to: “He said he believes the world is flat.” See verb tenses.

scouts
Army personnel who act as reconnaissance elements for a battalion-size or larger combat arms unit. Scouts operate ahead of a main element to gather intelligence on enemy capabilities and composition, and sometimes destroy enemy equipment ahead of a battle. Also referred to as cavalry scouts. Explain briefly what they do.

Seabee, Seabees
A Navy nickname derived from the acronym CB, which stands for construction battalion. Acceptable on first reference and headlines, although the Seabees unit’s mission should be explained elsewhere in the copy. http://www.navy.mil/navydata/personnel/seabees/seabee1.html

SEAL
The Navy’s Sea, Air, Land teams, commonly known as SEALs, are the service’s principal special operations force.

seaman
A sailor who specializes in seafaring-related duties. Not synonymous with sailor, the generic term for all Navy personnel. Also, one of four base groups (seaman, airman, fireman and constructionman) from which the different Navy enlisted ratings come. When using as part of an actual rank followed by a person’s name (Seaman Recruit, Seaman Apprentice, Seaman), capitalize and use AP style.

security classifications
In descending order of importance, they are: top secret (TS), secret (S), confidential (C), no foreign distribution (NOFORN or N), for official use only (FOUO) and unclassified (U). There are levels beyond top secret that receive special category assignment. Documents classified above NOFORN also are distributed on a need-to-know basis. Top secret: Applied to information that could cause grave damage to national security if publicly disseminated. Secret: Applied to information that could cause serious damage to national security if publicly disseminated. Confidential: Applied to information that could cause damage to national security if publicly disseminated. No foreign distribution: Applied to information that could cause damage to national security if publicly disseminated in other countries.

selective re-enlistment bonus
To keep some highly skilled service members in uniform, the military can offer bonuses. The bonus is calculated by taking into account pay grade, length of re-enlistment, time in service and the criticality of the skill. Use bonus in headlines and on second reference. Do not abbreviate as SREB or SRB unless in a direct quote.

senior NCO
An enlisted service member in pay grades E-7, E-8 and E-9.

sergeants major
Plural form of sergeant major.

service academies
The United States Air Force Academy is located in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The United States Military Academy is located in West Point, New York.

The United States Naval Academy is located in Annapolis, Maryland.

The United States Coast Guard Academy is located in New London, Connecticut.

The United States Merchant Marine Academy is located in Kings Point, New York.

service member
Always two words and lowercase in copy. This is the USO’s preferred generic term for members of the military, as it is inclusive of all military branches. All troops are service members, but not all service members are troops.

Sesame Street
See Sesame Workshop.

Sesame Workshop
The USO partners with Sesame Workshop to provide support and valuable resources for our service members with children who are experiencing the effects of deployment, multiple deployments, combat-related injuries and, unfortunately, the loss of a loved one. For more about the USO’s partnership with Sesame Workshop, visit: https://www.uso.org/programs/the-sesame-street-uso-experience-for-military-families/she

Do not use this pronoun to refer to ships, vehicles or nations. Use “it” instead (unless in a direct quote).

ships
Identify ships as “the aircraft carrier USS George Washington” or “the USS Port Royal, a cruiser.” Do not use hull numbers (e.g., CVN-70) unless it’s crucial to the story itself. This conforms to The Associated Press style on ship identification. Ships are considered neuter nouns. Do not assign gender, such as calling a ship “she.” Submarines are boats, as are PT boats and lifeboats. For the proper description of U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ships not listed in this stylebook, refer to “Jane’s Fighting Ships.” http://www.nvr.navy.mil/nvrships/index.htm

Silver Star

small arms, small-arms fire
Refers to handguns, assault rifles, shotguns and machine guns, .50-caliber/12.7 mm or less, generally used by an infantry squad. The term is often used when describing an attack. Usage: “The platoon received small-arms fire from behind a berm 100 meters away.”

soldier
Usually used to refer to enlisted Army personnel, but can be used collectively to describe Army personnel of all ranks. Do not use as a generic term for all enlisted members of the armed forces. Use service members or service men and service women. The Air Force has airmen, the Navy has sailors and members of the Marine Corps are Marines. Note: USO style for soldier is lowercase, unless at the beginning of a sentence. Army style is to always uppercase the word.

