

Writer's Guide



Servir

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Technical Data

Frequency of publication:	Bi-monthly Every second Wednesday (22 issues per year)
Deadlines for submissions:	On Monday, 10 days prior publication
Circulation:	3,600 copies

Why write for *Servir*?

You may have several good reasons for submitting material to *Servir*:

- Important changes occurring in your unit;
- Someone from your unit distinguishing himself/herself at a special event;
- Your unit being rewarded for its performance;
- You organizing a fundraising campaign or a special event;
- Your unit participating in an exercise;
- Members of your unit being promoted or decorated, or retiring;
- Etc.

Qui écrit?

You may write your own texts and submit them to the Newspaper. You may also contact us to give us new reporting ideas.



► Before Writing

Before putting pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard), remember these important points:

‡ Since each issue is read by about 10,000 people **in a hurry**, it is important to grab their attention. A reader usually only spends **30 seconds to a minute** per page!

‡ People's **reading order** is as follows: Readers look at the **picture** first, then the **title**, the **caption** (under the photo) and, lastly, the **lead**. If the first sentence of the lead doesn't hook the readers, you lose them. It is therefore in your interest to be **concise**, to write about subjects of **interest** and to use a **lively, dynamic** style.

‡ Since our readership includes military members' families as well as the civilian community, contributing writers must make the information **accessible**. For instance, acronyms and abbreviations, though common in the CF, pose an obstacle for outside readers.

► Pendant la rédaction

Are there any tricks for getting readers' attention? Yes!

Remember that most readers decide whether or not to keep reading based on the **first paragraph** of a text, and that reader's familiarity with a topic can vary widely. With this in mind:



‡ Begin your article with the most basic parts of the news item. Pretend you have to **sum up** the story to someone you have just run into in a hallway and who is in a hurry. This is what is called the **lead** of an article.

‡ Try to answer the following six questions at the beginning of your text: **WHO? WHAT? WHEN? WHERE? WHY? and HOW?**

‡ Begin your text with the most important facts and gradually work your way down to the least important ones. Remember to keep something interesting for the end!

‡ Write out all **numbers** less than 10 **in letters**.

‡ **Vary the way you present the facts.** You can begin your text with a personal impression, anecdote, question, proverb, pun, etc.

‡ Try to **focus your article on people**. Readers will feel more involved and will be able to identify with the people in your text.

‡ Use **short, active** sentences. They make reading and comprehension easier.

‡ Write out people's **names in full**. Don't forget to write their function and working unit.

‡ Before writing an abbreviation, make sure it is well known to readers. If is not well-known, write it out in full the first time with the abbreviation in parentheses.

ex: The Combat Antimine Action Centre (CAAC) [...]. The CAAC is therefore [...]

‡ **Include citations** (include someone else's words in quotations) whenever possible. It adds credibility and varies your style.

‡ Double check ranks, names, ages, units, locations, dates, spelling, and facts. Accuracy is the most important quality of good journalism!

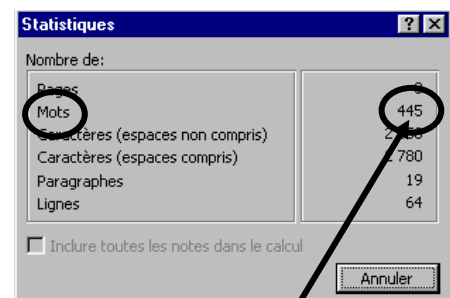
‡ Insert **subheadings** between your paragraphs. They mark out a text's progression, space out the text and sharpen the readers' interest.

‡ **Illustrate** your news item with **photos, logos or illustrations**. A picture is worth a thousand words.



‡ Avoid writing **sentences of more than 25 words**.

‡ Do not make your text too long. An article should have a maximum of 400 to 600 words (not including photo captions). Readers get bored with details beyond that point and stop reading. To see how many words you have, in **Word**, go to **Tools** and click on **Word Count**.



Number of words in a text

✦ Avoid using **jargon or overly technical terminology**. To be understood, you need to put the information in plain language. You may want to use a thesaurus.

