

Writing for the GUIDON:

Simple facts you should know when writing for the GUIDON...

The GUIDON:

Production of the GUIDON cost the government nothing. It's a no-cost contract that allows a printer to sell advertising to cover the costs of production, distribution and salaries of contract editors. The government provides the content, the contractor provides the production and delivery.

Deadline. For outside submissions, the material **MUST** be at the GUIDON office no later than 1600 (4 p.m.) on Thursday, the week before publication. Planning and production for the following week begins Friday mornings. Articles can be submitted to guidoneditor@myguidon.com or brought to the office on CD or flash drives. The GUIDON will not return CDs. The GUIDON does not accept handwritten articles.

Writing for the GUIDON:

Articles and photographs are accepted every week from non-journalists, but there are a few guidelines to make the process flow more efficiently. If you are familiar with Associated Press style, please use it, If not, expect your article to be converted to AP style when printed. (For example CPT is Capt. in AP style.) The GUIDON is directed by the Department of Defense to use the AP style.

Keep articles to 300 to 600 words. Longer articles are best kept for magazines. Newspaper readers like shorter content. Articles longer than 1000 words must be pre-approved by the GUIDON editor before submission, otherwise the article will not be considered for publication. Letters to the editor need to be less than 300 words.

Write for your mom. Unless your mom spent 20 years in Army boots, keep the acronyms out. If you use an acronym, spell it out on first reference. If you write so your mom can understand it, so can our newest Soldiers.

Keep the article to one focus. Organizations have a lot of activities, but keeping your article focused on one, keeps reader's attention. You cannot cover all aspects of basic training in 600 words — and have it make sense.

Write in the third person. Write like you are describing the action while looking through a window. It's not "we," it's "Soldiers" — even if you are one of them.

Keep opinions out of the article. 'Just the facts' makes for better articles.

Stay away from the fluff writing. Everyone works hard, is proud of their unit, committed to the fight...etc. Over used, these become meaningless clichés.

Use full names. Everyone has a full name. Articles with references such as Sgt. Johnson or Capt. Smith take away from the impact of the story. Please include hometowns for marketing purposes.

Use spell check and grammar check. There is a difference between site and cite; their, they're and there; and hear and here.

DO NOT SUBMIT copyrighted material. Just because it's on the Web, doesn't mean you can copy and paste. Submit your own work. If there is a collaboration of authors, tell us who actually wrote it and who contributed to it. Our experience shows that most keyboards only work with one set of hands.

Please read what you write before you send it to the GUIDON. If it doesn't make sense to you, it won't to us either.

A PowerPoint slide is not an article.

Photos:

Never, ever, never embed your photo in the word document. The programs the GUIDON uses do not work well removing the photo so it can be used for publication. Send the photo in jpg format and cut line information in the email.

Send photos via e-mail in the highest resolution your camera can shoot, up to 300 dpi. If you can adjust size, never send larger than a 5 inch by 7 inch photo. Larger photos take up bandwidth and are seldom used in sizes larger. 200 dpi is acceptable, lower than 100 dpi will not reproduce well in newsprint. (iPhone 3G – no, iPhone 4G – maybe)

Show action. The grip and grin shots are nice for your desk, but for the newspaper, show what the person did to get the award...or at least in some sort of action. (Even answering the phone is better than a static "look at the camera" shot.

Identify people in photo. The GUIDON asks that if you have four people or less in your photo, that you identify them by rank, first name, last name and unit. A brief description is necessary if the photo is not self-explanatory.

OPSEC.

Stories that violate OPSEC will never be used...nor will they be returned via email. When in doubt, have your security personnel check it out. Violations of OPSEC include discussing tactics, techniques and procedures for any specific mission in combat operations. For example, describing zeroing the M16 is not a OPSEC TTP, but describing how to identify a roadside bomb or vulnerabilities of the up-armored vehicles are.

Ask for help. We're more than glad to assist.