Soldier’s Medal
An Army medal awarded for heroism that involves voluntary risk of life under other than combat situations. The Army’s highest non-combat decoration for valor. http://www.losfall.com/fmd-army-sm.htm

Soldiers’ Home

SOP
Standard operating procedure. Do not abbreviate except in direct quotes, and only with an explanation.

Southern Command
See U.S. Southern Command. SOUTHCOM is acceptable in a headline.
Space Command

Space-A
See space-available travel.

Space-available travel
An Air Force Air Mobility Command program that allows military personnel and civilian employees of the U.S. government to fly on military aircraft to selected airfields on a stand-by basis. Space-A permitted on second reference. An especially important means of travel for U.S. personnel stationed in the Far East. Commonly still referred to as “MAC flight,” a leftover from the long-obsolete Military Airlift Command; only use that term in a direct quote, with explanation.

special operations
A term applied to unconventional warfare units, such as Army Special Forces, Marine Force Reconnaissance, Military Information Support Operations (MISO) and other elements that fall under the umbrella of the U.S. Special Operations Command, based at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. The terms Special Forces and special operations are not interchangeable. Also, special operations is uppercase when referring to a specific command. Do not use the shorthand “spec ops.”

Special Operations Command
See U.S. Special Operations Command. SOCOM is acceptable in a headline.

Spirit of the USO Award
The Spirit of the USO Award is given each year at the USO Gala to an individual or individuals whose actions exemplify the USO’s mission to strengthen America’s military service members by maintaining their connections to family, home and country, throughout their service to the nation.

squad
Capitalize and do not abbreviate in unit names.

squadron
In all cases, spell it out. Capitalize if part of a unit name. 1) An Army cavalry unit equivalent to a battalion, usually commanded by a lieutenant colonel. A cavalry squadron normally has three or four service members subordinate to it and is subordinate to a regiment or brigade. 2) A Navy or Marine Corps aviation unit. 3) An Air Force unit (aviation or otherwise) roughly equivalent to an Army battalion, usually commanded by a lieutenant colonel, and comprised of subordinate units called flights. 4) A Naval group of several ships that is subordinate to a task force.

SSN
1) Abbreviation for social security number. Only use on second reference if absolutely necessary. 2) Navy hull designation for a nuclear submarine.

staff judge advocate
The ranking legal officer on an installation or in a unit. Do not use the SJA abbreviation except on second reference.

staff noncommissioned officer
Marines holding rank of staff sergeant through sergeant major (pay grades E-6 through E-9). While the Marines tend to differentiate staff NCOs from more junior NCOs, the best approach is to use the Marine’s rank on first reference. In headlines, the term “Marine” usually will suffice. However, use the full name of the Staff Noncommissioned Officer Academy at Quantico, Virginia.

starboard, port
Nautical terms for right and left, respectively.

stateside
Do not capitalize.

Status of Forces Agreement
A Status of Forces Agreement defines the legal status of the U.S. armed forces stationed in host countries. It establishes the rights, privileges and responsibilities of U.S. forces and of individual U.S. service members. The agreement also covers civilian employees and families of both military and civilian personnel. The agreement governs the relationship between the United States and foreign countries in matters of criminal jurisdiction, passports, visa regulations and other civil and legal matters. SOFA is acceptable in headlines and on second reference.

