

Annotated Bibliography of Army Professional Writing on Army Professional Writing

Lieutenant Colonel Zachary E. Griffiths
Office of the Chief of Staff of the Army
The Pentagon, Washington DC
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Anders, Leslie. "Retrospect: Four Decades of American Military Journalism." *Military Affairs* 41, no. 2 (1977): 62–67. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1987198>.

This article provides a concise history of expansion and consolidation in United States military journals with significant discussion of Harding and the *Infantry Journal*, the establishment of *ARMY* from the *Infantry* and *Field Artillery Journals*, and the efforts in the 1970s to limit officer editors for association journals. The article largely represents a historian's perspective on these outlets.

———. "The Watershed: Forrest Harding's *Infantry Journal*, 1934-1938." *Military Affairs* 40, no. 1 (1976): 12–16. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1986843>.

This article explains how Major Edwin Forrest Harding renewed the *Infantry Journal* in the 1930s and the impact of his reforms.

Anthony, NJ. "Battered Military Ornaments; An Attempt (Forlorn) to Accurize Military English." *Army* 11 (June 1961): 70.

This short piece argues for clarity in military writing, skewering common military jargon.

Beagle, Milford. "Professional Discourse and Dialogue Made Easy." *Military Review*, Online Exclusive, December 2023. <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/Online-Exclusive/2023-OLE/Professional-Discourse-and-Dialogue-Made-Easy/>.

This transcribed speech lays out how the commander of the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth envisions the Army's journals renewing. His speech took place at West Point as part of a workshop focused on renewing professional journals. He concludes that the Army must (1) meet people where they are and educate them on these journals, (2) ensure journal quality, and (3) ensure sustainability of the journals.

Bell, Kristy L. "Writing Our Way to Better Critical Thinking." *Infantry* 110, no. 3 (Fall 2021): 3–5.

This piece, by an instructor of communication at the Infantry School, argues that writing develops critical thinking by forcing students to step outside easy templates or checklists.

Bennett, Drew Allen. "Characteristics of Successful and Unsuccessful Writers for a Military Journal." Texas A&M, 1991.

This doctoral dissertation surveyed 392 writers for the Marine Corps Gazette and made the following findings: (1) writers are intrinsically motivated, (2) successful writers are more likely have to completed advanced military schooling, (3) writers are generally not discouraged by the possibility of rejection, (4) writers are satisfied wit the Gazette's editorial staff, (5) time is the biggest obstacle, and (6) no rejection criterion predominates.

Bergen, John D. "The Causes of Writing Problems in the Army." Command and General Staff College, 1975.

This study finds that about 1/5 of Command and General Staff College students do not meet minimum national writing standards, have a general indifference to writing, and feel a

variety of pressures that negatively impact writing in the Army. The study seeks to understand poor writing in the Army through a literature review, a survey of military officers at the Command and General Staff college, and analysis of the College-Level Examination Program diagnostic test by similar students. The study suggests improved writing education to overcome deficiencies in civilian education and improved management of writing tasks.

Blumenfeld, Charles H. "Watch Your Language, Soldier." *Military Review* 33, no. 2 (February 1954): 9–12.

This article advocates for clarity and concision in military writing over stultified or ponderous prose. The author draws a parallel with George Washington's general order forbidding profanity to his desire to mandate staff writing in basic English.

Boatner, NM. "Should Army Officers Write?" *Army* 6 (February 1956): 37.

This article argues that while army officers are "encouraged to write for publication" most, in practice, do not. The author argues that the dearth of military discourse is resulting in more military thought by civilians who may not understand the unique considerations of military service.

Bost, Fred. "Buzzword Cowards." *Infantry* 76 (April 1986): 14–15.

This article argues that evaluation writers should avoid buzzwords and focus on sincere clarity. While the focus is not professional writing, the advice on word choice is valuable for any writing.

Bowman, James C. "How to Call a Spade a Spade." *Military Review* 34 (April 1954).

This article argues for better understanding of semantics in the military--understanding of word importance. After making the case that both military writing and speech can be improved generally, the author discusses profanity and the dangers of categorical thinking. The piece concludes with a reminder that "teaching men to think and express themselves clearly is surely just as necessary as teaching them tactics."

