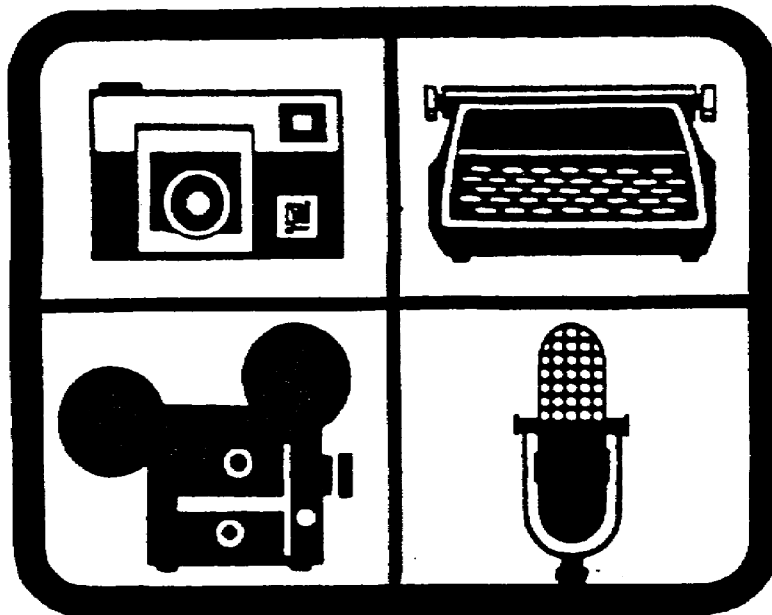


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# **INTRODUCTION TO JOURNALISM**

## **PUBLIC AFFAIRS**



**THE ARMY INSTITUTE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**ARMY CORRESPONDENCE COURSE PROGRAM**

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D**



US ARMY JOURNALIST

MOS 71Q SKILL LEVELS 1 AND 2

Introduction to Journalism

Subcourse DI0200

Army Public Affairs Center  
Fort George G. Meade, Maryland

Four Credit Hours

General

The Introduction to Journalism subcourse, part of the US Army Journalist MOS 71Q, Skill Levels 1 and 2 course, is designed to teach the meaning of news, the basic elements which create news, required elements of news stories, the role of journalism in the Army; the skills, techniques and attitudes which make good Army journalists; the function of Army journalists; Army newspaper operations; the methods of gathering news; and interviewing techniques.

TASK: Implement news gathering skills and conduct news interviews.

CONDITION: Given information on the use of journalism in the Army, methods of gathering news, and techniques crucial to conducting news interviews, research and collect information for use in public affairs publications and activities.

STANDARD: In accordance with the standards established in this subcourse and AR 360-5, Public Information; and AR 360-81, Command Information; research and collect information for public affairs publications and activities.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Introduction to Journalism subcourse, part of the US Army Journalist MOS 71Q, Skill Levels 1 and 2 course, is designed to teach the meaning of news, the basic elements which create news, required elements of news stories, the role of journalism in the Army; the skills, techniques and attitudes which make good Army journalists; the function of Army journalists; Army newspaper operations; the methods of gathering news; and interviewing techniques.

### Lesson 1: Introduction to Journalism

**Task:** Define terms related to journalism, learn the Elements of News, understand the function of Army public affairs specialists (journalists), and recognize the differences between unit and community newspapers.

**Condition:** Given the information in this lesson.

**Standard:** Define journalistic terms, describe the Elements of News, know the function of public affairs specialists in their role as journalists, and recognize the differences between unit and community newspapers.

### Lesson 2: What Makes a Good Journalist?

**Task:** Recognize the practices of good journalists, understand how journalists work within the Army, learn how decisions are made in Army newspaper operations, and recognize training and duty commitments.

**Condition:** Given the information in this lesson.

**Standard:** Apply the practices of good journalists, recognize decision-makers in Army newspaper operations, and understand the requirements of training and duty commitments.

### Lesson 3: Gathering the News

**Task:** Understand the various types of beat systems and learn what sources of information are available to the Army journalist.

Condition: Given the information in this lesson.

Standard: Know how beat systems operate and where to find various sources of information.

#### Lesson 4: Interviewing

Task: Prepare the mechanical aspects of interviewing, develop note-taking skills, pick interview locations, conduct interview research, arrange interview, conduct and transcribe the interview.

Condition: Given the information in this lesson.

Standard: Use interview tools, develop note-taking skills, pick locations for interviews, conduct preinterview research, arrange interviews, conduct and transcribe interviews according to guidelines contained in this subcourse.

## Lesson 1, Learning Event 1

### INTRODUCTION TO JOURNALISM

#### EDITOR'S NOTE

There is a tendency for Army journalists to believe they are part of America's Free Press and thus part of the investigative Journalist corps. The term "Army Journalist" is misleading as the Army newswriter is not a Free Press journalist. Army journalists are assigned to command information, public information and community relations duties. When assigned to public information staffs Army journalists write releases to tell the Army story and to respond to queries by the investigative Free Press. When assigned to Command Information staffs Army journalists may write for what the industry terms "in-house" publications. Just as a writer for commercial industry would not write investigative articles concerning his company for the in-house publication, neither do Army journalists write investigatively concerning the Army or their own individual commands. Army journalists may tackle controversial social issues, but they must avoid articles which attack or injure, or which give the impression of attacking or injuring their commands or the Army.

We apply the term "journalist" to enlisted Army public affairs personnel because they use the skills and techniques of the civilian journalist in writing, editing, and designing publications.

## Lesson 1, Learning Event 1

### WHAT IS NEWS?

In the simplest terms, news is a report of someone's actions, or of an event, which has not been previously reported, and which interests or affects significant segments of the community or audience.

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines news as:

1. a report of recent events.
2. material reported in a newspaper.
3. matter that is newsworthy.

Webster's further defines newsworthy as: sufficiently interesting to the general public to warrant reporting.

News, then, has a timely value and it must be interesting to be of worth to the general public. It must also have been previously unpublished. Once published it is no longer news, but history.

Another concept which aspiring journalists must master is that the event or the person's action is not "the news." An event may be newsworthy, but it doesn't become news until it is published.

How do journalists, civilian and military, evaluate an event for its newsworthiness? Perhaps the best answer is the journalist concerns himself and his writing with the events and people in which his readers are interested. The more people who are interested, and the more intense their interest becomes, the greater news value the event or the person.

The reporter is a gatekeeper of information for his readers. Editors, therefore, require their reporters to include three factors in their reporting.

- \* Authenticity and Accuracy
- \* Good Taste
- \* Mass Appeal



## Lesson 1, Learning Event 2

AUTHENTICITY AND ACCURACY -- No ethical reporter would fabricate a story, or make readers believe that something happened when it did not. Additionally, reporters obtain their facts and information from the most credible sources available, thus increasing authenticity and accuracy. Reporters ensure that their articles are meaningful and in agreement with reality. Errors in fact, mistakes, might be made by the inexperienced reporter. HOWEVER, THEY CAN'T BE TOLERATED. Accuracy is an unrelenting requirement, not only because the reputation of the reporter and newspaper are at stake, but because the reader demands the right to believe what he reads.

GOOD TASTE -- Good reporters display courtesy, good taste and respect towards and on behalf of their audience through their writing. The reporter's copy will avoid vulgarities and obscenities. His reporting will be neither callous, nor hardened or obnoxious. Professional reporters don't confuse complete, objective reporting with caustic or gory accounts of news events.

MASS APPEAL -- One of the basic facets of news is that it be or worth to significant segments of the audience. Hass Appeal is comprised of 10 elements; sometimes referred to as the "Elements of News."

### THE ELEMENTS OF NEWS

1. IMMEDIACY -- Timeliness, as discussed above is an indispensable part of the straight news story. Without timeliness, the news story is a historical record. In the Army, few Journalists write for daily newspapers. Most write for weekly or biweekly publications. That means breaking news will often be history by the time it can be printed in their papers. Army journalists seek fresh angles, late-breaking developments, analysis of the events and their effects. When such angles aren't available, Army journalists treat the event in news-feature or feature styles.

If the press reports that Congress approved a record defense bill, an army newspaper may have to wait days or even weeks to report on its installation's slice of the money. When this new development is available the paper has a timely news story.

## Lesson 1, Learning Event 2

2. PROXIMITY -- News events may occur close to readers in both the physical and psychological sense. The most important person in the world is the individual reader. Write about what he thinks or does, and his attention is guaranteed. Write about his family, friends, church, club, hobbies, career or city and his attention will be captured in varying degrees. The automobile accident in front of his home is more important than one across town. The accident, in another state, which involves his family is more important than the one in front of his home.

