MWSA STYLE GUIDE

This is an outline of rules basic to MWSA style for use in articles, reviews, and the anthology. Credibility of the organization dictates quality, content, and consistency.

Refer to *The Chicago Manual of Style, 16th Edition*, for questions of grammar. Refer to Merriam-Webster http://www.merriam-webster.com/ as the primary authority on spelling and word usage. Use Webster's first spelling if there is a choice and use American (not British) spellings for nonfiction works.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Layout and design
- **Font.** Times New Roman, 12pt.
- **Paragraph Style.** No indents or formatting of any kind. These are removed in the layout process.
- **Margins.** Use 1" margins, consistently throughout.
- **Byline**. Use the author's full name, no title or rank (save it for the bio).
- **Article Titles**.
  - Capitalize principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of five or more letters.
  - Capitalize an article (the, a, an) or a word of fewer than four letters if it is the first or last word in a title.
- **Book excerpts**.
  - Note at the end of the submission, set off by brackets.
  - Use the book title with the year of publication in parentheses. [Excerpted from *Chance ... and Other Horrors* (2011)].
- **Websites**. Use smallest URL possible with a hyperlink.

First and subsequent mention
- **People.** Give the full name including the middle initial (in nonfiction, unless relevant in fiction), if any, at first mention of a person in text. Subsequently use either first or last name but not mixed (be consistent).
- **Rank.** Spell out rank or military title and person's full name on first reference but use abbreviations and the person's last name on following references.
- **Abbreviations.** Use the spelled-out version first. Subsequent reference can use the abbreviation.
- **Acronyms.** Place the acronym in parentheses after the spelled-out term: U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), rocket-propelled grenade (RPG), improvised explosive device (IED). Subsequent reference can use the acronym alone.

PEOPLE

General
- **Racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.** Capitalize racial, linguistic, tribal, religious, and ethnic names used as nouns and adjectives: Shi'ite, African American (no hyphen), Caucasian, Muslim, Blacks, Whites *but* black people and white man.

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Military rank and designations
- Capitalize military titles preceding a personal name. Lowercase military titles when standing alone or when following a name. Brigadier General Gary C. **S**mith, the general; Pvt. Anthony W. Washington, the private.
- If the initial reference to a military officer with a numbered rank, such as 1st or 2nd, falls at the beginning of a sentence, spell out the number.
- Separate a name from the military service or branch to which the individual belongs with commas: Lt. Col. John R. Doe, U.S. Marine Corps, was in command.
- For retired officials, use the lowercased, spelled-out word (*retired)* or *(ret.)* after the applicable title/abbreviation.
- Lowercase generic references to individual members of the military: veteran, service member (2 words), soldier, coast guardsmen, reservists, armed forces, national guardsmen.
- Uppercase generic references to individual members of the military: Soldier, Sailor, Marine, Airman, Guardian, Coast Guardsman.

Academic titles and degrees
- Do not capitalize academic degrees or titles unless they are directly before or after the name of a person.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

- **Usage in chapter titles.** Avoid using acronyms and abbreviations in chapter titles.
- **Abbreviating rank and civilian titles.** A civilian or military title may be abbreviated when it precedes the full name. Preceding the surname alone, however, it is spelled out: Sen. Mark L. Kirk, Senator Kirk; Lt. Col. Or LTC Mary J. Pierce, Colonel Pierce; Pfc. Richard F. Jones, Private Jones; Sfc. Kathryn L. Jacobson, Sergeant Jacobson.
- **U.S. states and territories.** Spell out the names of states, territories, and possessions of the United States in text when standing alone and when following the name of a city (except for D.C.). Only use the two-letter, no-period state abbreviations when followed by a zip code.
- **Indefinite article preceding an abbreviation.** When an abbreviation or acronym follows an indefinite article (*a* or *an)*, the choice of *a* or *an* is determined by the way the abbreviation would be read aloud: an MWSA award winner, an NCO, a NATO meeting.
- Use periods when abbreviating U.S. used as an adjective but spell out United States when used as a noun: U.S. dollars *but* He flew back to the United States.