Brooks, Linton F. "An Examination of Professional Concerns of Naval Officers as Reflected in Their Professional Journal." *Naval War College Review* 33, no. 1 (1980): 46–56.

This article reviewed the content of the US Naval Institute's *Proceedings* and the Naval War College Review. For *Proceedings*, the findings revealed (1) about 1/3 of content was written by civilians, (2) internal navy matters were the most common type, (3) history was the next most common type, (4) leadership and ethics articles came from naval officers, and (5) articles on strategy were uncommon (>7%). For the *Review*, civilians authored almost half of articles and there is a greater proportion of articles on strategy. The piece concludes with a warning that the subjects in professional journals suggest the Navy lacks strategic thinkers and will be at the mercy of civilian thinkers.

Brown, Frank L. "Pass on That Combat Lore." *Army* 16 (September 1966): 56–61.

Bunker, Robert J. "Information Age Army or Empty Rhetoric?" *Military Review* 75, no. 1 (February 1995): 104–5.

This letter to the editor criticizes the Army's decision to transition Military Review from a monthly to a quarterly journal and offers a stout defense of the importance of the Army's journals.

Byerly, Joe. "To: Leaders. Subject: Write Your Own Emails." *Army*, May 20, 2020.

<https://www.ausa.org/articles/leaders-subject-write-your-own-emails>.

This piece argues for commanders to own their communication. By writing their own emails, intent, and other communication, their messages are delivered in authentic voice. Honing an individual's voice and communication style takes time and focus, so leaders should start early and practice.

Carr, Dwight W. "Ritazutawk." *Infantry* 64 (December 1974): 45–47.

This valuable piece argues that spoken and written English are distinct manners of communication both worthy of practice and study. The title of the piece skewers those who argue that people should "write-as-you-talk." The author builds on this idea by pointing out that spoken English contains numerous signals (inflection, tone, pitch, etc.) while written English contains capitals and punctuation. Effective communicators will write clearly not by writing as they speak, but through "thoughtful, systematic practice."

Cassino, Jan. "Writing Is So Easy." *Field Artillery Journal* 37 (December 1947): 357–58.

This engagingly written, reprinted piece from the *Army Information Digest* offers valuable advice for authors today, while also providing a snapshot into a different Army publication system. For authors today, the piece focuses first on having something to say--an idea--and then a sense of the audience before pitching a publication, and then, if accepted, writing a piece. This piece harkens back to a time when the Army maintained 64 in-house journals and Army public affairs actively worked to place Army writing into all kinds of journals, from the *Saturday Evening Post* to specialists in the laundry trade.

Chick, Bob. "Everything You Never Wanted to Know about Military Writing." *Army* 20 (December 1970): 25–27.

This article bemoans the respect afforded to "wordsmiths" who substitute clear writing for with more complicated terms.

Collins, John M. "Sharp Pens Sharpen Swords: Writing for Professional Publications." *Military Review* 86, no. 3 (2006): 109–12.

This article provides a concise summary of the military journal landscape in 2006 with a short history of the *Infantry Journal* and tips for writers. The article is based on John Collins' experience working with many of these outlets over 80 years.

Combs, John R. "Management versus Leadership as Reflected in Selected Military Journals (1970-1985)." Command and General Staff College, 1986.

<https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA172831>.

This report contains original content analysis in what is now *Army Sustainment* (then *Army Logistician*).

Coose, Alonzo L Jr. "A Critical Evaluation of Military Review." Fort Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff College, 1970.

This independent Command and General Staff College student research project evaluates whether *Military Review* met the professional needs of the 1970s. The author finds little correlation between the contents and the mission, concluding that the content is based on a "combination of editorial whim and availability of material." The key conclusions include: (1) the need to determine the requirements for the military profession, (2) coordination of the overall military press effort, and (3) evaluation and compilation of data relating to the military presses. The author first analyzed the *Military Review* mission statement, integrated comments from the 1968 reader survey, and then analyzed content in the 1969 issues. The piece concludes with an assessment that *Military Review's* content does not align with the stated mission and, most damningly, that *Military Review* "does not represent a true forum ... nor does it serve as a sounding board for the profession."