Strategic Command
See U.S. Strategic Command. STRATCOM is acceptable in a headline.

supply
In unit names, capitalize and do not abbreviate.

supply classes
The military supply class designations are: I - subsistence (food); II - clothing, tools and household cleaning supplies; III - petroleum (fuel); IV - construction; V - ammunition; VII - major end items (tanks, tents, etc.); VIII - medical supplies; IX - repair parts; X - material for support of nonmilitary programs, such as agriculture.

support
In unit names, capitalize and do not abbreviate.

tank
A heavily armed and armed combat vehicle that moves on tracks instead of wheels. Generally, tanks employ a large-bore (100 mm-plus) direct fire weapon as its main armament; it may have other weaponry such as machine guns mounted as well. The United States has one main battle tank, the M1 Abrams series. NOTE: Not all tracked vehicles are tanks. Armored personnel carriers, Self-Propelled Howitzers and Infantry Fighting Vehicles, among other things, are not tanks. See tracked vehicles.

tacttical
In unit names, capitalize and do not abbreviate.

tanker
Capitalize if part of an official grouping of elements, such as “Tank Force Eagle.” 1) A task-organized grouping of several units or subordinate parts of units, particularly in the Army. For example, the 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment was temporarily reorganized as “Tank Force 120” in Iraq in 2004. Some permanent units of the 1-120th temporarily fell under other commands, but other subordinate-level units were attached to 1-120th. 2) A Special Forces/Special Operations grouping of
various assets organized for a specific mission. Usually with a code name such as “Task Force Dagger.” 3) A naval grouping of ships smaller than a fleet but larger than a squadron. Generally assigned to patrol a specific area of ocean. Usually has a numeric designation, such as “Task Force 60.”

TDY
Acronym for temporary duty is acceptable in a headline, but spell it out on first reference.

telephone numbers
For DSN (Defense Switched Network) use: DSN 555-5555. For stateside numbers use (202)-555-5555.

temporary duty
A short-duration (usually less than two months) assignment requiring an individual to travel away from their regular duty station. Usually it involves schooling, conferences, or participation in an exercise or operation. In most cases, the individual receives per diem. The abbreviation TDY is acceptable in headlines and on second reference.

Thunderbirds
The Air Force’s precision-flying demonstration team. The team flies the F-16 Fighting Falcon, and is assigned to Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, an Air Combat Command asset. “Thunderbirds” is acceptable in all capitalization. Use “Capt. Susan James, a USAREUR drug and alcohol specialist.”

Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

Training and Doctrine Command
The Army command with headquarters at Fort Monroe, Virginia, that trains the individual soldier, develops training doctrine, and conducts officer and noncommissioned-officer professional development education programs and conducts officer procurement and pre-commissioning training programs such as ROTC and Officer Candidate School. Abbreviation TRADOC is acceptable in headlines and on second reference. http://www.tradoc.army.mil/

Transportation Command
See U.S. Transportation Command. TRANSCOM is acceptable in a headline and on second reference.

troop, troops, trooper
Do not abbreviate. An individual cavalry soldier is a trooper, not troop. A troop is a cavalry unit equivalent in size to an infantry company. Troop should not be used to describe service members in general, as it is not inclusive of all military service branches, particularly the Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard. See service member.

If in doubt and referring specifically to Army personnel, soldier is always acceptable.

U

UCMJ
See Uniform Code of Military Justice. UCMJ is acceptable in headlines and on second reference.

Uniform Code of Military Justice
UCMJ is acceptable in headlines and on second reference. The code of U.S. military law, approved in 1950, that consolidated the Army Articles of War, the Articles of the Government of the Navy and the Disciplinary Laws of the Coast Guard. It applies equally to all members of the military. Use code on second reference. Note it is Uniform, not “uniformed.” http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/ucmj.htm

unit abbreviations
In unit names, capitalize and do not abbreviate words.

unit nicknames
Service members often refer to their unit by its nickname, such as “Chaos Company.” While it’s fine to add that into a story for some color, use the actual name of the unit, such as Company C, 999th Latrine Cleaning Battalion, on first reference.

United Through Reading’s Military Program
Spell out on first reference. UTR is acceptable on second and subsequent references. The USO partnership with United Through Reading allows deployed service members to read their kids a bedtime story and be there, virtually, when they can’t be there in person. For more on United Through Reading’s Military Program, visit: https://www.uso.org/programs/united-through-reading-s-military-program

up-armored
A system of bolted- and welded-on steel doors, plates and other attachments in an effort to make a vehicle IED- and mine-resistant. Also includes very thick, projectile-resistant glass for the windshields and all windows. The system became very common in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2004. Usage: The soldiers drove through Baghdad in an up-armored Humvee.

