

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

ARMY AL&T MAGAZINE WRITER'S WORKSHOP

29 April 2015



OUR MISSION

To serve the Army Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology community by educating, informing, motivating and instructing the AL&T Workforce. These efforts, which are directed and guided by the Army AL&T Editorial Advisory Board, support the ASA(ALT) and principal military deputy.



ASA(ALT) PRIORITIES

As of 24 April 2015

1. Support the Soldier in operations worldwide.
2. Develop and deliver best value products and services.
3. Transform culture to focus on improving efficiency, responsiveness, effectiveness, agility.
4. Forge a more effective relationship with the Defense Industrial Base.
5. Cultivate a professional acquisition workforce.
6. Guide sound investments in enabling technologies to provide future capabilities.



ARMY AL&T MAGAZINE STAFF

Nelson McCouch: Editor-in-Chief; more than 25 years in communications, public relations, corporate communications. M.A. in communications, Masters of Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College and a Bachelor of Journalism (broadcast) from the University of Missouri (Columbia).

Margaret (Peggy) Roth: Senior editor; B.A. in Russian language and linguistics from the University of Virginia with more than a decade of writing about the Army in particular and more than two decades' experience in journalism and public relations.

Robert Coultas: Department editor; a retired Army broadcaster with nearly 40 years of combined experience in public affairs, journalism, broadcasting and advertising. Army Keith L. Ware and DOD Thomas Jefferson Award recipient.

Catherine DeRan: Creative director; more than 15 years in strategic communication. M.A. in publication design from the University of Baltimore and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in photography from the Rochester Institute of Technology.

Michelle Strother: Layout and Graphic Design; 7 years experience in computer art and multimedia design; B.F.A. in Graphic Design from George Mason University.

Steve Stark: Editor, M.A. in creative writing from Hollins University and a B.A. in English from George Mason University, with more than a decade of experience writing about the military, technology and the Army, and more than 20 years as writer, ghostwriter, novelist, critic and editor.

Susan Follett: Editor, B.A. in English literature from St. Lawrence University. She has more than two decades of experience as a journalist and has written on a variety of public and private--sector topics, including modeling and simulation, military training and technology, and federal environmental regulations.



WORKSHOP GOALS/AGENDA

- ✓ Army AL&T Magazine Processes.
- ✓ Editing Process.
- ✓ Writer Guidelines.
- ✓ What Makes a Good Story.
- ✓ General Guidelines for Army AL&T Art.
- ✓ Share your stories.
- ✓ Upcoming Themes.
- ✓ Guest Speaker – Kris Osborn.
- ✓ ALTies.



Story ideas



Send outline/
intro paragraph



Send final draft
OPSEC approved and
functional lead approved

Editors
review

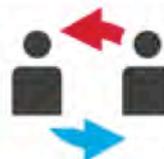


Review
proofs



Finalize edit send to layout

Send questions back to sender



Send to print

Final review

Approve to print/
send to online publisher



EDITING PROCESS

Our editors review each article with the following questions in mind:

- Is the article too long or too short?
- Does the article tell a story?
- Are claims of savings and the like substantiated?
- Have facts been checked?
- Is there too much insider baseball?
- Are highly technical things explained in concrete layman's terms?
- Is there a lot of jargon or buzz-wordiness?
- Are only proper nouns capitalized?
- Are acronyms spelled out? Are there too many initials (initialisms and acronyms—anyone know the difference?) in one place?
- Is there a complete bio? A contact or link for further information?

EDITING PROCESS (CONT.)

Our editors then:

- Add captions for images and graphics and identify pull quotes.
- Consolidate pull quotes and share with author(s) and PAO and provide suspense for responses.
- Incorporate author changes into a revised version of the article.
- Review the revised article for clarity and accuracy.
- Check bios for completeness.
 - MAJ FIRST W. LASTNAME is the assistant PM GS. He holds an M.B.A. from the Naval Postgraduate School and a B.S. in business management from Texas Christian University. Lastname is Level III certified in program management and Level I in information technology. He is a U.S. Army Acquisition Corps member.
- Send article to layout.



WRITER GUIDELINES

Basic parameters:

- 500-1,600 words, excluding bio and captions.
- Times New Roman 12-point font.
- Double-spaced.
- No indents, headers, footers, footnotes or endnotes.
- Command and OPSEC approval and functional lead approval.
- 3-4 photos and/or graphics.