Curis, Homer K. "Preparation of a Staff Study." *Military Review* 31, no. 9 (December 1951): 55–62.

This timeless "how-to" article on effective staff writing argues that good writing requires practice to achieve clear, brief, and logical papers to aid decisions by senior commanders.

Dibble, John. "Of Words and Weeds and Nice Clear Print." *Infantry* 48 (July 1958): 50–52.

This article provides an interesting snapshot into a period when the Army's Chief of Information would screen servicemembers' articles and work to place them in civilian outlets. The author reports that, in 1956, the Army cleared 1,300 manuscripts and had publishers accept 131. The author concludes with a few thoughts on writing for publication on military topics to civilian audiences.

Edgerton, Marie B, and Albert N. Garland. "Writing for Publication." *Infantry* 73, no. 5 (October 1983): 20–25.

This article provides writing tips (with fun illustrations) for new writers. Notably, the piece provides a typology of military non-writers: (1) those who want no part in writing, (2) those who are indifferent to writing and share lessons with those in their immediate vicinity, (3) those too proud to have their work criticized by editors, and (4) those who want to write but fear rejection. The article warns new authors of some considerations and then provides writing tips.

Fergusson, Charles M. Jr. "Strategic Thinking and Studies." *Military Review* 64, no. 4 (April 1964): 9–24.

This article primarily focuses on developing military strategists and decries the lack of them in the post-World War II period. Despite investments in civilian education and War College education, the author finds that little has been written on strategy. The author suggests that a DOD-wide strategy journal could help. The piece makes wide ranging recommendations about improving strategy in the DOD and uniformed services, but notably suggests encouraging writing in military education and better dissemination of writings.

Foster, Gregory D. "Research, Writing, and the Mind of the Strategist." *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. Spring 1996 (1996).

This article argues that effective research and writing skills are prerequisites for effective strategic leadership, which the Army should not outsource. Notably, this article includes two reprinted Calvin and Hobbes comic strips to reinforce the importance of research and clear writing. This article joins others that bemoan the lack of notable strategic thinkers in the post-World War II period.

French, Jeffery Wellington. "Intellectual Discourse during the Interwar Years: A Content Survey of the United States Infantry Journal (1919-1939)." Masters Thesis. College Park, TX: Texas A&M University, May 2000.

This student thesis presents an original analysis of the authors and article subjects in the *Infantry Journal* in the interwar period. The author concludes that the authors "were representative of other successful Army officers that remained in uniform during the interwar period ... not outsiders, mavericks, or pariahs." On content, the author found writings dealt primarily with routine matters, but also an interest in foreign military and political developments. In all, the author finds the *Infantry Journal* "stood out as a vehicle that permitted infantry officers to question the current state of the army, air original and innovative ideas and call for innovations in the future" and concludes with a call for "publications that promote open and honest discussion."

Fudge, Russell. "Informing the Army Officer." *Military Review* 34, no. 7 (October 1954): 31–48.

This article finds that broad reading is important to Army officers, significant overlap in the Army's publications in the 1950s, and that officers of the time devoted significant personal time to informing themselves, though much less time to group discussion. The article bases these conclusions on original content analysis into three military periodicals and a survey of professional self-study habits of War College students. Notably, it also contains an early complaint about reading lists without annotations describing the book's importance.

Galloway, Strome. "How to Write Effective English." Edited by Military Review Digest Team. *Military Review* 34, no. 12 (March 1955): 102–9.

This article, a digest from the *Canadian Army Journal* in October of 1954, argues in favor of clear, concise, simple, and accurate writing. The author then outlines a variety of common mistakes in military writing and concludes by decrying gobbledygook.

Galvin, Thomas P. "Writing Faculty Papers for Joint Professional Military Education." *Joint Forces Quarterly* 77 (2015): 51–54.

This paper argues that professional military faculty should write papers for specific classes or on specific topics rather than relying on already published articles or book chapters. Galvin describes the differences between writing for academic publication and writing faculty papers. He argues the best faculty papers are (1) theoretically grounded, (2) bridge theory to practice, and (3) make use of illustrative examples. Good faculty papers will stand the test of time and help military students advance their understanding of complex topics.

Gates, John M. "The 'New' Military Professionalism." *Armed Forces & Society* 11, no. 3 (April 1, 1985): 427–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X8501100306>.