If a servicewide event takes place, you must localize it --tell how it affects the folks at your post. If the defense appropriations bill is approved in Washington, D.C., how will it affect the budget of your post? Localize. Don't just take "canned" material from Department of Defense or Department of the Army news services.

All too often a story is taken directly from the news services and used without being localized. Doing this cheats the reader. If the story has an Army-wide interest it should also have a local angle as well. Find it. Write about it. Tie it in with the news service story and publish it.

3. CONSEQUENCE -- The more people affected by a news event the greater consequence it has for the readership. The journalist's job is to discover and report how readers will be affected, and how long they will be affected.

If the water main to one street of houses bursts, the consequence is great for those living on the street, but negligible for the rest of your readers. Such a story might be reported on the inside pages with a few short paragraphs.

Let the post's central water main burst and its consequence will throw the story to page one.

4. PROMINENCE -- When PFC Cruik has a gall stone attack, it has little news value. Let the same thing happen to a football quarterback the night before he's to start in the Super bowl, and it's newsworthy. If PFC Cruik says cigarettes should not be sold in commissaries, no one listens. Let the commander of the Troop Support Agency (which controls commissaries) even hint that he is considering such a ban and people want to know what he said and why he said it.

## Lesson 1, Learning Event 2

The place of a news event may raise it to prominence. If PFC Cruitt's wife has a baby in the post hospital it has little news value, perhaps a birth announcement. If she has the baby while on a tour of the White House, it has tremendous news value. Time may also bring prominence if the child is the first born in a new year, or the first born in a new hospital.

There is danger in featuring one prominent member of an Army command too often. Be careful about overplaying the commanding officer. True, he is important and has an influence over everyone in the command. But, if he is the front page picture and story in every issue, people will get tired of seeing his face and reading about him. In effect, instead of building the commander's image and presence in his command, such coverage detracts. (Building the commander's image is not a function of Army newspapers. But, public affairs officers must be able to explain why such coverage of the commander is not in his best interest.)

It is a big mistake to make the newspaper a fluff piece for the commander. It's better to feature your commander in the newspaper as an expert explaining important command issues. If the commander wants to use a part of the newspaper as a method of talking to the community, encourage him to write a column or start an "action line." (Action Lines use telephone answering machines which record people's complaints, questions and comments. The commander and his staff make replies in the standing newspaper column.) He is more effective expressing his command views in a dedicated spot in the paper than as a part of every story.

5. SUSPENSE -- Soldiers are always caught by the suspense of promotion board results, or Congressional consideration of pay raises. A continuing story about efforts to locate a missing child contains suspense.

6. ODDITY -- Readers are interested in people, animals and things which don't fit the norm. When whales beach themselves without reason, the oddity of the act gives it news value. Be wary of the danger in this element, though. You must have good taste not to engage in the bizarre for its own sake or merely for shock value. Never ridicule people. Never depend on oddity to fill your paper.

7. SEX -- Sex is a touchy topic, but it has a strong attraction for readers. The romance of Prince Charles and Lady Diana is an example of the sex element of news. An

### Lesson 1, Learning Event 3

article on the first woman to be selected as the Army. Chief of Staff would be strengthened by the sex element. A story about the winner of the post knitting contest would be strengthened by the sex element if the winner is a man. The mix of gender and oddity form strong sex elements to news. Any discussion of venereal disease, AIDS, single parenthood, rape, fraternization and the whole issue of women in combat is based on the element of sex.

8. CONFLICT -- Sports fall into this category, as do wars and gang fights. but, conflict also spreads into other areas of life such as people opposing rate hikes in their telephone bills, or arguments about whether smoking should be banned from public areas.

9. EMOTION -- When the space shuttle Challenger exploded the emotion was tragedy. When the first man stepped on the moon the emotion was elation. When peace came at the end of World War II the emotion was Jubilation. When a family dies in a house fire and a father watches in tragic helplessness the emotion is sorrow and empathy. People are interested, and want to somehow share, in the drama of life.

10. PROGRESS -- Progress fascinates people. Readers always want to see what new technologies are doing to improve everyday life. New weapons systems and training devices and new uses for computers are always being introduced to the Army. Take advantage of these advancements and write about them for your readers. Take the time to explain how these advancements improve the quality of life or the ability to perform the mission. Progress can also be achievements in nuclear arms reductions, civil rights, etc.

The dominant element of news is often called "the News Peg or Angie." Once the writer analyzes a news event for its newsworthiness, he will want to determine which element within the story is most important. That element becomes his news peg. However, these elements of news are not independent or exclusive of each other. They intertwine and support each other. It is difficult to use them separately.

#### NEWS IN THE ARMY COMMUNITY

New Army journalists are often confused about their role in the Army community. Most are familiar with their newspapers back home. They are used to the civilian reporter investigating -- or reporting on the investigation of --

## Lesson 1, Learning Event 4

fraud, waste or abuse in the local, county or state government. Arriving at their first post they find a community which seems to be somewhat similar to that of their hometown. The post commander seems to be the mayor, and the provost marshal represents the chief of police. The commander's staff fills the rest of the government positions. There are schools, stores, businesses and recreational services.

But, Army journalists must learn that the commander is not so much a 'mayor as he is the president of a company. And the Army community is really much like a company town. The MOST IMPORTANT tact that an Army Journalist must learn is that he writes for an in-house publication, not a public or private newspaper. he is not free to investigate the commander (mayor) or to publish the commander's faults to the rest of the community. The community has not elected the commander. He serves at the discretion and the direction of the President of the United States through the Department of Defense chain of command. The object of Army newspapers is not to be a watchdog or overseer of what the local command (government) does.

The object of Army newspapers is to enhance morale, to increase readiness and productivity, to be the voice of the commander to his community, and to inform, educate and entertain internal audiences.

Army journalists are subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). The Army journalist who creates turmoil, or who disrupts command authority and discipline may be charged and tried under the UCMJ.

### RECOGNIZING UNIT AND COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

The focus of Army newspapers may differ from post to post depending upon mission requirements and the desires of the commander.

For instance, at posts where tactical units are the major activities, newspapers may be unit or mission-oriented, hence the term "unit newspaper." The content of these papers may be heavily weighted with articles concerning unit training, leadership development and the place of local units in the Total Force.

## **Lesson 1, Learning Event 4**

Unit newspapers strive to enhance morale by recognizing individual and unit accomplishments. They may also be used as teaching tools using standing columns in each issue to describe friendly and threat vehicles and aircraft. Some community news will be covered, but unit news will occupy greater amounts of space and the more prominent sections of the newspaper.

Community newspapers are generally found at posts that are primarily headquarters or administrative in nature. A major objective of community newspapers is to develop a sense of community and provide families with information concerning their social and entertainment needs, and the community support and service activities.

No Army newspaper should be wholly unit- or community- oriented. While the primary internal audience includes soldiers and Department of the Army civilians, the total audience also includes family members, retirees, West Point and ROTC cadets, and others. Newspaper coverage should be balanced, covering the needs of its total audience as determined by newspaper readership surveys and focus group interviews.

### **GOVERNING REQUIREMENTS**

**SECURITY** - Operational security, the safety and security of the United States, its citizens and soldiers, and its property must be the first concern of all soldiers, including Army journalists. Don't use material, artwork, or photographs which could damage that security. Report security problems immediately.

**ACCURACY** - Accuracy gives the journalist and his newspaper credibility, the only commodity they have to offer the public. Always be right. Never misspell a name. Always be tactually correct.

**PROPRIETY** - Avoid gory, gruesome, and grotesque writing. Use good taste and be sensitive to your readership. Tell the story straight and avoid distasteful adjectives and adverbs.

**POLICY** - Know the Army public affairs policy various subjects such as accident reporting, nuclear and chemical accidents, and counterterrorism. Don't violate established command or army-wide policy.

PRACTICE EXERCISE

LESSON NO. 1

INTRODUCTION TO JOURNALISM

SUBCOURSE NO. DI0200

INSTRUCTIONS:

Review the material in this lesson. Answer the questions below by circling "T" or "F" next to each question. Compare your answers with the answer key on the next page. Ensure that you understand the lesson material and answers before proceeding to the next lesson.

- T F 1. An event must be reported to be news.
- T F 2. Articles must include complete graphic accounts of accidents to meet the requirements of authenticity and accuracy.
- T F 3. The elements of news operate independent of each other.
- T F 4. An indispensable element of news in a straight news story is the element of immediacy.
- T F 5. Army journalists may be subject to discipline under the UCMJ for articles they write.