See *Writers Guidelines and Army AL&T Overview* at: <http://asc.army.mil/web/publications/army-alt-submissions/>.

Themes:

- Each issue of Army AL&T magazine has a topical theme. The editorial calendar is based on guidance from the Army AL&T Editorial Advisory Board of senior AL&T leaders.
- Themes are chosen to support ASA(ALT)'s key messages and the Army themes.
- We accept articles on both theme and non-theme topics, but theme articles get better play.
- No “quick-and-dirty” news stories; the “inverted pyramid” doesn’t apply as a structural guide in organizing the article.



WRITING A GOOD STORY

- Focus on program challenges overcome and lessons learned.
- Start with the big picture and then whittle down to the details.
- Hook the reader immediately.
- Tell a story. Tell it in active and not passive voice (i.e., “The command made decisions,” not “Decisions were made by the command.”)
- Emphasize take-aways that are relevant, meaningful and applicable to your readers.
- Avoid abstractions and use concrete details to ground what you want the reader to get. “Vehicle” is an abstraction: a specific make, model and year is concrete.
- Don’t assume too much knowledge on the part of your reader. While AL&T readers are acquisition professionals, they may know nothing about an SME’s domain of expertise.
- Quotes from SMEs add credibility to the "argument" you are making.
- Write with a clear narrative. Start with the big idea or issue, then clearly delineate the "argument" you are making, then close with a conclusion that "brings it home."

AVOIDING ABSTRACTIONS AND PASSIVE VOICE PITFALLS

Writing in the abstract

- "A vehicle was parked next to a structure" tells a reader very little that's "real."
 - Compare that to: "A yellow, 1972 Gremlin stopped in front of the shabby storefront."
- "The contractor provided engineering solutions to PEO Widgets"
 - What were the "engineering solutions" that the contractor provided?
 - "The contractor developed an innovative way to help boost radio frequency transmission signals in RF-hostile environments, and built a solution that PEO Widgets employed immediately."

Passive voice

- Is there understanding of the contents of this page?
- The stairs were walked up by him.
- "The decision was made to roll the two directorates into one."
 - Who made the decision? Why? When? We are going to ask you these questions, so it's easier to answer them first.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ARMY AL&T ART

Basic parameters:

- **4 or more** images approved by Command and OPSEC.
- Minimum 300-dpi resolution or make vector graphic.
- Acceptable formats: .png, .tiff or .jpg for photos, art work should be submitted in an editable format if the artwork contains text (i.e., .eps or .pdf).
- Submission:
 - Please submit artwork in files separate from the manuscript
 - Photographs and graphics must also be submitted via: <https://usaascalt.info/stories/>
 - Please also name images so it's clear they go with the story (StoryName_unique identifier not IMG_0001)

Captions:

- Provide the photographer's name and command for each photo submitted; the artist's name and command for each illustration; and the source organization for each chart.
- Provide the names, ranks, and titles of everyone in the photo.
- Briefly explain the photo (i.e., who is doing what, where and when?) (1-2 sentences).



PHOTOS

Send more photos

- You are the best judge of what photos supports your story.
- We need help showing the Army AL&T community at work.
- There's over 38,000 workforce members, let's highlight as many as possible doing the good work they are accomplishing.
- Photos personalize the article, they help the reader visualize the work/team/product, etc.

Plan ahead

- Make sending photos along with your article part of your planning process.

Photo sources for DOD photos

- DVIDS, <https://www.dvidshub.net/>.
- U.S. Army website, <http://www.army.mil/media/>.
- U.S. Army Flickr site, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/soldiersmediacenter>.



CHOOSING THE RIGHT PHOTOS FOR YOUR ARTICLE

1. **Quality control:** Above all else, be sure to use a high-resolution image.
2. **Tight area of focus:** A too abstract or very busy photo will confuse the reader, and attention will quickly divert elsewhere.
3. **Remember relevance:** The photo must sell your story. If your image and article headline match up, much more likely to catch the reader's attention.
4. **Bright is best:** Make sure there is good lighting in the photo—people, objects or concepts can be well identified. Bold, bright colors will pop and stand out.
5. **Think like the reader:** What would give you the incentive to read further? Does the photo offer you a unique viewpoint or different perspective on the topic?

An image is just as important as text, so take the time to ensure you're picking the perfect photo. We guarantee, it will pay off.