CAPITALIZATION

Military Terms
- Capitalize formal full and shortened names of national armies, navies, air forces, fleets, regiments, battalions, companies, and corps. U.S. Air Force; Air Force; U.S. Army; Army; U.S. Marine Corps; Marine Corps; U.S. Navy; Navy.
- Capitalize *Army* when standing alone when it refers to the United States Army. Lowercase words such as *army*, *navy*, or *military* when used collectively in the plural, or when not part of an official title. e.g., air force [referring to a generic or foreign air force]; U.S. soldiers; U.S. Marines; a Marine; the navy [referring to a generic or foreign navy].

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- Capitalize widely used military names of members of specific units or branches of the armed forces: Rangers, Army Special Forces, Seabees, Green Berets, Marauders, Screaming Eagles.
- Capitalize the formal names of guard and reserve units and categories. 1st Air National Guard, 2nd Army National Guard, Wyoming Army Reserve, 2nd Naval Reserve, New York Marine Corps Reserve.
- Lowercase the word *reserve* when used generically: a reserve officer, the reserve components.
- Capitalize adjectives designating the armed services when the reference in context is clearly to the organization and not merely descriptive: the Army way is not the Navy way *but* infantry troops, the marine guard.

Units and Organizations
- **Unit names.** Capitalize formal names of specific units of armed forces: VII Corps; 4th Aviation Regiment; Company A (*not* A Company); 23d Infantry Division; 75th Ranger Regiment; 101st Airborne Division.

Military Equipment, Weapons, Ships, and Aircraft
- **Types of military equipment.** Capitalize the formal names of types of aircraft, missiles, tanks, weapons, and other military equipment, but not the common nouns following the formal name. Bradley, Apache, Bradley fighting vehicle, Apache helicopter.
- **Weapons designations.** Designations for individual weapons, ordnance (ammunition), and weapons systems (tanks, self-propelled artillery) are set with capital letters with no spaces or dashes. Given in brackets are explanations of the kind of weapon or weapon system. AK47 [assault rifle], M1 [tank or rifle].
- **Ship and aircraft designations.** Use capital letters and dashes in aircraft and ship designations. Given in brackets are explanations of the kind of aircraft or ship. C-130 [fixed-wing aircraft], UH-1 [helicopter].
- **Wars and battles.** Capitalize formal names of wars, battles, and conflicts: Global War on Terror, Battle of the Wheatfield.
- **Medals and awards.** Capitalize military medals and awards: Presidential Unit Citation, Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart.

PLURALS

- To form the plural of capital letters used as words, abbreviations that contain no interior periods, and numerals used as nouns, simply add *s*: the three Rs, the 1990s, ICBMs.
- To avoid confusion when forming plurals of lowercase letters, add an apostrophe s. Mind your *p*'s and *q*'s.

TREATMENT OF NUMBERS

- **Express in words**. Spell out whole numbers from one through one hundred, and any number beginning a sentence.
- **Express in figures.** Use figures for clock time, dates, decimals, degrees, money. Use figures for numbers of 101 or more.