U.S. Africa Command
Established in 2007 and currently based at Kelly Barracks in Stuttgart, Germany, U.S. Africa Command’s responsibility includes all of Africa with the exception of Egypt (which falls under Central Command). AFRICOM and Africa Command are acceptable in headlines, but use the full name on first reference. http://www.africom.mil

U.S. Armed Forces Retirement Home
Formerly known as the U.S. Naval Home and the U.S. Soldiers’ and Airmen’s Home, which were combined in 1991. Each active-duty Army and Air Force enlisted member and each Army warrant officer involuntarily contributes 50 cents a month for the operation of this Washington, D.C., facility for retired soldiers and airmen. Additional funding comes from the proceeds of service members’ pay that is forfeited as a result of UCMJ action. https://www.afrh.gov/

U.S. Central Command
Established in 1983, Central Command’s area of responsibility covers 20 nations in the Middle East, Central Asia and northeast Africa (Egypt). Headquartered at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, CENTCOM handed responsibility for the remainder of Africa to the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) in 2008. CENTCOM is leading the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. CENTCOM can be used in a headline, but spell it out as “U.S. Central Command” on first reference. http://www.centcom.mil/
U.S. Cyber Command
A command created in 2010 to defend American computer networks as well as launch cyberattacks on the networks of enemy nations/forces. Cyber Command, under the direction of a four-star officer, falls under the umbrella of U.S. Strategic Command. Subordinate commands include Army Forces Cyber Command; 24th Air Force; Fleet Cyber Command; and Marine Forces Cyber Command. CYBERCOM is acceptable in a headline, but spell it out on first reference in copy. https://www.stratcom.mil/factsheets/2/Cyber_Command/

U.S. European Command
The top U.S. command in Europe is EUCOM, located at Patch Barracks in Stuttgart, Germany. EUCOM is acceptable in headlines, but spell it out on first reference. http://www.eucom.mil

U.S. Northern Command
Based at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, this unified command was established in 2002 to coordinate the military’s Homeland Security missions. Its geographic responsibilities include all of the U.S. (except Hawaii), Canada, Mexico, some portions of the Caribbean (not including Cuba) and oceans/seas surrounding those areas. NORTHCOM is acceptable in a headline, but spell it out on first reference. http://www.northcom.mil

U.S. Pacific Command
With headquarters at Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii, U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) is the unified command with responsibility for Asia, Australia, all of the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Its components include the Pacific forces of each service, as well as multiservice commands in Japan, Korea and Alaska. PACOM is acceptable in a headline, but use full name on first reference. http://www.pacom.mil

U.S. Southern Command
The U.S. Southern Command, based in Miami, is charged with defending U.S. interests in all of Central and South America, including Cuba. It is one of six unified commands with a regional rather than an operational responsibility; the others are European, Pacific, Northern, Central and Africa. Joint Task Force Guantanamo is also under SOUTHCOM. SOUTHCOM is acceptable in a headline, but spell it out on first reference. http://www.southcom.mil/

U.S. Space Command

U.S. Special Operations Command
One of the unified service commands, its responsibilities include coordinating U.S. special operations around the world. Headquarters are at MacDill Air Force Base, near Tampa, Florida. Component commands include the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (Fort Bragg, North Carolina), U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command (Hurlburt Field, Florida), U.S. Naval Special Warfare Command (Coronado, California) and the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (Camp Lejeune, North Carolina). SOCOM is acceptable in a headline, but not on first reference. http://www.socom.mil

U.S. Strategic Command
One of the unified service commands, it places the planning, targeting and wartime employment of strategic forces under the control of a single commander, while the day-to-day training, equipping and maintenance responsibilities for its forces — the Navy’s ballistic submarine fleet and the Air Force’s bombers and ICBMs — remained with the services. Headquarters are at Offutt Air Force Base, near Omaha, Nebraska. STRATCOM is acceptable in a headline, but spell it out on first reference. http://www.stratcom.mil/