ANSWER KEY

PRACTICE EXERCISE

LESSON NO. 1

WHAT IS NEWS?

SUBCOURSE NO. DI0200

1. TRUE PAGE 2, PARA 5
2. FALSE PAGE 3, PARA 2
3. FALSE PAGE 6, PARA 4
4. TRUE PAGE 3, PARA 4
5. TRUE PAGE 7, PARA 3



## Lesson 2, Learning Event 1

### WHAT MAKES A GOOD JOURNALIST?

Journalism isn't an 8-to-5 job. The aspiring journalist will find himself working long hours to develop his story. At first each word may be extracted and placed on paper with great anxiety. There is no easy road to writing well. It takes time and practice.

Additionally, many newsworthy events don't occur during normal "duty" hours. The editor may assign a reporter to cover an evening event. Or, the reporter may be assigned a beat and find a newsworthy event that will keep him past "closing" time. Sports usually take place after normal work hours.

Army and civilian reporters alike may have specified work hours. They are nevertheless expected to work at whatever hour the newsworthy event takes place.

Journalism requires a commitment of time --time to work, time to write and time to polish and improve skills. It requires dedication to the craft of writing, and to the task of informing, educating and entertaining the audience.

Military newspapers are notorious for being short-staffed. The new journalist will progress more rapidly if he uses initiative to find and write more than his editor assigns. A professional journalist will not sit by and relax as deadline nears simply because his stories are done. He will help finish the product for the printing process.

As a reporter moves through his daily routine, whether on his beat or off-duty, he will be perceptive, inquiring and observant of his environment. His constant questions must be: "What is happening?", "Who is doing it?" and "Why?"

So, when a hot air balloon is forced to land next to the reporter's home in a post housing area, the reporter should get photographs and interview the balloonists.

When a reporter sees a rugby match, and the newspaper staff doesn't even know the post sponsors a rugby team, the reporter should gather the essential facts and photographs.

Notice that in the above two examples the reporter is doing the photography. Unlike many civilian papers which employ photographers and writers, the Army newspaper will seldom have a photographer assigned. And, when Army Signal Corps

## Lesson 2, Learning Event 2

photographers are available from post photo labs they are too often unable to provide photographic prints in time for deadlines. Therefore, the Army journalist must learn to do his own photography and film and print processing. This requires as much practice as writing. It also means the reporter's camera should be constantly available for the unexpected story. But, this kind of extra work pays dividends: The paper is more comprehensive and the reader is better informed.

No one can write intelligently about any topic unless they have researched it. Fast-breaking news stories leave little time for background research, but the reporter must find and report the facts. However, when a reporter is assigned to cover a speech or meeting he can check into the background of the speaker, the purpose of the speech and the results and topics of prior meetings. An enterprising reporter might arrange to get an advance copy of the speech so he can be more aware of how the speech is delivered. Indeed, the reporter can write much of the story prior to the actual speech. Reporters must be cautious, however, for the speaker who discards his speech for another, or for speakers who make important impromptu remarks during the course of their speeches.

### THE FUNCTION OF ARMY JOURNALISTS.

As discussed previously, Army journalists are involved in writing for internal Army audiences. The primary internal or command information audiences are soldiers and DA civilian employees. Military family members, retirees, and West Point and Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets form broader significant audiences. Overseas, the family members of DA civilians, local national employees and contract employees add to the internal audience. Almost every Army journalist will write for these internal publics sometime in his career.

Some Army journalists will write for external "civilian" audiences. These may include local, state, national or international publics. Most often such writing is sent to the civilian news media who assess its newsworthiness and its placement in their newspapers and magazines, or in radio and television broadcasts.

## Lesson 2, Learning Event 2

Preparing an article for external news media may mean "writing" it several times to fit the writing and format styles of the various mediums and the differences between news organizations using the same medium.

Additionally, whether writing for internal or external release the Army journalist may be writing hard news, sports or accident stories, he may also write feature stories or editorials. In some cases the Army journalist will find himself researching and writing speeches for the commander. All of these types of writing require different styles of writing, with their own unique requirements.

In writing news, sports and accident stories, the writer uses "inverted pyramids" to format his copy. The inverted pyramid is a method of providing the most important facts of the story first. The least important facts come last. The writer places all essential facts in the first paragraph. But, even then there are separate requirements between these types of stories.

In feature writing the writer is freer to develop his subject; editorial writing allows the writer an opportunity to influence his audience.

Speech writing is in a category, all its own.

But, Army journalists must be more than crafted writers, for it is not simply their job to publish information.

As discussed in previous subcourses, no commander is able to do everything himself. Commanders seldom make decisions prior to obtaining the advice of their specialists. The commander's specialist in communicating with internal and external audiences is his public affairs officer (PAO). The PAO in turn depends on his staff to advise him, to gather information, evaluate public understanding of and attitude towards the command, and to provide feedback from the public to the PAO and the commander. This feedback and advice are important tools for both the PAO and the commander in accomplishing the unit mission.

### ARMY NEWSPAPER OPERATIONS

The organization of the ideal Army newspaper staff is difficult to describe, not only because needs are dependent on population, but also because missions vary.

## Lesson 2, Learning Event 3

At mythical Fort Boston, a corps headquarters also serves as the post headquarters. An armored division is the major tactical unit on post. There are nearly 18,000 soldiers and 6,000 DA civilian employees, as well as 30,000 Army family members. There are three elementary schools, a junior and a senior high school on post.

Ideally, an editor might hope to have four or five journalists working various beats, with another two covering sports. These journalists might also assist the editor in layout, pasteup and proofreading. They are each responsible for their own photography. Ideally, other PA staff sections are staffed sufficiently to limit additional requirements on the newspaper staff.

In reality, the newspaper staff may consist of two or three people who occasionally also fill the requirements of public information and community relations sections. The editor in this situation will need to establish a stringer system. A stringer is a non-journalist who gathers the essential facts about something his unit or organization does and provides this information to the editor or an assigned reporter. Stringer systems will be discussed in another subcourse. The Army journalist may also be responsible for distribution of the newspaper.

Teamwork and personal initiative are critical if a quality newspaper is to be published. Nothing short of long hours and dedication will produce a newspaper filled with the news and information the Army audiences deserve and need.

### Decision Making

No newspaper reporter, civilian or military, is ever the final arbiter of what will appear in print. Sometimes reporters are assigned stories they would rather not do, or in which they have no interest. The decision isn't theirs. Similarly, a writer's copy is subject to editing and rewriting under the editor's pen. Changes are to be expected. Invariably they lead to better stories.

Ultimately, the commander has responsibility for what is published in his newspaper. It is his right to review all copy before it goes to the typesetters. Most PAOs and editors act responsibly enough that commanders ask only to be briefed on the newspaper's content; sometimes --only when a controversial or sensitive topic will be published.

## **Lesson 2, Learning Event 4**

Most PAOs review all copy before it goes to the commander or the typesetter. Remember that the PAO has access to information and situations about which his staff may be unaware. He may "kill" a story based on that information. Although this can be frustrating, it may happen from time to time. Good PAOs don't abuse this authority. They are committed to "providing a free flow of general news and information" to the Army community.

While commanders and PAOs may be considered owners and executive editors of Army newspapers, the editor fills the same responsibilities as his civilian counterparts. Editors determine the content of their newspapers, they critique the writing style of their writers, they evaluate stories for completeness, accuracy and news value, and they determine if one writer has taken the best approach to his assignment.

The day-in, day-out work of preparing a newspaper is usually handled by a "managing editor" who may be a mid-level NCO, a DA civilian or the command information officer from the public affairs shop. This individual is assisted by one or more reporters and sub-editors, depending on the size of the newspaper.

It is the editor's job to tighten up writing, to eliminate redundancy, to increase clarity, and to ensure accuracy. No writer of any rank or experience should expect to escape the editor's pencil. Everyone can benefit from copyediting. Writers must copyedit their own material and editors must also copyedit the same articles. Even editors should have someone else copyedit their own writing.

### **MILITARY TRAINING AND ADDITIONAL DUTIES**

Charge or quarters, headcount, guard duty, reaction platoons, promotion boards, company morale councils, and NBC team duties are only some of the additional duties expected of soldiers. Some editors may be exempted from these duties by commanders; others will not. It would be difficult to justify exempting other Army journalists on a continuing basis.