- **Combination.** When indicating round sums of money, of a million or more, use a combination of figures and words. $1.5 million [*not* $1,500,000].
- **Approximations.** Spell out numbers used in the approximate sense. The area covers roughly two hundred acres *not* 200.
- **Dates**. Dates are typically written in the sequence month, day, year (February 20, 1952) unless nonfiction military which uses the military standard of day, month, year (20 February 1952). When using only month and year, no internal punctuation is necessary (February 1952). A specific day (August 20 or 20 August) uses the cardinal number, whereas a day without a month (the 20th) uses ordinal with superscript.
- **Fractions.** Hyphenate as both adjective and noun: a two-thirds majority, two-thirds of those present.
- **Time.** Indicate time in connection with military activity on the 24-hour basis. It is not necessary to add the word *hours* unless in dialogue. If a nonfiction volume does not deal with battlefield activity, use time in the standard manner. Action started at 0845. Congress recessed at 11:15 p.m.
- **Age.** Twenty-four years old, eleven months old, a thirty-four-year-old woman, 101-year-old man, a woman in her thirties.
- **In Dialogue.** All numbers are spelled out in dialogue (e.g., eight hundred hours, nine dollars, etc.) unless conventional use, i.e., .45mm.
- **Military designations.**
  - Spell out numbers of U.S. field armies under 100. Eighth Army, 386th Division.
  - Use Arabic numerals for U.S. Army groups, commands, brigades, divisions, regiments, battalions, squadrons, companies, detachments, and platoons. 12th Army Group, 1st Logistical Command, 2d Infantry Division, 3d Brigade Combat Team.
  - Do not begin a sentence with a number (such as XV Corps). Insert *the* in front of the number. The V Corps stationed its armored cavalry regiment forward to screen and observe the border.

<u>ITALICS</u>

- **Book titles.** Use italics for book titles (no underlining or quote marks) and publications (magazines, songs, etc.).
- **Names of ships and aircraft.** Italicize names (not types) of ships and aircraft. USS *Alabama, Spirit of St. Louis,* UH-72A Lakota helicopter.
- **Words used as terms.** Use italics for any words singled out as terms in written context: the letter *m*, the term *depressed* implies.
- **Italicized passages.** Do not italicize normally italicized words when they appear in an italicized passage (such as photo captions). *The USS* Cole *is pictured on the right*.
- **Italicize brand names.** *Burger King* restaurant*, Coca-cola* bottle, *Delta* Airlines.

<u>PUNCTUATION</u>

General
- **Space following punctuation**. One space, not two, follows any mark of punctuation, including period, colon, question mark, or exclamation point.

Colon
- **Compound titles**. Book titles with subtitles use italics and appear with a colon as *Title: Subtitle with Appropriate Capitalization for a Title.*
- **Lists.** Use a colon to introduce a list following a grammatically complete sentence. The mission was plagued by problems from the onset: loss of the element of surprise, unfamiliarity with the terrain, and malfunctioning weapons *but* The chief requirements for this operation are surprise, speed, and firepower.
- **No capitalization following.** When a colon is used within a sentence, lowercase the first word following the colon unless it is a proper name.

Comma
- **Series.** Use a comma between each item in a series of three or more words, phrases, letters, or figures used with *and* or *or*: The flag is red, white, and blue.
- **Parenthetical elements**. Use commas to set off parenthetical elements if a slight break is intended. If a stronger break is needed or if there are commas within the parenthetical element, use em dashes or parentheses.
- **State.** Add a comma after state or country when used with city names. I work in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, as a medical technologist.
- **Year.** Set off the year with commas on both sides when used with a day and month. September 11, 2001, will long be remembered as a day of terror and confusion.
- Use a comma to separate two independent clauses of a compound sentence but not a compound subject or a compound predicate unless there are three or more elements.
  - Two independent clauses: We are visiting Washington, and we also plan a side trip to Williamsburg.
  - Compound predicate, single subject: We are visiting Washington and plan to see the White House.
  - Best: We're visiting Washington. We're also planning a side trip to Williamsburg.
- Use a comma before and after a phrase indicating the larger group to which a unit belongs. The 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, began to move. [But never use 'began' or 'begin' or 'started' as an action verb as one either moves or one doesn't. One cannot continue to begin or start to do anything in text. Best: The 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, moved out.]

Ellipsis Points
- Ellipsis points (formed by three spaced periods) indicate the omission of quoted words or the trailing off a thought.
- Use ellipsis points (…) sparingly in nonfiction. Do not add a space on either side…of the ellipsis when eliminating words. Use one space after the ellipses when trailing off (indicating a pause) and beginning again. "I wanted to tell you, but… I don't know how to begin." Never use four-point ellipses when ending a sentence. The final period is unnecessary.