U.S. Transportation Command
A unified command, with headquarters at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, consolidating air, land and seafair activities of the Army, Navy and Air Force for the strategic mobilization of forces. TRANSCOM is acceptable in a headline, but spell it out on first reference. http://www.transcom.mil/

USAA
An insurance and financial services company, founded by military officers in 1922, which insures 90 percent of all active-duty officers (and their dependents) and offers insurance to enlisted service members. USAA stands for United Services Automobile Association, but USAA is acceptable on all references.

USAF
Abbreviation for U.S. Air Force, not “U.S. armed forces.” Permissible only in headlines. Air Force is acceptable in all cases.

USMC

USO
A nonprofit, congressionally chartered, private organization, the USO relies on the generosity of individuals, organizations and corporations to support its mission to strengthen America’s military service members by maintaining their connections to family, home and country, throughout their service to the nation. The USO is not part of the U.S. government, but is recognized by the Department of Defense, Congress and the president of the United States, who serves as honorary chairman of the USO.

USO2GO
USO2GO bundles deliver the USO’s most popular services to service members in remote locations. They can include beanbag chairs, snacks, coffee and toiletries to phone cards, electronic entertainment laptops, musical instruments, art supplies and sports equipment. For more on USO2GO, visit: https://www.uso.org/programs/uso2go

USO Care Package
Always spell out. Care packages are distributed at USO airport centers, special send-off celebrations for military personnel deploying overseas and to service members returning to overseas locations from rest and recuperation (R&R). For more on USO Care Package, visit: http://www.uso.org/operation-uso-care-package.aspx

USO center
Note “center” is lowercased. At more than 180 locations around the world, thousands of U.S. service members and their families walk through the doors of the USO every day. Inside the USO, they’ll find a place to relax, ways to connect with loved ones back home, snacks to enjoy and a wide range of USO programs and services. To locate a center, visit: https://www.uso.org/centers

USO chartered center
A chartered center receives a USO charter from USO, Inc. to operate under the USO’s brand. USO Inc. conducts periodic reviews of chartered centers to ensure that their operations are in keeping with USO’s Standard of Excellence (SOE). Chartered centers are independent organizations and receive the majority of their funding through their local community.

USO Congressional Caucus
The USO Congressional Caucus was formed in 2003 to enhance the outreach efforts of the American people to U.S. service members and their families, providing another critical link between service men and women and their representatives. Bipartisan and bicameral, the caucus brings together members from the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives who have a mutually shared interest in supporting and improving the quality of life for our service members and their families around the world. For more on the USO Congressional Caucus, visit: https://www.usa.org/about/congressional-caucus
USO direct report center
Direct report centers are directly owned and operated by USO, Inc., and are financially funded by the local community, where available, in addition to funds raised through USO, Inc.

USO Gala
This annual event celebrates the USO and features well-known entertainers from USO celebrity entertainment tours and recognizes special volunteers, as well as honorees selected by the senior enlisted representatives from each branch of the armed forces for their extraordinary bravery, loyalty and heroism.

USO Leadership Council
The USO Leadership Council is a giving society comprised of individuals and organizations that provide transformational support to the USO’s mission. Members of the council serve as goodwill ambassadors for the USO, encouraging and inspiring staff, volunteers, friends and family to join them in supporting life-changing moments for our military and their families.

USO 1941 Legacy Society
The USO 1941 Legacy Society honors those friends of the USO who make a gift through a will, trust or other estate plan to continue the USO’s long tradition of connecting service members to family, home and country.

USO Show Troupe
The only official chartered USO performance group, USO Show Troupe is an entertainment production that features music and dance performances evoking the historical style and themes of USO Camp Shows dating back to USO’s 1940s origins. It also raises funds for the USO while raising public awareness about the USO and its mission, as well as America’s military service members and their families.