There may be ceremonies when the entire company is to stand inspection and pass in review. The PAO has great justification for asking the commander to exempt his Army journalists from the ceremony because they will be otherwise

## Lesson 2, Learning Event 4

involved in the ceremony. Keep requests for exemption to duty at a minimum and have adequate functional justification prepared when you make these requests.

Military journalists should never neglect nor attempt to get out of military training. Requests may be made to delay training when it interrupts deadlines and pasteup/proofreading requirements, but training must be made up.

A thorough understanding of common soldiering tasks is essential, not only so journalists can pass the Common Task Tests, but because they are soldiers first.

Military journalists, in time of conflict, may find themselves traveling throughout their command's area of operations writing about the soldiers and units in the command. They will spend a lot of time away from the direct supervision and control of editors and senior noncommissioned officers. They must know how to use a compass, read a map, dig defensive positions, use camouflage and react to NBC hazards.

These same journalists may be used to escort news media and must be able to get them where they need to be. They also need to know how to protect the civilian media. Journalists should be among the most thoroughly trained, most physically fit soldiers in the command. More and more, as divisions become increasingly light, the journalist must be able to keep up with the physical rigors of the soldiers he reports on.

Don't ignore military training.

PRACTICE EXERCISE

LESSON NO. 2

WHAT MAKES A GOOD JOURNALIST?

SUBCOURSE NO. DI0200

- T F 1. Army journalists may have work hours similar to their civilian counterparts.
- T F 2. Army journalists must be able to develop their own film.
- T F 3. Most Army newspapers are well staffed.
- T F 4. Editors can decide not to use a reporter's story.
- T F 5. Army journalists should be exempt from duty rosters.

ANSWER KEY

PRACTICE EXERCISE

LESSON NO. 2

WHAT MAKES A GOOD JOURNALIST?

SUBCOURSE NO. DI0200

1. TRUE PAGE 11, PARA 3
2. TRUE PAGE 11-12, PARA 9
3. FALSE PAGE 11, PARA 5
4. TRUE PAGE 14, PARA 5
5. FALSE PAGE 15, PARA 5-6



## Lesson 3, Learning Event 1

### GATHERING THE NEWS

The Department of Defense "Stars and Stripes" Pacific and European editions and the Army's Southern Command News in Panama are the only military papers which routinely cover national and international news. Most Army newspapers deal with local and military news which affects their post, community or leadership. Army newspapers are prohibited from publishing articles which concern partisan politics. Writers should become familiar with the requirements and restrictions of Army Regulation 360-81, Command Information Program.

There are several methods of ensuring that the newspaper covers all segments of the community.

### THE BEAT SYSTEM

Editors may assign reporters in a beat system. Beat systems may be either geographical or functional in nature. For instance, a reporter may be assigned to cover everything which happens in the 2nd Brigade area. This is a geographical beat. Or, a reporter may be assigned to cover anything related to housing, barracks and construction --a functional beat. Each reporter becomes familiar with the personnel and the news sources in his area and visits them regularly to find out what has happened or what is planned.

It may be necessary to set up special beat systems to cover large or complex events. For example, an Armed Forces Day may require a special beat system for several days preceding, during and after the event.

The keys to a successful beat system are dependability and a personable attitude. A dependable reporter gets to know his news sources and visits them regularly. If a reporter is assigned to cover post training activities, he should become acquainted with the post or unit G-3 staff and with the training officers and noncommissioned offices of the major subordinate units. He should arrange a convenient time for visiting these people and keep appointments faithfully. When he does, his visits will be anticipated and his sources may have information prepared for him in advance.

A personable attitude is important because the reporter who antagonizes his sources, either by his behavior or appearance, is cutting his own throat. The reporter's job is

### **Lesson 3, Learning Event 1**

to develop contacts who will lead him to newsworthy events, not to discourage people from talking to him. The reporter should always be polite, punctual, neat, and he should display proper military courtesy.

Editors might use a combination of geographical and functional (sometimes called subject) beats. The key is to fix responsibility on the writers to ensure adequate, balanced reporting on all aspects of the military community.

Editors may also combine the beat system with special assignments, or they may operate their newsgathering system on a straight assignment basis only. A reporter might be given a general assignment to see what the 2nd Brigade is doing this week. Or, he might be given a special assignment to cover the first Abrams tanks being delivered to the 2nd Brigade.

To ensure that responsibility for an assignment has been placed on the reporter, and to pass along the essential coordinating instructions to the reporter, editors should use assignment sheets. The assignment sheet (See Figure 3-1) indicates the topic, possible points of contact, known information about the event, a suggested slug (the administrative title of the article used in tracking the article through the production phase of publication), and the deadline. The assignment sheet may be a preprinted form or it can be a slip of paper torn from a notebook. Both the editor and the journalist should have a copy of the assignment sheet.

Regardless of which system is used, editors should NOT restrain the initiative of their reporters. New journalists need guidance, but their initiative to find and cover-(report) news must also be developed.

However, journalists must keep the editor informed about the stories on which they are working. Editors must be able to plan what their paper is going to use and what the lead stories will be. Keeping the editor informed may also save the writer numerous hours if the editor has already assigned someone else to cover the story.

Figure 3-1

<b>ASSIGNMENT SHEET</b>	
<b>REPORTER</b>	<b>DATE</b>
<b>DEADLINE</b>	
<b>TOPIC</b>	
<b>SLUG</b>	
<b>POINTS OF CONTACT</b>	<b>PHONE NUMBERS</b>
<b>BACKGROUND</b>	

## Lesson 3, Learning Event 2

### SOURCES AND TOOLS

No matter what kind of news gathering system is used, the reporter must first find the background information and the facts of the current event or person, before he can begin to write.

The writer is not simply one who puts words on paper. A Journalist is NOT expected to know everything, but he must learn where to find the information on most any topic. The reporter must therefore be an adept researcher.

Among his primary sources of news the journalist should have personal contacts throughout the community. This does not mean people who secretly let him in on what's going on, but people who know him and understand what he's looking for --people who like to talk. These contacts can keep the Journalist informed about training, people's hobbies, upcoming community events and the concerns of the local parents' and teachers' organization, for example.

Through these contacts the reporter keeps track of the ebb and flow of community life and can advise the PAO of problems and successes in public affairs programs, and the concerns and interests of community members.

A look at a typical unit organization chart will aid the aspiring journalist in his search for contacts. Typical unit organization charts may appear as those in Figures 3-2, 3-3 and 3-4.

The first thing a journalist should do when arriving at a new installation is to familiarize himself with the organization charts of the post and of the units he is likely to cover. The organization chart lists essential positions within each directorate, and the name, rank and phone number of people filling those positions. Organization charts are generally much faster to use than telephone boots.

Telephones are essential to a journalist's writing. They are used to obtain facts when face-to-face interviews are not required. Interviews are arranged by telephone (most journalists avoid dropping in on the people they need to interview). Telephoning saves time when people aren't in their office to be interviewed, and it displays respect and courtesy towards the interviewee.

