

HeraldPOST

Serving the communities in U.S. Army Garrison Heidelberg
DSN 314-372-7277, civ. 06221-17-7277
www.heidelberg.army.mil

Getting your newsworthy story in the *Herald Post*

Editorial Policy

The editor can be contacted at DSN 373-7277 or usaghd.post@eur.army.mil.

DEADLINES: close of business the **Thursday** before the newspaper publication date. For events that occur after the deadline, contact the editor prior to Thursday to approve a later deadline.

The *Herald Post* will *not* accept stories more than three weeks old. If at all possible, stories should run in the paper immediately following the event. (i.e. if the event is Monday, April 9, the story should be in the Thursday, April 12, paper.)

Material for publication is welcome and encouraged from the newspaper readership. However, the editor reserves the right to edit all contributions for space, style, accuracy, taste and other factors. Editorial opinions will be confined to editorial columns or pages and will be clearly defined as such.

Material from quasi-military organizations (such as the Association for the United States Army and the Retired Officers Association) may be considered for publication, but such material will not promote the organization, such as solicit membership, or endorse a political position.

The *Herald Post* staff will determine article use, placement, editing, staffing, etc.

What we do cover:

- Garrison level and above changes of command
- Events of interest to the readers of the *Herald Post* newspaper
- Personality features

What we do not cover:

- Changes of command – below garrison level
- Events from the purely historical aspect – that is the responsibility of the Multi-Visual Information Service Center.
- Check presentations, promotions, award ceremonies, office parties, holiday parties, organization days and other widespread events unless the story is determined by the *Herald Post* staff as newsworthy.
- Private organizations (local businesses, AUSA, etc.) unless the event has a direct, significant impact on a large portion of the community.

We don't accept stories:

- Written in the first person, unless they're editorials.
- That are poetry or fiction.
- That are information papers or after-action reports.
- On individual retirement ceremonies
- With no Army or USAG Heidelberg angle.
- That criticize other government agencies or advocate or dispute specific political or legislative matters.

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- When the information is either outright or questionably offensive.
- When information isn't properly attributed to its source.

We can't accept photos that:

- Have been manipulated to change the context of the photograph. While minor corrections can be made to correct the quality of the photograph (darkness, lightness, color), elements cannot be digitally moved, removed, etc., to change the context of the photo.

- Show individuals out of uniform.

- Show individuals not following proper safety precautions -- such as failing to wear a hardhat in a construction area.

- Show individuals doing things that are illegal or in conflict with DoD, Army or local policy, such as driving a motorcycle on post without a helmet, or driving while talking on a cell phone without a hands-free device.

- Show individuals in embarrassing situations, such as in mid-chew or bent over from behind. While many individuals aren't comfortable in front of the camera, almost all are fine as long as they feel secure that you're not going to embarrass them. You may want to show them the photos you took of them on the digital camera display, just to ease their concerns.

- The subject of the photo specifically asks not to run.

- Glamorize drug use, smoking, alcohol use or other vices.

- Are grip-and-grin photos, check presentations, most posed photos or group shots, based on AR 360-1 (The Army Public Affairs Program). Exceptions to this policy are **extremely** rare and are made by the *Herald Post* editor, the garrison public affairs officer or the garrison commander.

- Have been manipulated beyond basic lightening, darkening, etc. While cropping unwanted or unnecessary parts of the photo is okay, people and items will not be removed or the photo otherwise dramatically altered using PhotoShop or other computer software. For more information or clarification, see AR 25-1 (Army Information Management), paragraph 7-8c(3).

We don't run stories or photos when:

- The story or photo is of such poor quality that it is incomprehensible, detracts from its purpose of being in the newspaper (to be read or viewed) or is otherwise noncompliant with basic journalism standards. It is better to run no story or photo than to run a bad one!

- Information is incomplete. If information in a story, caption, etc. is incomplete – if adult names don't include rank (if applicable), job title and organization or children's names don't include their ages – don't run the item. If possible and if the item isn't so time-sensitive that delaying its publication is a problem, get complete information so that the item can run in the following newspaper issue. If it's not possible to get complete information, don't use the item.