Before submitting your article

Here are a few things to consider before submitting your article to *Servir*:

► Les photos



✓ Take **pictures of people in action** and opt for **close-ups** of people so readers can see them clearly and recognize them.

✓ **Clearly identify people** in your photos. Write the filename of your picture at the end of your text with a description of the picture after each picture's filename. Remember to include the **date, place and event**.

Ex.: (Photo: IMG_1234.jpg)

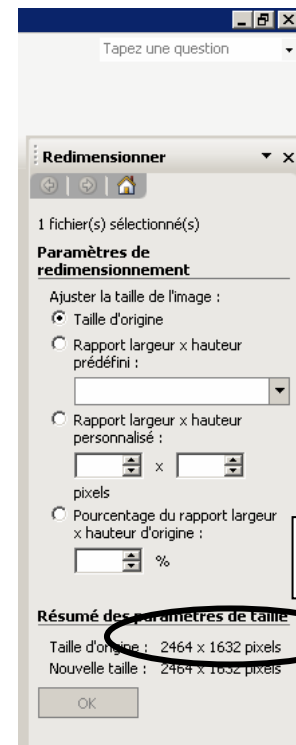
During Exercice KODIAK STRIKE on last September 12th, Major Paul Tremblay met ...

✓ The **caption** can provide information about the photo that the image itself does not make clear. Be creative!

✓ **Do not insert graphic files or photos** into your Word document. Send your images and photos as separate files.

✓ We accept paper and electronic versions of photos. Electronic versions must have minimum dimensions of **1200 x 800 pixels**. To check it, open your photo (jpg) in **Microsoft Office Picture Manager**, click on **Image**, then **Resize**. Make sure the original size is over or equal to 1200 x 800. Photos should (preferably) be saved as **JPG** (level 7). We also accept BMP and PDF files.

✓ If you want your picture, diskette or other material returned promptly, place a sticker on the back of it with a **return address**.



Dimensions in pixels

► The text



- ✓ Articles must be printed and sent with a copy on diskette (unless you send them by Internet or Intranet). **Write the file name on the paper copy** to make it easy to find.

- ✓ **Do not insert graphic files or photos** into your Word document. Send your images and photos as separate files.

- ✓ **Avoid make-ups and special formatting.** Justify your text to the left, without columns, tabs (except for tables), section breaks, bullets, etc.

- ✓ Do not write in capital letters and avoid underlining. Use **bold** and *italics* instead.

Lexicon

Here is a brief lexicon of elements used in formatting a text:

- **Overline:** Small heading above the headline. Helps to situate an event.*
- **Headline:** Heading in bold characters (usually includes a conjugated verb).
- **Subheading:** 1. Small heading under the headline. It complements the headline.
* Usually an overline or a subheading is used, but not both with the same headline. Both are optional.
2. Small headings between certain paragraphs. These reference points for readers space out the text, making it easier to read.
- **Byline:** Identifies the author: first and last names, rank and unit.
- **Lead:** First paragraph of the text in bold. Briefly presents the subject. A kind of introduction.
- **Text:** Just the text!
- **Inset:** Sentence taken from the text and used to attract attention. A visual element that can be used instead of a photo.
- **Photo, logo or vignette (illustration):** Used to attract attention and make information easier to process.
- **Caption:** Explains the photo. Also presents elements of the text.
- **Photo credit:** Identifies the person who took the photo: first and last names and rank.

Sending in material

Submissions can be sent by internal mail or delivered in person to room K-121 at Saint-Jean Garrison. Submissions by e-mail can be sent by intranet: **+JOURNAL SERVIR@5 GSS PSP@STJEAN** or by Internet: servir@forces.gc.ca. You can also submit your material directly to:

Gaëtane Dion, Managing Editor

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450 358-7099, extension 7426

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450 358-7099, extension 7330

Most texts submitted to *Servir* are published without major changes. The Editor in chief reserves the right to modify a text for the sake of readability. Articles submitted may also be condensed due to limited space. They may occasionally be postponed until a later issue or rejected.

Need help?

Our staff is available to help you. Feel free to call.

450 358-7099, extension 7426 or 7330

Your contribution is important to us and our readers.

We hope to read you soon!