Figure 3-2  
DIVISION ORGANIZATION CHART

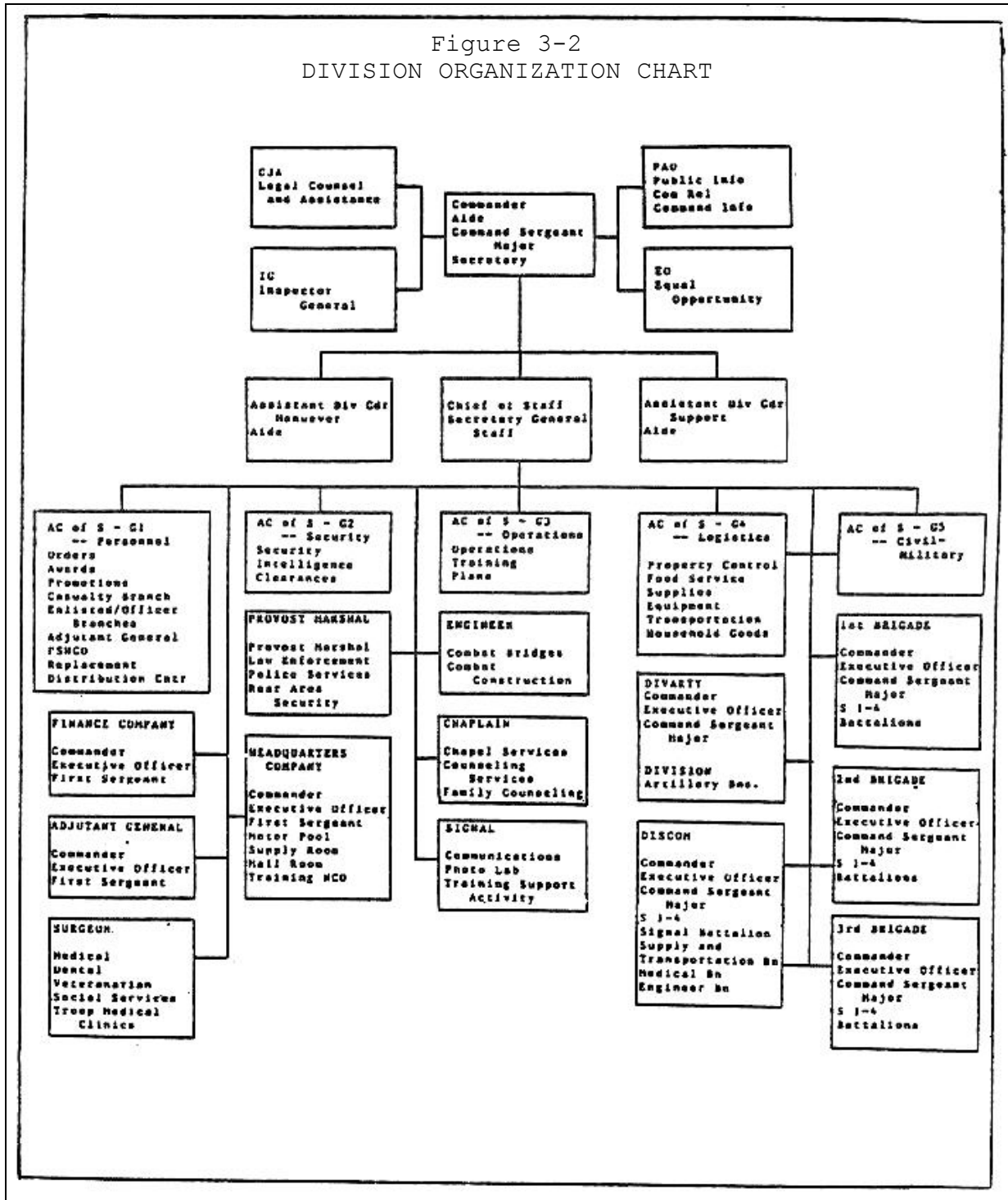


Figure 3-3  
BRIGADE ORGANIZATION CHART

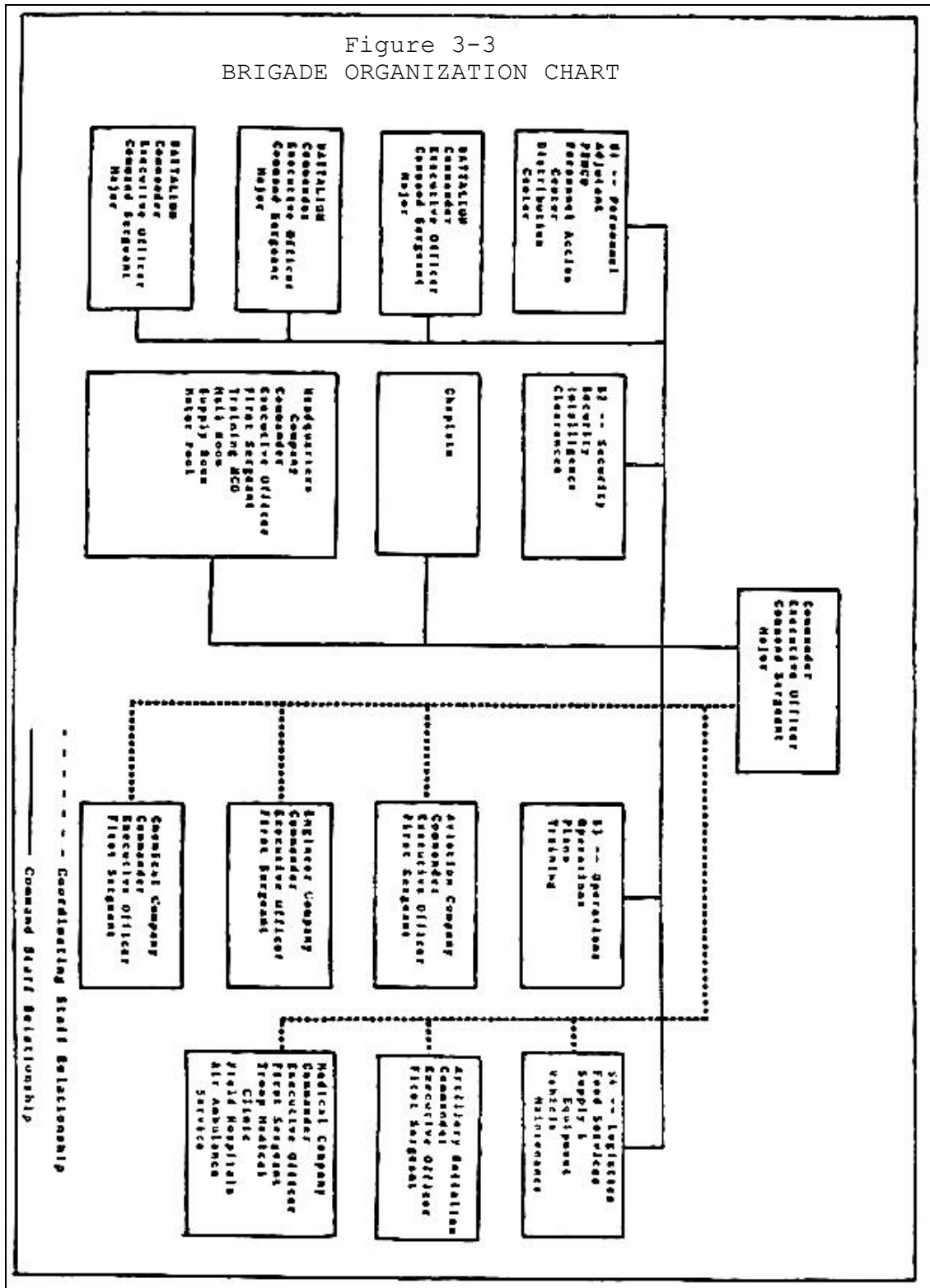
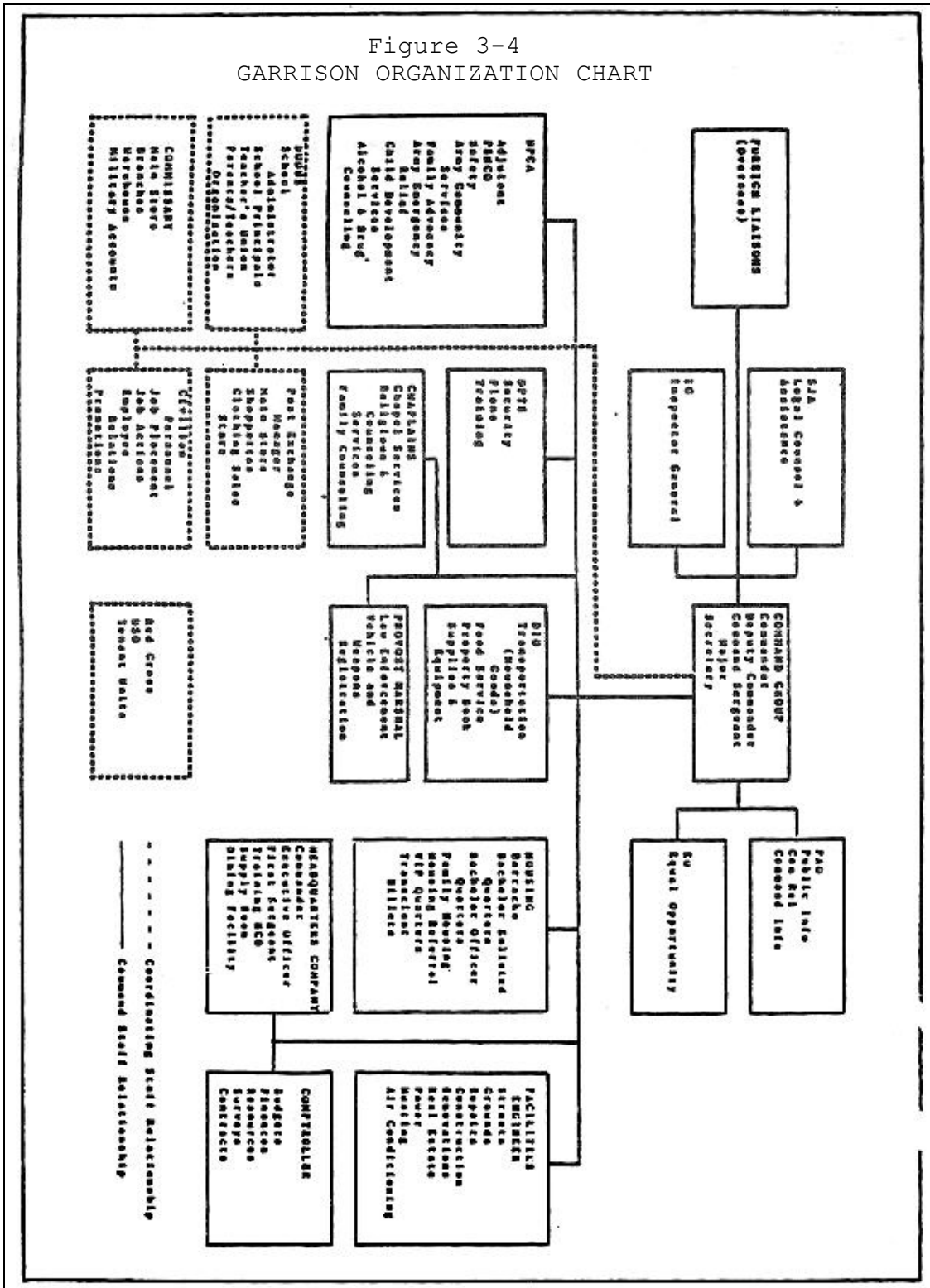