Gavin, John A. "Thinking and Writing." *Military Review* 32, no. 10 (January 1953): 3–5

This article argues in favor of professional writing based on the logic that (1) officers will spend most of their careers on staff, (2) success on staffs requires writing proficiency, and (3) therefore that investing early in your writing skills by writing for professional journals is sensible. It concludes with a few words about submitting articles and tailoring them for particular publications.

George, Randy, Gary Brito, and Michael Weimer. "Strengthening the Profession: A Call to All Army Leaders to Revitalize Our Professional Discourse." Modern War Institute, September 11, 2023. <https://mwi.westpoint.edu/strengthening-the-profession-a-call-to-all-army-leaders-to-revitalize-our-professional-discourse/>

This article by the Chief of Staff of the Army, the commander of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command, and the Sergeant Major of the Army calls for reinvigoration of professional writing in the Army.

Greene, Joseph I. "Write It up for the Journal." *Infantry Journal* 43, no. 4 (August 1936): 324–28

This valuable piece provides timeless guidance for the budding or experienced writer on how to write and be published. The author covers topics ranging from selecting your subject, understanding your audience, style, and the rest. Except for the notes on sending in the original over the carbon copy, today's writer would do well to take note of this advice from nearly a century ago.

Griffiths, Zachary. "Bring Back Branch Magazines." *Modern War Institute* (blog), April 27, 2023. <https://mwi.usma.edu/bring-back-branch-magazines/>.

This article makes a case for modernizing the Army's journals based on a review of novel data about branch journal performance. The article directly contrasts the decline of Special Warfare with the rise of the Irregular Warfare Initiative (a non-Army outlet) and the success of the Pineland Underground podcast. The piece concludes with two recommendations: either transition journals to a volunteer-editor model based on how students staff law reviews, or merging with an already web-first outlet like the Modern War Institute at West Point.

Griffiths, Zachary E. "Low Crawling toward Obscurity." *Army University Press* 103, no. 5 (October 2023): 17–28.

This article argues for renewing the Army's professional journals by presenting novel data on journal performance and an original survey of military authors. The piece concludes with recommendations that the Army (1) modernize outlets to a web-first, mobile-friendly standards, (2) stimulate quality content with modest incentives, and (3) be thoughtful about the system of journals.

Griffiths, Zachary, and Theo Lipsky. "Introducing the Harding Project: Renewing Professional Military Writing." Modern War Institute, September 5, 2023.

<https://mwi.westpoint.edu/introducing-the-harding-project-renewing-professional-military-writing/>

This piece introduces an effort to renew professional writing in the United States Army. Finding that the Army's branch journals produce less content, less often, and more erratically, the authors offer a four-point platform: (1) modernizing to a web-first, mobile-friendly standard, (2) embracing volunteer staffing models, (3) improving archive accessibility, and (4) updating military education courses to teach everyone about the journals and their professional obligation to contribute.

Guezlo, Carl M. "Literary Freethinkers Unite!" *Military Review* 48, no. 8 (August 1963): 57–59.

This article defends the use of longer words in military writing taking on writing guides that advocate for creating acronyms and discourage the use of words longer than two syllables.

Harding, Edwin. "Foreword." *Mailing List* 1, no. 1 (1930): 2–3.

This foreword, likely by Edwin Forrest Harding, explains the purpose of professional journals: "the dissemination of military instruction and the stimulation of thought on military subjects." Harding explains the importance of adapting often dry written military instruction for more dynamic and interesting writing that benefits the reader and the army.

———. "Valedictory." *Infantry Journal* 54, no. 3 (June 1938): 270–71.

This final letter from the editor by Forrest Harding thanks readers and outlines his success in renewing the *Infantry Journal's* subscribers.

Harding, H.F. "Modernize Your Speaking Ability." *Military Review* 30, no. 2 (May 1950): 49–54.

This useful article describes how to prepare a speech for the public. The author recommends selecting an interesting subject for which you have expertise or first-hand knowledge, careful research, good examples, an outline, rehearsals, reflection after the speech, and revision before the next delivery.

Hause, William L. "Professional Writing: A Professional Obligation." *Military Review* 54, no. 8 (August 1974): 41–48.