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Clarity –

Please keep the following details in mind:

– People do things, buildings don't. For example, in the statement "The average hospital sees 100 patients a day," the hospital doesn't actually see anyone -- the hospital staff does. Rather than say, "The fitness center can create a fitness program just for you," again, it's the staff there, and specifically the personal trainers. Think about who is doing the action and be specific.

– People don't buy seats to an event – if so, they'd be able to take the seats home after the event. They buy tickets to the event, possibly tickets for specific seating. On the same topic, it's not that "Tickets for Friday's event are \$12" – instead, "Tickets for Friday's event cost \$12."

– If you're writing about a span of time, you're talking about from one time until another, not to another. An event is held from 1 until 2 p.m., not from 1 to 2 p.m. Also regarding time, if you're addressing both a.m. and p.m. time, indicate so after each time (such as from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m.) – if both times are a.m. or p.m., only indicate so after the second time (such as from 1 until 2 p.m.).

– If you're listing a range of dates in a month, only list each month once (unless circumstances dictate otherwise). For example, instead of writing "Meetings will be held Sept. 12, Sept. 14, Oct. 3 and Oct. 8," write "Meetings will be held Sept. 12 and 14 and Oct. 3 and 8." In writing about a range of dates, also be mindful of "until" and "through." If a meeting will be held Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, it will be held "Wednesday through Friday," not "Wednesday until Friday."

– Don't use "on" before dates and days, such as "The meeting will be held on July 6." It is unnecessary. In the same regard, be careful of overusing the word "that." In the phrase "I heard that the conference has been cancelled," it is unnecessary.

Basic style –

– When referring to a numbered document (a regulation, pamphlet, DoD Directive, etc.) or form, list the document number followed in parenthesis by its complete name. For example, "He referred to his Office of Personnel Management Form 71 (Request for Leave or Approved Absence) for his vacation dates." Be sure the titles are correct – oftentimes the terms commonly used for publications or forms are different from on only part of the document's full title. If referring to a Standard Form using the abbreviation, use "SF 360" rather than the redundant "SF form 360."

- In point of contact lines, include DSN and civilian phone numbers as well as e-mail addresses and Web sites, if applicable.

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Is it news?

There are 10 elements that make an event newsworthy:

- *Conflict* – an opposition (a sporting event, court case, election, etc.)
- *Consequence* – how does an event or action affect the reader?
- *Emotions* – news that excites, disturbs or otherwise affects readers
- *Immediacy* – timely events appeal to people
- *Oddity* – something unusual or comical
- *Progress* – changes in the ways things are done
- *Prominence* – a person the readers may be interested in
- *Proximity* – news that happens close to home
- *Sex* – issues include women working jobs traditionally done by men, fraternization, rape, sexually transmitted diseases and women in combat
- *Suspense* – news that has the reader wondering what will happen next

Writing basics

Stories are made of three major components:

- The introduction, or *lead*, which lets the reader know what the story will be about. An interesting lead will catch readers' attention and compel them to read further.
- The *bridge*, which bridges the gap between the lead and the body. The bridge fills in 'who, what, where, when, why, or how' information missing from the lead.
- The *body*, which is where you will go into greater detail about the subject you are writing about.

- Think of the whole package. When doing a story on a person, get quotes from that person -- make the story personal. Also, get quotes from others involved. For example, if it's a work story, get quotes from the person's boss, coworkers and customers. Get photos of the person doing something the story is about. If she volunteers with an animal shelter, get photos of her with the animals, rather than at work. Be creative.

- Newspaper stories, whether news or feature, must explain within the first two paragraphs the "5 Ws and the H" of the story: Who, What, Where, When, Why and How. Other basic rules of newspaper writing are to:

- Keep leads short -- usually about 30 words.
- Keep things simple. Use simple words and refrain from using jargon and abbreviations. Keep most sentences under 25 words. Paragraphs shouldn't be more than two or three sentences.
- Tell the story using action verbs. Write in the "active" voice rather than the "passive." Say who does the action. For example, "Melissa was given a reprimand for her excess tardiness" is written in passive voice. To make the sentence active, state who is doing the action, such as "Melissa's supervisor, John, gave her a reprimand for excess tardiness."
- Remember the ABCs of journalism:
 - A = *Accuracy* - Get it down right.
 - B = *Brevity* - Keep sentences and paragraphs short
 - C = *Clarity* - Avoid using too many words. Don't be repetitive. Keep related ideas together. Keep the wording tight and simple.