Figure 3-4  
GARRISON ORGANIZATION CHART



### **Lesson 3, Learning Event 2**

Telephones also provide access to the Army's Public Affairs "USA Network" through which the Army News Service (ARNEWS) may be obtained. USA Network is a computer information service offered through International Telephone and Telegraph Dialcom, Inc. Computers and telephones also offer other information services through which one can access news services, libraries and encyclopedias.

The Armed Forces Information Service (AFIS) provides camera-ready copy and artwork for military papers. AFIS clipsheets and ARNEWS are important sources of information about Department of Defense and Department of the Army news.

Local news is often provided in news release form by local military units and private organizations in the military community. These releases may be short announcements about meetings or activities, or they may be articles. For instance, the local preventive medicine office may prepare an article on mosquito infestations to alert residents to precautions they should take. Or, the local officers' wives club may want to publicize its annual college scholarship application deadline.

Army newspapers should establish a policy that all announcements be submitted in written or typewritten form. This ensures that no misunderstandings occur over the phone, and it provides a backup for the editor when private organizations mistakenly provide the wrong date, etc. Additionally, if announcements and releases must include points of contact and phone numbers for the editor, he has the option of assigning a reporter to cover the event or he can obtain other essential information.

Story ideas can also come from the office future file. The future file is a suspense file of sorts. The newspaper staff places announcements of upcoming events in the future file under the date of the event. Reviewing and updating this file daily can help the reporter and editor in finding or assigning story ideas.

The future file is sometimes a collection of file folders, each containing advance information that comes into the office about a particular event. The future file can be as simple as a calendar pad with enough space in its blocks to write reminders to the editor. It can be a large wall calendar under glass or acetate with information written in with grease pencil for a month in advance or more.



### **Lesson 3, Learning Event 2**

The future file may also be set up in an accordion file, with article ideas or topics filed for the next 31 days. At the beginning of each newspaper week the editor reviews the file for the upcoming week and assigns reporters to cover the events.

Perhaps the most indispensable aid for gathering news, especially under tight deadlines, is the newspaper's library or "morgue." The morgue is a collection of information (clippings from previous issues of the newspaper and other sources) a reporter can use to supplement his coverage of events and to provide depth and background in his stories. The best way to organize a morgue is alphabetically by subject, with the material filed in folders or manila envelopes that are clearly labeled. Morgues should NOT simply be file copies of each issue filed by issue, unclipped, although such copies should also be maintained.

A morgue might include folders labeled: "Armed Forces Day," "Traffic Safety," "Wives Club -NCO," "Youth Recreation," "Youth Sports," "Theft." If many VIPs visit your post the morgue may include their biographies. A topic such as "Youth Sports" may be further divided into subcategories such as "Youth Soccer" or "Youth baseball."

Ideally, a four-drawer file cabinet would be the minimum facility needed.

It is vitally important that a morgue be kept up to date. By checking the morgue before going out on a story, the reporter will be able to cover the event with a fuller understanding and write the story imparting this background to the reader. Reporters, however, would do well to double-check morgue information so they don't reprint an error contained in the previously printed article.

Libraries have numerous materials such as "Facts on File" which can give the writer a good idea of the current issues and thoughts on a number of topics. Librarians can also be valuable allies in finding background information quickly when under deadline pressures.

As good as these information sources are, they often lack a local or timely angle, the factors which gives a story immediacy, proximity or consequence. The writer will often have to localize articles by interviewing people, the topic of the next lesson.

PRACTICE EXERCISE

LESSON NO. 3

GATHERING THE NEWS

SUSCOURSE NO. DI0200

INSTRUCTIONS:

Review the material in this lesson. Answer the questions below by circling "T" or "F" next to each question. Compare your answers with the answer key on the next page. Ensure that you understand the lesson material and answers before proceeding to the next lesson.

- T F 1. Most Army newspapers provide readers with local, Armywide, national and international news.
- T F 2. A reporter assigned to cover events in the 2nd Brigade area of a post is on a functional beat.
- T F 3. The key to using beat systems is to fix responsibility upon reporters for providing adequate coverage of their beats.
- T F 4. Reporters are most successful in gathering news when they have established contacts throughout the unit and the community.
- T F 5. The newspaper's private reference library is called the "morgue."
- T F 6. Editors should encourage individuals and organizations to telephone announcements into the newspaper staff.

ANSWER KEY  
PRACTICE EXERCISE  
LESSON NO. 3  
GATHERING THE NEWS  
SUBCOURSE NO. DI0200

1. FALSE PAGE 19, PARA 1
2. FALSE PAGE 19, PARA 3
3. TRUE PAGE 20, PARA 1
4. TRUE PAGE 22, PARA 3
5. TRUE PAGE 27, PARA 2
6. FALSE PAGE 26, PARA 4

## Lesson 4, Learning Event 1

### INTERVIEWING

Interviewing, among all the crafts a writer might develop, is fundamental to all else a writer does. Writers may occasionally write short articles without interviewing anyone, but most articles of substance require interviews to get the complete story.

Some writers seem to be better conversationalists than others, and, conversationalism aids the writer in conducting interviews. But interviewing is a craft, with skills that can be learned, developed and improved.

Writing requires Journalists who can interview a source, take notes on the discussion, transcribe their notes and their memory of what was said, and who can then arrange it and convey it to the reader.

Many otherwise skilled journalists fear the interview. Some don't know how to prepare for or set up an interview. Some aren't sure of how to conduct interviews. Others lack confidence in their ability to carry on a conversation. These are all fears that can be eased by practice and effort.

The mechanical or equipment aspects of interviewing are easily learned.

### PREPARING MECHANICALLY FOR INTERVIEWS

One authority on the topic of interviewing, John Brady, editor of Writer's Digest, includes everything from clothing to paper and tape recorders in this category.

For instance, if the writer is going to interview a tank mechanic in the unit motor pool, the writer might appropriately wear the battle-dress uniform. If, however, the writer is to interview Willie Nelson, the celebrated country-music star, the writer might dress casually. The writer would dress more formally in dress uniforms or civilian coat and tie when interviewing people of business, professional, or governmental backgrounds.

The writer should try to dress in a manner which he believes the interviewee expects him to dress. The idea is that clothes make an unspoken introduction of the writer. Clothes indicate your level of understanding and respect for the

## Lesson 4, Learning Event I

interviewee and what he does. Suitable clothing helps set interviewees at ease, if they believe you understand them and what they do.

Clothes, however, are only one aspect of putting the interviewee at ease.

Since the advent of tape recorders, many reporters have used them in the interviewing process. Unfortunately, some people are uncomfortable with tape recorders. Some people have reasons, others have no idea why it disturbs them.

Before using a tape recorder in an interview, explain that you use the recorder to get your quotes right and as a reference for your notes when writing the story. Then ask if he would mind you using it. Abide by his decision. If a subject agrees, but it becomes obvious during the interview that he is still nervous about the tape recorder turn it off and put it away. This will happen rarely.