This valuable article skewers the "myth that critical professional writing is disfavored." It opens by refuting an assertion that Army officers seek the status quo. Instead, the author argues that "the Army does value imaginative thinking... [but] what the Army does not value--in fact, disfavors--is imagination unaccompanied by the ability to get things done." The author then identifies that most effective officers are too busy to write, that many imaginative officers are less effective and have more time to write, and that therefore those who have the time to write but are less effective lament that their writings ended their career. The article surveys the types of topics that should be written on, including national security strategy, tactics, and leadership. The piece also suggests that the Army formally encourage writing by including writings as part of promotion boards, for credit at military schools, and by offering prizes for distinguished articles. Whether the Army encourages writing or not, officers should still "encourage, or at least not discourage, professional

writing” by junior officers.

Hough, Artra. “Communicative Skills: A Selected Biography.” DTIC. Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College Library, June 1989.

This bibliography is subdivided into nine communicative skills so that readers can find resources in areas where they desire self-improvement. Each section includes numerous articles in military journals in addition to many more resources from other outlets.

Johnson, Harold K. “The Years Ahead.” *Military Review* 72, no. 2 (February 1962): 64.

This note from the commandant of the Command and General Staff College lists four goals for the continued efforts of *Military Review* at its 40 year anniversary: (1) authoritative coverage of significant military problems, (2) stimulating military thought in the US military and with our allies, (3) encouraging a broad readership, and (4) emphasizing readability.

Josef “Polo” Danczuk. “Overcoming Army Writer’s Block: Tips to Start Professional Writing and Publishing for Junior Officers.” The Center for Junior Officers, July 13, 2022.
<https://juniorofficer.army.mil/overcoming-army-writers-block-tips-to-start-professional-writing-and-publishing-for-junior-officers/>.

This article advocates for junior officers to write professionally through seven steps: (1) get hyped about writing, (2) read publications that interest you, (3) pick potential topics, (4) talk to others in your field, (5) research and write in a way that works for you, (6) have a peer review your work, and (7) submit your piece for publication.

Kent, Sherman. “The Need for an Intelligence Literature.” *Studies in Intelligence* 1 (1955): 1–11.

Though focusing on the intelligence profession, this article makes a compelling case for professional writing. The author argues that professional literatures (1) permanently record new ideas and experiences, (2) define terms, and (3) lead to durable insights. He also describes how to resolve issues of classification, time, and paying writers. The author’s insights are valuable for considering military professional writing as well.

Lay, Kenneth E. “Military Writing: A Response to the Challenge of Our Profession.” *Military Review* 44, no. 7 (July 1964): 53–60.

This piece argues for reviewing and improving the Army’s journal system in the post-war world. A renewed journal system could help the Army think harder about opposing views of considered policies.

Lentz, Bernard. “More Interesting Articles.” *Infantry Journal* 41, no. 2 (April 1934): 106–8.

This article argues the profession (and the length of journal subscription lists) benefit when people write more interesting articles. The author clearly states that writing can be tough, requires reading the literature one wants to contribute to and more broadly, an original and hopefully critical idea, and effective style. At the conclusion, the author calls on authors not to worry about potential criticism from their peers for speaking up.

Lipsky, Theo. "Twitter Will Not Steward the Profession." *War on the Rocks*, July 30, 2021.
<https://warontherocks.com/2021/07/twitter-will-not-steward-the-profession/>.

This article argues that the Army should not retreat from Twitter (now-X) but that social media platforms are unsuitable for professional dialogue. Key, the piece argues that social media is designed to amplify outrage, when the profession requires thoughtful discourse. The piece calls for renewal of professional journals and thoughtful professional dialogue.

Marshall, S.L.A. "Genesis to Revelation." *Military Review* 52, no. 2 (February 1972): 17–24.

Famed author SLA Marshall explains his path to military writing and why he see writing as essential to effective command.

Matthews, Lloyd J. "Musket and Quill: Are They Compatible?" *Military Review*, no. 61 (1981): 2–10.