USO partner
See also partner. The USO relies on the generosity of its partner corporations, clubs and organizations. The contributions of such partners are vital to advancing the mission of the USO. For more about USO partners, visit: https://www.uso.org/take-action/become-a-partner

USO tour
Note lowercase “tour.” USO entertainers are essential to boosting the morale of service members and their families. The USO’s long-standing tradition of sending entertainers around the globe will carry on as long as military men and women are stationed far from home. For more on USO tours, visit: https://www.uso.org/entertainment

USO tour veteran
Anyone who has participated in a USO tour aimed at raising the morale of service members stationed around the world.

USN, USNS
Navy designations for United States Ships (US) and United States Naval Ships (USN). Use as part of a ship’s name, such as “USS George Washington.” Similarly, in dates, use all caps: ABOARD THE USS GEORGE WASHINGTON. USNS ships, indicated by the blue and gold bands on their stack, are part of the Military Sealift Command. The command operates ships manned by civilian crews under the command of a civilian master. Note that naval hospital ships receive the USNS designation. Commissioned ships, warships in particular, bear the USNS designation.

V

V Corps

V device
The V device is a bronze block letter, V, 1/4 inch in height. It is worn on certain medals (Bronze Star, Commendation Medals, Air Medal) to denote participation in acts of heroism involving conflict with an armed enemy. Combat awards higher than the Bronze Star would not get a V-device, as valor is implicit in the award of such decoration. Usage: Sgt. Jones earned a Bronze Star Medal with V device for valor.

vehicles
Use numbers for military trucks identified by capacity: three-quarter-ton truck, 2½ ton truck (sometimes called a “deuce and a half”), etc. Use names or acronyms for others: Humvee, MRAP, M2A1, M113.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial
A black granite, wedge-shaped, sunken wall on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., inscribed with the names of more than 58,000 Americans who died or are reported missing in action in the Vietnam War. The wall was built in 1982 and, with the Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln memorials, is among the most visited sites in the city. Can be referred to as the Vietnam Wall. http://www.vvmf.org/

W

Warrior Centers
When wounded, ill and injured service members begin their journey home, USO centers, especially those near major military medical facilities, are often the first stop for service men and women and their families. In April 2003, the USO opened a center embedded in the Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility (CASF) at Ramstein Air Base in Germany. In 2008, the USO completed the construction of a 4,000 square-foot USO Warrior Center at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center (LRMC) in Germany to extend supportive services to a greater number of servicemen and women and their families. The success of these facilities helped initiate Operation Enduring Care.

Warrior and Family Center
The name for two new centers built by the USO using funding from Operation Enduring Care. The Warrior and Family Centers—at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, and Walter Reed National Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland—will provide a home away from home for wounded, ill and injured service members and their families as the service members recover at nearby military hospitals. For more on Warrior and Family Centers, visit: https://www.uso.org/programs/uso-warrior-and-family-centers
weapon
The term used by soldiers and Marines to refer to rifles, pistols and other small arms. The term gun is not used.

women in the military
Women in uniform also are soldiers, airmen, sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen. Enlisted females or female officers are the most definitive terms for referring to one category of military women. Since airman (or airmen) is a generic term, it is appropriate to use for enlisted women. In second references to women, use last names only.

win, winner, won
Military decorations are never, ever “won” or “given.” They are awarded, presented, received or earned. A person receiving a medal can be said to have been decorated. A recipient of a decoration is not, under any circumstances, a “winner.”

Wounded Warrior Battalion
A collection of units whose focus is taking care of wounded, ill and injured Marines and their families as they proceed through the Integrated Disability Evaluation System process.

XO
Military shorthand for executive officer. The executive officer is a commander’s key staff member and responsible for seeing that the command’s policies, as applied to day-to-day operations, are carried out. The executive officer in lower echelons is equivalent to the chief of staff in higher ones. Do not use “XO” or “exec” except in direct quotes.

Y

Your USO at Work
Your USO at Work is a bi-monthly email publication to inform USO donors, potential donors, the military, USO staff and volunteers and other interested parties about how the USO is carrying out its mission to keep America’s service members and their families connected.