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- Be consistent. If you establish an abbreviation or acronym, use it as the term comes up throughout the rest of the story. Ensure names are spelled correctly, all the way through the story. Check your facts -- don't say an event will happen at one time in a story, and at a different time in the cutline.
- The *Herald Post* will not accept stories less than 250 words. It is very difficult to place stories less than 250 words, and stories typically get shorter after editing.
- All stories must have at least two sources to be credible.
- The *Herald Post* uses Associated Press style in all articles; please be aware AP-style ranks are written different than the Army writes them
- As part of the "whole package" concept, submit at least one suggested headline to accompany each story or photo you submit. The wording may change to accommodate the amount of space allotted for the headline, but having the headline helps the editor know at a glance what the submission is about.

Avoid plagiarism:

- The easiest way to ensure you are safe is to get your information from scratch, such as through personal interviews with subject matter experts. In that case, quote the person you interviewed as providing the information. Doing so not only protects you from accusations of plagiarism, but can enhance the story by providing a solid basis for the information. For example, saying the next cold and flu season will be the worst yet won't mean as much coming from you as it would coming from a source at the Centers for Disease Control or another medical organization. Do not, however, write the entire story in quotes. Try to paraphrase long quotes, but still attribute it to the SME.
- If you must use reference material in a story, clearly give credit for where you found it. Ensure that any information, graphics and other elements you find online, in publications, etc., are available for use.
- Items that are copyright protected or offered for a fee require the owner's written permission before the information can be used. Coordinate with the *Herald Post* editor before contacting someone on a copyright issue on behalf of the *Herald Post*. If you're not sure if the information is available for public use or is copyright protected, don't use it!

Quotes:

- Use quotes to emphasize something a person said, but be careful not to write the article with just one quote after another.
- When using verbs with quotes, reserve using "he shouted," "he exclaimed," etc., for personality pieces, and then use them sparingly and correctly. Do not attribute quotes with verbs denoting nonverbal physical processes, such as laughing, smiling, pouting, etc. No one laughs, smiles or pouts words. Said is the safest bet.
- Be sure that what you put in the quotation marks is what the person said. While the quote can be cleaned up to take out any "uhs" and "ums," the text must be true to what was said.

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Attribution:

- Attribution is touched on in the “Avoid plagiarism” and “Quotes” paragraphs above. In addition:
 - If a photo submitted was taken by someone other than the story author, give bylines for both, specifying who did which. If there are photos from more than one photographer, give a byline for each photo separately to credit all the photographers whose photos were used.
 - Attribute all opinions and editorial comments.
 - Bylines should give credit to the individuals who wrote the story or took the photo.

Basic style:

- Items submitted should be typed in upper and lower case characters (not all capital letters).
- When writing sports, the lead should say who the teams are, the score, how the event was won, the name of the sport and when and where it was played. Also, ranks will not be used regarding athletes and coaches being covered in the sports, but may be used for non-players and coaches. For example, if the garrison commander is presenting a trophy to a basketball player, the commander will be identified by rank and duty title, while the basketball player would be identified with no rank and using his or her title on the team, such as “team captain” or “forward.”

Photography

- A picture may say 1,000 words, but if the photograph isn't of good quality, the message it's sending could be a very bad one. We've all taken photos of our family and friends, vacations and other special events. Photos of good quality attract our attention and leave us feeling pleased. The photos that are out of focus, are under or over lit, or that have distracting background or foreground content make us feel frustrated at having to work hard to decipher the story in the photo. The same is true when taking pictures for the *Herald Post*. The printing process acts as a magnifier for photo problems, therefore, it is extremely important that the photos used in the HP be crisp and visually correct.