This article explores why (1) so few servicemembers write, and (2) why those who do often submit poor quality manuscripts. The author turns the frequent lament about lack of time around, arguing that there is really just a lack of prioritization for writing. The author then outlines common challenges with manuscripts: (1) a lack of actionable solutions to presented problems, (2) lack of argumentative thesis, (3) lack of clarity or specificity, (4) poor understanding of syntax, grammar, or word definitions, (5) submitted term papers, (6) jargon, (7) diatribes, and (8) poor alignment with the outlet. The piece concludes by outlining potential venues that included the Army's 43 authorized periodicals, civilian outlets, and foreign military periodicals.

———. "To Military Writers: A Word from the Editor on Words." *Military Review* 56, no. 4 (April 1976): 33–40.

This article by the editor of *Military Review* argues for clear speech, devoid of "gobbledygook." The piece specifically argues against the use of faddish military jargon, as the definitions are often poorly understood and glossed over by tired readers. The author then provides a list of 25 "vogue" words abused in 1975's military vernacular. Today's reader will be accustomed to most of them.

McConnell, Richard A, Mark Williams, Trent Lythgoe, Theodor Ihrke, Lisa Babin, Allyson McNitt, and Kimberly Brutsche. "Improving Writing Skills Through Diagnosing and Treating At-Risk Writers." *Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Proceedings* 50 (2023): 30–41.

This academic article argues that the Command and General Staff College's intensive writing course helps at-risk students improve their writing skills, but that the diagnostic essay method for identifying at-risk students should be improved. The authors conclude that a combination of the Nelson-Denny score and a Writing Skills exam offers the best way to identify students for the intensive writing course.

Millen, Anthony. "Acronymia." *Military Review* 54, no. 8 (August 1974): 48–52.

This article, by a British exchange officer, skewers the American infatuation with acronyms.

He takes special issue with acronyms that select random letters from the base words to include, “backronyms”, and turning acronyms into verbs.

Miller, Larry D. “Writing, Integrity, and National Security.” *Joint Forces Quarterly* 79 (2015): 57–62.

This article argues for the importance of academic integrity by War College students in their writing. The article presents a novel typology of plagiarism based on the authors’ experiences at the Army War College. The piece concludes with a call to treat plagiarism as a breach of “professional competence” and to fail plagiarists.

Miller, Lester L Jr. “Military Writing: A Bibliography.” Special Bibliography. The Century Series. Fort Sill, OK: US Army Field Artillery School, April 15, 1984.
<https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA140867.pdf>.

This bibliography includes five pages of references related to military writing from 1936-1982 across a range of journals. Articles related to professional writing where I had access to the source material are in this collection, but many more, especially from Army and naval outlets, are not included. It also includes a one-page section on writers’ manuals.

Montague, Kareem P. “The Army and Team Learning.” Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, 2008.

The author assesses the Army’s “team learning” based on Peter Senge’s framework in the *Fifth Discipline* and recommends reforms to both unit-level unit development programs and the Army’s journals. Notably, the author surveyed 147 CGSC students on professional development sessions and engagement with professional journals. He leverages letters to the editor as a measure of engagement

Moore, Peter R. “How to Optionally Maximize Your Buzzwords.” *Army* 31 (1981).

“One of Them.” “The General’s Ghost.” *Infantry Journal* 62 (April 1948): 23–26.

This terrifically (and anonymously) written piece describes military ghostwriting for senior officers and the steps for success. These steps include (1) determining who else is on the program and what they plan to talk about, (2) know the words that your principal likes to use--and those he cannot pronounce, (3) keeping in contact with other ghostwriters, (4) carefully research facts and figures, (5) reacting with grace when your principal doesn’t like a draft, (6) do your best to interpret the vague guidance for the next draft, (7) time and revise the speech by having someone else read it while standing, (8) research the event and people present, and (9) ensure your principal (and the aide) has an easy to read copy of the speech. Despite this hard work, the “ghost” will rarely--but occasionally--be recognized.

Pappas, George S. “‘The Voice of the Turtle Is Heard’ Programs to Develop Military Writers in the Field of Strategy.” Student Research Paper. Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, April 8, 1966. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/%22The-Voice-of-the-Turtle-is-Heard%22-Programs-to-in-Pappas/8e0bb9b391aacd88bbbed27057ea82d5a4ca56ff6>.