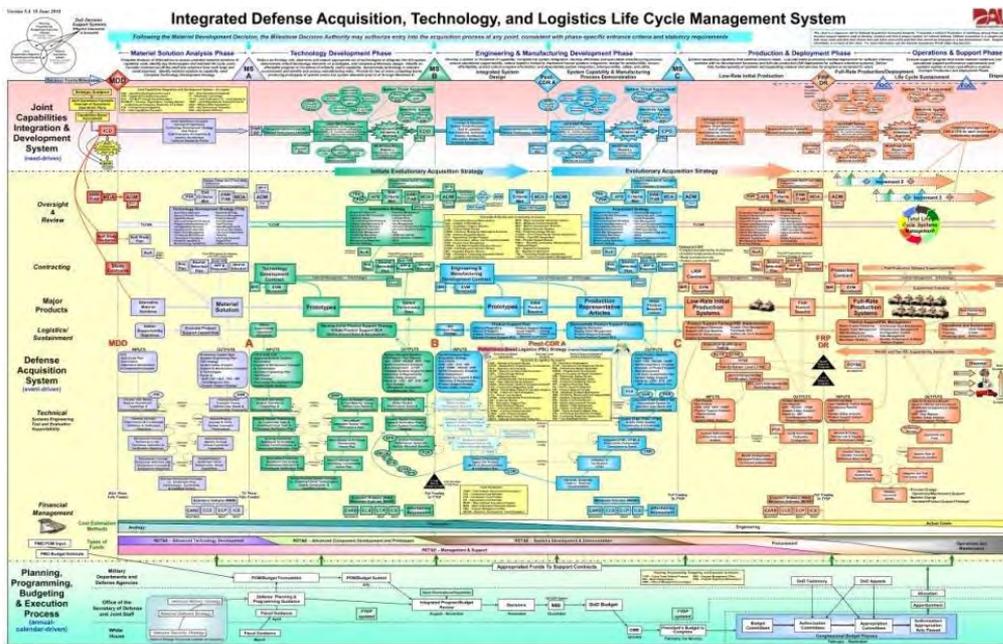
GRAPHICS CAN HELP ILLUSTRATE A COMPLICATED PROCESS



GRAPHICS AND ADS

Remember: Keep your message as simple as possible.

- Ads and graphics should help communicate your message, not add confusion.
- Too much information could be overwhelming, don't be afraid to break it up.



GREAT GRAPHICS!

- You can easily follow the flow of the diagram from Step 1 - 5
- Key helps to break down acronyms and technical terms