Exclamation Point
- Use an exclamation point to indicate an outcry or an emphatic exclamation. Usually one word interjections: Ouch! Or, Now! Avoid using exclamation points at the end of a sentence.
- Only sparingly use exclamation points.

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Hyphen The hyphen is a single dash (-).
- **Numbers.** Typically use a hyphen to separate telephone numbers, social security numbers, and ISBNs.
- **Spelled words.** Use hyphens to separate individual letters when a word is spelled. Just get O-U-T.
- **Clarity.** Use a hyphen if the meaning would be ambiguous without the hyphen: re-form [a unit], re-create [create again].
- **Compound words.** Use a hyphen to show the combination of two or more words into a single term representing a new idea (as an adjective). long-term loan.
- **Fractions.** Use hyphens between the numerator and the denominator in spelled-out fractions unless one already contains a hyphen: two-thirds, three one-thousandths.
- **Multiple hyphenated compounds.** Where two or more hyphened words have a common basic element, and this element is omitted in all but the last term, retain the hyphens in all. two- and four-foot lengths.
- **Ordnance.** Hyphenate sizes of weapons and ammunition when used adjectively: 105-mm. howitzer, .45-caliber round.
- Use Chicago Table of Hyphenation https://ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/CMS_list.pdf or Miriam Webster Dictionary for additional or specific hyphen usage.

En Dash The en dash is a double hyphen (–).
- **Usage.** The en dash is of limited use and can generally be replaced by the word *to*.
- **Connecting numbers.** Use to signify *up to and including* or *through*. 1966–1973.
- **Indicate time period.** Use to denote a span of time. June 21–August 5.

Em Dash The em dash is a triple hyphen (—).
- **Parenthetic:** Use to set off parenthetical material. Don't use more than two em dashes in a sentence; if more than two elements need to be set apart, use parentheses.
- **Interrupted thought**. Use—like this—to convey a thought that interrupts the sentence. Sometimes a parenthesis should be used instead. Use in dialogue to indicate another person interrupts or when the conversation is interrupted or truncated by an action: "I wanted to t—" He slammed the door in her face.
- When using an em dash—do not leave a space before and after. [It can be made by typing two hyphens, then pressing enter, then backspace OR with the numeric keypad Alt 0151.]

Parentheses
- Use parentheses to set off material that is less closely related to the rest of the sentence than that enclosed in em dashes or commas.

Quotation Marks
- **Titles.** Use quotation marks for references to chapters and section titles of published books, and newspaper articles, exhibits, and speeches. Titles of magazines, books, businesses, and songs are always italicized.
- **Irony.** Use quotation marks to alert readers that a term is used in a nonstandard, ironic, or other special sense. Sometimes called 'scare' quotes: "Child protection" sometimes fails to protect.

- **Punctuation.** Place periods and commas inside quotation marks unless the quotation is a phrase or scare quote, whether double or single. If the quotation is a short phrase, word, or scare quote, place the punctuation outside (think parentheses placement). Place colons, semicolons, question marks, and exclamation points outside quotation marks (unless the question mark or exclamation point is part of the quoted matter).

Semicolon
- **Closely related sentences.** Use a semicolon sparingly in nonfiction and only to join two short, closely related sentences, or independent clauses, especially if there are commas within the clauses. If you can, create two or more sentences instead of using semicolons. Too many long sentences in a paragraph or story bore the reader. Different length sentences do the opposite. Avoid semicolons in fiction.
- **Serial lists.** Use semicolons to separate items within a sentence if the items themselves contain commas. MWSA enjoyed conferences in Dayton, Ohio; Charleston, South Carolina; and San Antonio, Texas.

Brackets
- Interpolation of the author's/editor's comment or explanation should be enclosed in brackets. e.g. [See page 5].

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS
- Armed Forces: Refers to the six military branches (Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard).
- Active Duty: Refers to a full-time occupation as part of a military force, as opposed to Reserve or National Guard.