

The best
11^{1/2} caption writing tips

1. Check the facts! Be accurate!
 2. Always identify the main people in the photograph.
 3. Avoid making judgments or editorializing.
 4. Use active voice! Present tense!
 5. Use commas to set off directions from the captions to the picture. "Joe Sailor, left, picks up a tool."
 6. Don't use quotes in a Navy caption.
 7. Make sure your caption matches your photo! Avoid using generic captions. It's lazy.
 8. Only use acronyms when referring back to something already in the caption.
 9. Avoid using terms like "is shown, is pictured, and looks on."
 10. Don't rely on spell check...there is no better check than your eyes!
 11. Check ship names and hull numbers (don't use a hyphen).
- 11^{1/2}. Go shoot and have fun!



NAVY VISUAL NEWS SERVICE
CAPTION TRAINING

Photo and video captions are an integral part of Navy storytelling, but they are often the most underdeveloped element in the mix of words, graphics and photographs. A poorly executed caption can destroy the message of a photo or the story package of which it is part. The reader/viewer expects nothing less than accurate, complete information, including captions.



CHINFO

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Caption Checklist

DO YOUR CAPTIONS HAVE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS?

- _____ 1. Is your dateline correct?
- _____ 2. Who – Does your caption identify who the subject is?
- _____ 3. What – Does your caption correctly explain what the subject is doing?
- _____ 4. Where – Does your caption identify where the subject is?
- _____ 5. Why – Does your caption contain a tag line, explaining why the subject is doing what it is doing?
- _____ 4. Byline – Is your byline correct?
- _____ 5. Have you checked the DoD Style Guide for any questionable style items?

<http://www.defenseimagery.mil/learning/captionstyle.html>

Dateline

SAN DIEGO (March 12, 2008)
PACIFIC OCEAN (March 12, 2008)
VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (March 11, 2008)

- Capitalize the names of months in all uses
- When a month is used with a specific date abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct. Nov. and Dec.
- Spell out when using alone, or with a year alone.
- Do not abbreviate March, April, May, Jun or July

Stand alone cities with no state in datelines:

ATLANTA	PITTSBURGH
MILWAUKEE	DETROIT
BALTIMORE	ST. LOUIS
MINNEAPOLIS	HONOLULU
BOSTON	SALT LAKE CITY
NEW ORLEANS	HOUSTON
CHICAGO	SAN ANTONIO
NEW YORK	INDIANAPOLIS
CINCINNATI	SAN DIEGO
OKLAHOMA CITY	LAS VEGAS
CLEVELAND	SAN FRANCISCO
PHILADELPHIA	LOS ANGELES
DALLAS	SEATTLE
PHOENIX	MIAMI
DENVER	WASHINGTON
PEARL HARBOR	NORFOLK

State Abbreviations

Ala.	Md.	N.D.
Ariz.	Mass.	Okla.
Ark.	Mich.	Ore.
Calif.	Minn.	Pa.
Colo.	Miss.	R.I.
Conn.	Mo.	S.C.
Del.	Mont.	S.D.
Fla.	Neb.	Tenn.
Ga.	Nev.	Vt.
Ill.	N.H.	Va.
Ind.	N.J.	Wash.
Kan.	N.M.	W.Va.
Ky.	N.Y.	Wis.
La.	N.C.	Wyo.

Byline Byline

The most important line in your caption!
(At least to you!)

(U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Tiffani Jones/Released)

Tips:

1. The entire byline is in parentheses.
2. Include a forward slash (/) with the Release information indicated as above (if the photo is released).
3. Lowercase the word "photo."
4. Lowercase the word "by."
5. Spell out your rate. Mass Communication Specialist (not Mass Communications Specialist)
6. Use numerals for your rate. Do not spell out the number (1st, 2nd, 3rd)
7. There is no period at the end of your byline.
8. Use these tips when writing captions for both still and video.

Photo Mechanic

This is how the Photo Mechanic window looks for most of the imagery that comes into NVNS:

This is how the Metadata should be submitted. Each block should be filled in and supplemental categories should contain your own contact and release information.

Areas of Consideration for Imagery

- Command master chief
- Aerographer's mates
- Berthing/Laundry
- Flag/captain's bridge
- DC central/Fire fighting lockers
- Island/Flight deck control
- Ready rooms
- Galley/Mess Deck/Social events
- Radar shops/Navigation
- Engine Room and spaces
- Chief's mess
- Captain's inport cabin
- Ward room
- Medical and dental (get HIPAA)
- TV studio
- XO and CO p'way
- Post office/Phone bank
- Library/gym/Store
- Woodshop/Machine shop
- IT's and computer networks
- Sea/Shore power rigging
- Chapel/Legal/Personnel
- Jet shop
- Security/ Master-at-arms
- Cargo and fueling stations
- Weapons department
- Supply/ Aviation supply
- Laundry
- Foc'sle
- Seabees
- Navy Divers

OST COMMON STYLE ERRORS

aboard/on board aboard a ship; on board or at a naval station

Arabian Gulf Use "Persian Gulf" rather than "Arabian Gulf."

area of responsibility vice area of operations

military/civilian titles Use full name and title or job description on first reference. Capitalize only if title precedes name. Do not use a comma to separate it from the name when it precedes the name. Use last names only on second reference.

Commanding Officer Capt. Tom Jones greets... Or, Capt. Mary Smith, the commanding officer of the cruiser, greets...

global war on terrorism all lowercase

LCAC landing craft, air cushion. Use lower case unless identifying an individual numbered LCAC (e.g., Landing Craft, Air Cushion 8).

maritime security operations all lowercase.

MH-60S Knighthawk MH-60S Sea Hawk is correct. Knighthawk was the proposed name, but it was declined as it was too similar to the Air Force's F-117 Nighthawk. All H60 series helicopters are Sea Hawk helicopters.

Numbers Never start a sentence with a number; all ranks and units should use a number Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 4. Second ref: NMCB-4.

over vs. more than "Over" refers to physical placement (above). "More than" is used with quantities. This is the same for "under vs. less than."

quotation marks The period and comma always go within the quotation marks.

Rank refer to AP style for officers. Spell out full rate for enlisted, using numbers for rank. (Builder 1st Class)

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

rigid hull inflatable boat lower; case

Sailor Capitalize when referencing U.S. Navy Sailors; lowercase other countries' sailors.

ship names On 1st reference, include the type of ship (e.g., aircraft carrier, destroyer), USS, the ship's name and the hull number: **the** aircraft carrier USS George Washington (CVN 73). On 2nd reference, drop the designator and the "USS." Do not abbreviate the ship name on second reference.

squadrons Spell out on first reference and use numerals for the squadron's number: Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron (VQ) 1. On second reference, use the abbreviation (with a dash), e.g. VQ-1.

United States Abbreviate only when used as an adjective. Spell out when used as a noun. She is a U.S. citizen. She lived in the United States.