- Images are labeled
- Like items are separated into organized groups



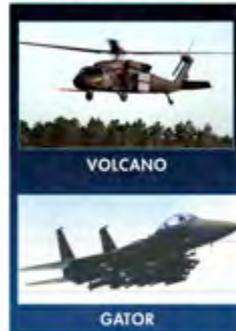
0-300 METERS



300m - 17Km



Over 17Km



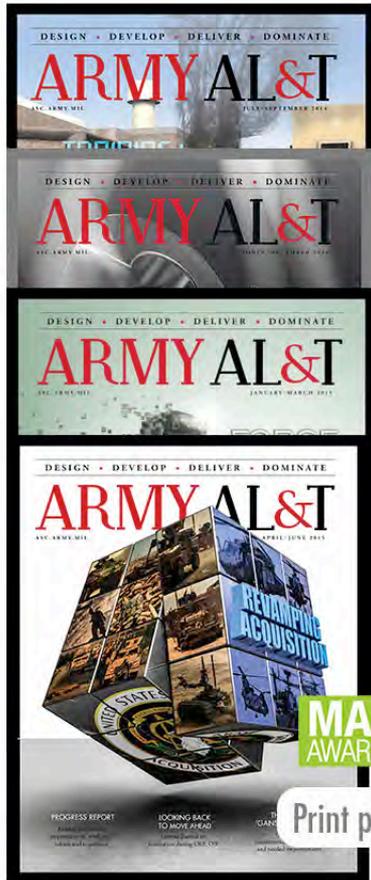
ARMY AL&T REACH

25,851
PRINT COPIES
3,373
PRINT SUBSCRIBERS

27.5K WEB VISITS
1.1M PAGE VIEWS
6:16
AVERAGE TIME DURATION



756
APP DOWNLOADS



MARCOM AWARDS

Print publication - overall



ARMY AL&T
PDF
2,000
ESTIMATED DOWNLOADS

ARMY AL&T
E-MAGAZINE
790
ONLINE SUBSCRIBERS

MARCOM AWARDS
E-magazine

3,189 USAASC FANS
806 USAASC FOLLOWERS
446 USAASC FOLLOWERS
1,217 PHOTOS



ACCESS AL&T
1,069 ONLINE SUBSCRIBERS



EBSCO

WINNER Digital Publication | MG Keith L. Ware Public Affairs Competition

Unclassified/For Public Release

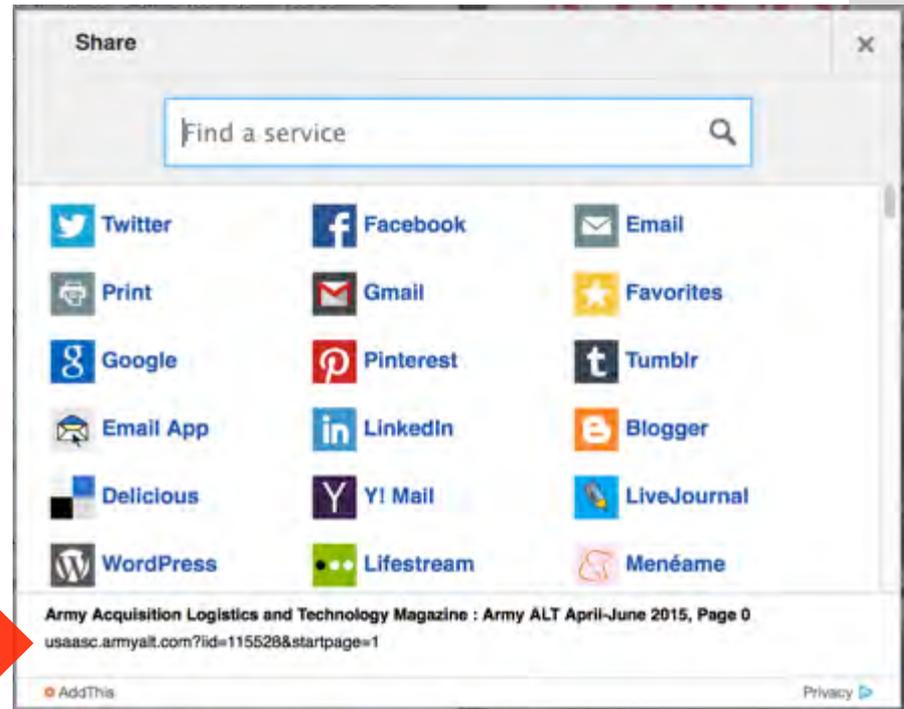
SHARE YOUR STORIES

- Share stories from our e-magazine: <http://usaasc.armyalt.com/>



- Each page has its own link, making it really easy to share stories.
- Use #ArmyALT when sharing stories on Facebook and Twitter.
- Online extras allow us to add additional information including links, call out text boxes, videos, animation and photo galleries.
- Questions about the E-magazine?

Note full url if you're sharing or embedding links.



ARMY AL&T JOINS MILBOOK

The screenshot shows the MilBook interface for the 'Army AL&T Magazine' group. The page header includes the MilBook logo and navigation links (Home, Content, People, Places). The group name 'Army AL&T Magazine' is prominently displayed with a sub-header 'Army AL&T'. Below the header, there are tabs for 'Overview', 'Activity', 'Content', 'People', and 'Reports'. The main content area features a 'Recent Activity' section with three posts by Catherine Deran, each featuring the Army AL&T logo and a brief description of the content. To the right of the activity feed is a sidebar with options to 'Start a discussion', 'Write a document', 'Upload a file', 'Write a blog post', 'Create a poll', 'Invite people to join this group', 'Group feeds', and 'Create an idea'. Below the activity feed is a 'Featured Content' section with two items. The left sidebar contains a group overview with a description of the magazine's mission and ownership information.

- Army AL&T magazine has a new group on MilBook.
- Army AL&T magazine can also be found at: Access AL&T online, Army CORE, DVIDS and EBSCO.

UPCOMING THEMES

- July-September 2015: Requirements.
 - Articles due May 1
- October-December 2015: Foreign military sales and security assistance.
 - Articles due July 15
- January-March 2016: Cybersecurity – Homeland defense.
 - Articles due October 15

Editorial calendar can be found online at
<http://asc.army.mil/web/publications/>.