Photography 101:

The following basic photography rules will help ensure the photos you take are the best they can be, increasing the chance that they'll be published in the *Herald Post*:

- As you're looking through the viewfinder of your camera, take the time to ensure your subject is in focus.
- Take a lot of pictures – the more photos you take, the better the chances that you will have quality photos and a variety of photos for the editor to choose from.
- Ensure there are not too many people in the shot.
- Strive for action.
- Ensure you have a variety of photos. Shoot verticals and horizontals, close-ups and more-distant shots, the subject at various angles. Because photos should face into the page or story they're on, it's important that you get photos of your subject facing both left and right, if possible. Also, be creative. If you're taking pictures of a clown entertaining children, take photos not only of

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the clown, but of the children's facial expressions and other reactions, with a close up of the clown's eyes getting big as he or she blows up a balloon and maybe a photo of a child getting his or her face painted like a clown. Don't just stand behind the group of children taking straight-on photos of the clown.

- Many people don't like to have their photos taken. If someone says they don't want their picture taken, don't take it. If you've already taken it and have a digital camera, show the individual the photos you took and see if he or she feels differently after seeing them. If not, don't use the photos. If that person is the focus of a personality feature, you may want to discuss the matter with the *Herald Post* editor to see if she is willing to run the story without the photograph. If the subject is someone other than the focus of the story, try to find other individuals who also have a tie to the purpose of the story and take their picture instead.

- The amount of photo detail is very important. Low resolution photos cannot be "made bigger" and look good. The most common problem is when people take photos using the lowest setting, which sacrifices pixels or compresses the data too much. The "Basic" setting provides the greatest number of images on the card/data stick/disk, but sacrifices a lot of quality, resulting in photos that look fake or blotchy when enlarged.

- The best procedure is to use "Large/Fine" or "Extra Fine," and send in the original, unaltered image; so the HP staff can best enhance the photo for good reproduction in the paper (this is very different than adjusting for the web).

- Submit photos electronically if possible -- when photos are scanned, they lose quality. The *Herald Post* staff does not provide film or developing services to the community or post organizations.

The Rule of Thirds:

While you might be tempted to frame the subject of your photo in the middle of your viewfinder, practicing the rule of thirds will ensure you take more interesting photographs.

To use the rule of thirds, simply imagine your viewfinder is divided into thirds horizontally and vertically. Many digital cameras have a viewfinder option that divides your screen in thirds for you – check your owner's manual to see if your camera has this option.

As long as the subject of your photograph is located in your viewfinder where any of the vertical and horizontal lines cross, you will be following the rule of thirds. Of course, if the subject of your photo is looking to the right, make sure he or she is positioned on the left side of the viewfinder so that he or she has photo space to look or move into.

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Cutlines:

- Captions, also called cutlines, have four major functions: they briefly explain the action, identify the subjects, provide background information, and give credit to the photographer.
- Captions, whether they stand alone or accompany a story, must answer the same 5Ws and H that stories do. Even though someone was identified completely in the story, and the story said when and where the event took place, that same information has to be used in the caption.
- Abbreviations and acronyms used in the story must be re-established in the caption.
- If there is more than one photograph being used, one photo should stand out as a lead photo based on its size and being located so as to draw the reader's eyes to that photo first. The 5Ws and H should be addressed in the main picture caption. The other captions do not need to repeat the information in the main picture caption, such as where or when the event was held, unless the information is different for that photo or not including the information would add to reader confusion.

Editing:

- While the *Herald Post* staff reserves the right to edit submissions for format, space and other issues as necessary, you can help ensure your submission is changed as little as possible by editing your own material before you submit it. Be aware of your grammar and spelling. If you're not sure if something is spelled correctly, run a spell check on your computer or, even better, look the word up in the dictionary.
- In addition, reference the *Herald Post* stylebook and the Associated Press Stylebook, if you have one. If you don't have a copy of the Associated Press Stylebook, stop by the *Herald Post* office to look at one of our copies. While you don't need to memorize all of the entries in these books, become familiar with them so you can best use them as reference materials when you need them. Make the effort to ensure you submit the best quality submissions you can -- after all, they'll be run with your byline.
- Make each submission something you're proud to put your name on.