Two of the best reasons for using tape recorders are mentioned above. Another excellent reason for their use is that it allows the reporter to take notes on the most important points while being able to more accurately listen to, and watch, the interviewee for his reactions, presentation, posture, and feelings. The writer may find these observations useful in writing his article.

Tape recorders also allow the journalist to hear himself, and to study how he conducted the interview. It can be a good tool toward improving oneself.

If using a tape recorder try to use one with a counter. Set the counter on zero at the start of the interview and put the recorder where you can see the counter. When the interviewee offers a good quote or gets into an important subject area, you can jot down the counter number. This greatly speeds up the transcription process.

There are disadvantages to using tape recorders other than causing some people to be anxious. Even "new" batteries may be "dead" and batteries may "die" during an interview. These problems can be fixed by using power cords (extension cords when needed) to plug in the recorder. but, power supplies can fail, or they may be unavailable. Equipment can also have internal failures as well.

## Lesson 4, Learning Event 2

Another disadvantage of recorders is that they record everything -- including ringing telephones, slamming doors, sounds we often ignore through selective listening. But recorders cannot selectively listen and your interview can often be masked by sounds you didn't notice during the interview.

No reporter should depend wholly on a tape recorder to conduct an interview. Too many have tried only to fail. Few writers want to go through the agony of losing an interview, or the professional embarrassment of asking for a second interview. Few editors will tolerate such failures and fewer interviewees willingly grant a second interview.

The tape recorder must be backed up by the most fundamental tools and skills of the interviewer. Indeed, many writers stress that the tape recorder should only be used to backup the writer's pad and pen and note-taking skill.

The advantage of note-taking is that equipment failure is difficult. If the writer goes to the interview with sufficient paper and pencils or pens he should be able to concentrate on his note-taking. Always carry a spare pen or pencil. Writer's should match their pencils, ballpoint and felt-tip pens to the environment in which they will be working. Pay attention to what may cause them to break, smear, smudge or run.

Additionally, note-taking has the advantage of laying the complete interview in front of the reporter. Tape recordings have to be transcribed. This often amounts to listening to the interview several times to get what note-taking gets the first time.

There are some techniques to note-taking that will help interviews flow smoothly without being broken up by the task of taking notes.

Writers can make vast improvements in their ability to keep notes by developing a personalized form of shorthand using abbreviations. Common abbreviations (TDY, PCS, ETS, Mon., Wed., Fri., etc.) form the basis and the journalist should add his own. Some writers drop all vowels, others develop a somewhat closed list of abbreviations they will use. The list is only limited by the writer's imagination and his ability to decipher his abbreviations and shorthand consistently.

## Lesson 4, Learning Event 2

### DEVELOP NOTE-TAKING SKILLS

One way to develop your note-taking ability, your skill in using abbreviations and to increase your speed in this task, is to take notes during television newscasts.

Develop the habit of watching the screen while you take notes. Learn to listen to the broadcaster and note his expressions as well as what he says. Learn to remember more of what was said than you note on paper. Note only the highlights of the report, recording all essential facts.

At the end of the 30-minute broadcast, review your notes, organize and transcribe them. If you have a video-cassette recorder, record the broadcast and review it after transcribing your notes. You may be surprised at how much of the broadcast you remember without using a tape recorder. Your speed will increase with practice.

There are six additional points to consider in note-taking.

1. Use a steno pad, or a pocket-sized notepad. Single sheets of paper may become disorganized and the notes taken on them can become as tangled as a pile of old wire coat hangers. Steno pads and notepads can be safely and quickly rearranged at the reporter's desk.
2. Write on only one side of the paper. Use a new page for every shift in topic to simplify organization later on.
3. Don't lose eye-contact with the subject (interviewee). With practice you can learn to write without looking at the notepad. This will let the interview become more conversational and will give the source something to look at other than the top of a head.
4. Pace your note-taking. When the source says things of little interest to you, the tendency is to stop writing. Resist this natural tendency. The person will notice if you stop taking notes and his or her enthusiasm may wane.

## Lesson 4, Learning Event 3

5. Know ahead of time which key points you must ask questions about. To help you remember them, tape a 3x5 card with essential notations to the back of your steno pad.
6. Transcribe the interview as soon as possible regardless of whether you used a tape recorder or a pad and pen, or both. One Army writer goes so far as to transcribe important quotes from the interview as soon as he gets into his car following the interview. Others go to a library and many return to their office typewriters. Remember --the memory dims with time, rapidly. Tomorrow isn't soon enough, transcribe immediately.

### PICKING THE INTERVIEW LOCATION

Interviews may be conducted in or at most any location. There are several things the reporter should consider when locations are left open to the writer.

The newspaper office has the advantage of limiting travel for the writer but may be a disadvantage for the interviewee in terms of travel convenience and time. It may also be a poor location because there are usually few quiet places in a newspaper office where interviews can be conducted without interruptions.

If interviews are conducted in the newspaper office, policy should dictate that reporters conducting interviews are NOT to be interrupted for telephone calls or office business. It should be as if the reporter were conducting the interview in the source's office.

If interviews are conducted away from either person's office the reporter should try to arrange to have as few interruptions as possible. In some instances the reporter and source may only be able to take a short walk away from other people and extraneous distractions.

If interviews are conducted in the source's office, the writer is limited in what he can do with distractions, interruptions and comfort. One of the most effective ways to limit interruptions is to advise the source that you only need "X" amount of time and then to finish within that time frame. Many sources will ask their co-workers to not be interrupted in such circumstances.



## Lesson 4, Learning Event 4

Interviews are set up in three basic phases:

1. Preinterview
2. The interview
3. Post-interview

### CONDUCT PREINTERVIEW RESEARCH

The preinterview period can be broken into four phases.

1. Learn about the source
2. Arrange the interview
3. Research topic and decide on the angle
4. Write questions

When an article has been assigned, the reporter should be asking himself several questions. What is the topic? What is the purpose of the article? When is it due? What sources of information exist? Who should be interviewed?

#### Learn About the Source

When interviews are necessary and the reporter has identified the person he needs to interview, he should find out what he can about the source. Exactly what he will need to know about the subject depends on whether the interview is for a news story or a feature. Is the source an authority? What is his professional and scholastic background? Hobbies? Interests? What does he know about your subject and how does he feel about it?

#### Arrange the Interview

Once you have begun to get an understanding of the person you can telephone him to ask for an interview.

Brady, of Writer's Digest, suggests that, when writers are asking for interviews they should put themselves in the interviewee's position. What will the interview cost him?

## Lesson 4, Learning Event 4

Who are you? For which publication do you write?.. How are interviewees treated in your publication? What will the interview do for him? How much time will he lose? Writers should avoid giving the lame reason, "My editor wants a story on the commissary project and I need to interview you." A better approach may be, "Mr. Carn, I understand that you are working on the new commissary project. I am writing an article to update the Fort Lost Tree community on the project. Could I come talk to you for about 30 minutes?" Notice in the second example the word interview was never mentioned. (Some people freezeup in 'interviews' but can discuss their topics well in conversation.) Mr. Carn's credibility was recognized (massaging his ego) and the length (time cost) of the interview was mentioned.

Be flexible. Try to fit the interview into his schedule. If you are working against a deadline, tactfully explain, and ask if there is a time he could fit you into his schedule.

Be prepared to interview early, late or during lunch.

### Research Topic and Decide on the Angle

Once the interview has been arranged, the writer should start searching for the answers he needs in the article. The late Cornelius Ryan, author of "The Longest Day," wrote that an interview should never be conducted unless the writer knows at least 60 percent of the answers in advance.

The writer may check earlier news clippings on the subject for material which has already been published. This information may form the basis for follow-up questions. However, don't waste the source's time by asking questions to which you can easily find answers in biographical sheets or regulations.

### Write Questions

Library references can acquaint the writer with the current issues on the topic. Supplied with his news clippings and library research the writer can begin forming his questions. He will know the answers to some questions but the reporter may want to get the interviewee's comments and viewpoints.

## Lesson 4, Learning Event 5

Writers understand that for an article to be credible, facts and opinion must be attributed. Indisputable, publicly known facts can be used without attribution. However, the new journalist should strive toward letting the interviewee and reference sources be the sources of attribution. The writer can never use himself as the source of attribution in the news or feature story.

It's a good idea to avoid putting words into the interviewee's mouth. Questions which begin with or end with comments such as: "Don't you think ...." or "Wouldn't you say ...." generally indicate a thought the writer wants to attribute to the source. Such questions indicate to your source that you have already written the article and just want to attribute it to him. It also puts the interviewee in a "yes" or "no" answering mood. This makes getting anecdotes and the source's personality or additional thoughts next to impossible.

An easy way to avoid "yes" or "no" answers is to write your questions phased in the five Ws and H format. For example: "What do you think about ...." or "Why is this project so important?" These questions put the source in a reflective, explanatory mood.

Artful notetaking enables the writer to jot down the main points and to also note the color or atmosphere of the interview. The writer can note the source's tone of voice, facial expressions, mannerisms, movements, physical appearance, clothing and many other things that will help him paint a vivid word picture of the subject.

### CONDUCT THE INTERVIEW

Among the most critical tasks of the actual interview is the absolute necessity of being on time. Never waste the source's time by making him wait. A related task is to not exceed the time limit you asked for. If more information is needed, ask for another interview time. Always defer to the source's schedule. If the interview is running overtime and the source wants to continue, go ahead, but don't waste time.

Establishing rapport between the reporter and the source is a primary consideration during the interview. Since the real purpose of an interview is to get the subject to talk

## Lesson 4, Learning Event 5

-- not merely answer a list of prepared, well-researched -- questions, rapport can make the difference between a great or a mediocre article.

One way to establish rapport is to be professional in every way: Be on time, look sharp and know the questions you want to ask (this allows the interview to range in a conversational way). Don't Be too casual in manner; it's best to be a little formal when meeting someone for the first time (or anytime your subject is your superior). Don't invite yourself to sit down; wait until you're asked. Certainly, you won't smoke without permission. (Smoking also makes note-taking more difficult because it takes up one of your two hands.) In other words, conduct yourself as if you were a guest, as indeed you are.

Because many people are nervous about being interviewed, the writer is responsible for putting the person at ease. Although the writer shouldn't waste time in icebreaking small talk, he can begin with relatively easy questions and then move to the more thought-provoking.

To become an accomplished interviewer the reporter must do two things during the course of the session: Let the subject talk, and listen attentively to what is said. He should listen carefully and forget about what he is planning to ask next. This encourages the subject to be himself instead of a spokesman.

However, to make the interview as conversational as possible it is necessary to do more than just listen. Conversation is a two-way process and the reporter is expected to carry his share of it.

### Don't Argue With Your Source

The professional reporter never argues with the person, never tries to persuade the source to the reporter's way of thinking, never judges the source and never acts like a prosecuting attorney in cross-examination. If the reporter does any of these things, he will lose the source. Should the reporter disagree with what is said --and there are times when writers do disagree --simply nod, or make a comment of understanding such as: "I see." Let the person keep on talking. To keep up his end of the conversation, the reporter may simply indicate his understanding of what has been said and his desire to continue listening.

## Lesson 4. Learning Event 5

Turning an interview into a friendly conversation is impossible if the reporter has failed to establish rapport at the outset. And very often this friendly feeling can begin way back when the reporter did all the tedious research and stumbled across something of interest to the subject which can be used as an icebreaker.

Most sources are readily impressed and become more willing to pass along information, when they see by the reporter's questions that the reporter has done his homework. The unprepared reporter who gives his subject the impression that every basic fact of a topic must be explained in detail comes away from the interview with a shallow news or feature story.

### Maintain Military Courtesy

A word of caution about interviewing superiors in the military service. Never say "huh" to a general officer. One young army journalist attending the first range firing of a new weapons systems got caught up in the excitement of the event. Walking up to the division commander, the private first class said, "I guess you're pretty proud of this, huh?" It was a 20-minute run back to his office, where the journalist reported to his public affairs officer that they had an "interview" with the commanding general immediately. Always treat superiors with the respect and dignity due their rank and position.

By the same token, don't be cowed by a subject's rank. Thoughtful and valid questions are seen by commanders as opportunities to pass along critical information to their troops and to the public.

### Don't Lose Control of the Interview

This may require the writer to restate questions tactfully and to turn conversations back to the subject of the interview. Allowing the source to do limited rambling may elicit information the writer needs, but uncontrolled rambling may provide the writer with mounds or unusable information and few of the facts he needs. Control is easier when questions are organized and written prior to the interview. Additional questions may arise during the interview, but the written questions provide a framework for conducting and controlling the interview.

## Lesson 4, Learning Event 6

### Ending the Interview

Just as a writer must learn how to open and conduct an Interview, he must also know how to end the interview, Obviously, the reporter can't leap up and say, "That's it. I got it all. Thanks. Bye. The interview must be brought to a logical and definite end. The writer will know when the source is done, or when he has asked all his questions.

The writer should review all essential facts, including the source's name, title, unit/organization and all figures. The writer should also ask if he can call to clarify questions that might arise during the interview. The reporter should close his notebook and turn off the tape recorder preparing to thank the source as he leaves. But the reporter should keep his ears open because some sources relax when the equipment is put away and they provide additional, sometimes important, information that adds sparkle and zest to the finished article.

It is best to avoid the practice of having interviewees review articles prior to publication. However, the writer should follow the newspaper's policy. The positive aspect of having material reviewed is accuracy.

The negative aspects of review include: conflicts with deadlines, inappropriate changes in the writer's style, and changes in content by superiors of the source.

Ideally reviews should be rare and must be based upon the principles of security, accuracy, propriety and policy. If a writer and source disagree, the public affairs officer should be asked to help solve the conflict.

### CONDUCT THE POST-INTERVIEW

After the writer has transcribed his notes, he must decide if he has all the information he needs for his article. If not, he conducts additional research or interviews needed to obtain the information.

If, in note-taking, the writer has kept separate ideas on topics or separate sheets of paper, he has made the task of outlining his article much easier. The writer has only to organize his sheets of paper by topic to outline his story. Having thus organized and outlined his notes, the writer has determined what information to use first in the article.

This, in turn, gives the writer his news or feature angle, and should point to how he will write his lead (the opening paragraph of the article.) With the lead written, the body of the article normally falls into place. After the article is written the writer will copyedit the article, rewriting as necessary and as time permits.

Figure 4-1, Tips on Interviewing, offers a quick review of the three phrases of interviewing.

- Figure 4-1  
TIPS ON INTERVIEWING
- 1. Preinterview: Prepare**
    - A. Learn about the news source**
    - B. Arrange the interview**
    - C. Research the topic, choose angle**
    - D. Write and organize questions**
  
  - 2. Interview**
    - A. Break the ice, easy questions first**
    - B. Keep your tentative angle in mind**
    - C. Be flexible - shift to a better angle if the story permits**
    - D. Show interest and enthusiasm**
    - E. Observe**
    - F. Don't cross examine**
    - G. Keep it friendly, enjoyable**
    - H: LISTEN**
    - I. Be sure you understand**
    - J. Take notes - verify names, figures certain quotes**
    - K. Control the interview**
    - L. Get names of other sources**
    - M. Ask "Is there anything else?"**
  
  - 3. Post-interview: Finish shaping the story**
    - A. Transcribe your notes**
    - B. Conduct other interviews as needed**
    - C. Outline the story**
    - D. Write the lead**
    - E. Write and rewrite the story as time permits**

PRACTICE EXERCISE

LESSON NO. 4

INTERVIEWING

SUBCOURSE NO. DI0200

INTRODUCTION:

Review the material in this lesson. Answer the questions below by circling "T" or "F" next to each question. Compare your answers with the answer key on the next page. Ensure that you understand the lesson material and answers before proceeding to the next lesson.

- T F 1. Proficiency in interviewing is dependent on conversationalism, an inherited trait.
- T F 2. Clothing sets the tone of an interview.
- T F 3. Tape recorders should be the writer's chief means of recording interviews.
- T F 4. Felt-tip pens should not be used in note-taking because they smear.
- T F 5. Writers should let interviews "cook" in their minds for several days before writing the story.
- T F 6. Writers should master Gregg shorthand.
- T F 7. Cornelius Ryan suggests writers know 60 percent of the answers prior to the interview.



ANSWER KEY  
PRACTICE EXERCISE  
LESSON NO. 4  
INTERVIEWING  
SUBCOURSE NO. DI0200

1. FALSE PAGE 31, PARA 2
2. TRUE PAGE 31, PARA 7 and 8
3. FALSE PAGE 33, PARA 2 and 3
4. FALSE PAGE 33, PARA 4
5. FALSE PAGE 35, PAPA 1
6. FALSE PAGE 33, PARA 7
7. TRUE PAGE 37, PARA 6