This piece provides a glimpse into questions of military writing on strategy in the 1960s as

the civilian academic writing on national security and international relations was surging in the post-World War II era. The author surveys evidence on whether or not the military officer should write and concludes that the “voice of the military scholar must be heard.” The study compares the career paths of civilian national security experts with West Point graduates of the class of 1944 and finds scholars work in “surroundings which are most conducive to productive thought” while “the officer is required to conduct his activities in a crowded office with almost half of each 24-hour period devoted to his duty requirements.” The article also spends significant time exploring and critiquing how security clearances impact military scholarship. In the view of the author, such scholars should roughly possess (1) military experience at the senior field grade level, (2) military education at the war college level, (3) civilian graduate schooling, (4) normal career patterns of command and staff assignments, and (5) outstanding performance. To develop military scholars, he considers several models including establishing a career field (similar to today’s strategists, FA59), but concludes this model is not desirable. The paper concludes with recommendations that have been largely, but perhaps unevenly by the Army: establishment of Fellowships at universities, civilian graduate study, and supervision of the Fellows by the Chief of Staff of the Army.

Pruett, Allen. “Fighters Also Write.” *Infantry* 61 (April 1971): 26–27.

This article argues that all officers have an obligation to be understood and that writing should start with that goal. The piece advocates for writing that uses common words, contains short simple sentences and paragraphs, is written like you talk (but with better grammar), omits needless words, and is in active voice.

Raugh, Harold E. Jr. “Professional Reading Program.” *Infantry* 76, no. 2 (April 1986): 12–14.

This article describes how an Infantry company in 1986 ran a professional military history reading program. Officers read articles on the importance of military history and then 16 books over two years. They also wrote and presented research papers on a variety of topics to improve their written and oral communication. This reading program benefited from a system that provided multi-year personnel stability. Modern programs might need to adapt for more frequent changes in personnel.

“Reader Survey.” *Military Review* LXXI, no. 5 (May 1991): 95–96.

This provides an example of a reader survey done in 1991. I could not locate the survey results.

Riddlebarger, Samuel E. “Better Writing--a Heretic’s View.” *Airpower Journal* 1, no. 3 (1987): 75–80.

This article pushes back against contemporary calls for concision and simplicity arguing for using the precisely right word or sentence construction. The paper concludes with ten rules ranging from asking whether the paper is necessary to “clocks, chiefs, and colonels won’t wait.” He then follows with an even longer section of “Notes on the ‘Rule’” suggesting this author cannot cope with concision.

Shulenberg, Arvid. “The First 40 Years.” *Military Review* 62, no. 2 (February 1962): 51–63.

This article describes the first 40 years of *Military Review's* history, arguing that the purpose has remained "to provide for the military officer succinct and unbiased information of those things that he should know." In 1962, the circulation was 18,000 copies. The journal evolved from a collection of indices and bibliographical entries suitable for the initial audience of Army instructors, towards translated summary of foreign items, published the first original piece in 1933 on the "Holding Attack", and ultimately reflected the needs of the Army over time. The Spanish and Portuguese editions launched in 1945 due to requests from Latin American countries.

Stillman, Richard J. "The Effective Military Speaker--a Dying Art?" *Military Review* 44, no. 8 (August 1964): 3–10.

This piece argues for improved speeches by reducing reliance on speaking aids. The author contrasts American techniques that rely on slides or speaking packets with European techniques that rely on greater expertise by the speaker. He specifically recommends (1) discarding conformist techniques, (2) improving communications, (3) providing opportunities early, (4) improving talks, and (5) exploring new techniques.

"The Importance of Effective Writing in the NCO Corps." Accessed October 8, 2023.
<https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/NCO-Journal/Archives/2017/September/Effective-Writing/>.

Todd, Greg. "Becoming a Better Military Writer" *Airpower Journal*, no. 3 (Fall 1992): 69–77.

This article argues that clear communication is an important professional skill and that servicemembers should write--or they cede military thought to civilians. The author highlights four books and four essays for the military author desiring to improve their craft. The article concludes with five suggestions: keep it simple, compose on a computer, relax, revise, and to get the four books.

Towns, W. Stuart. "Oral Communication." *Military Review* 35, no. 8 (August 1973): 56–63.

This article makes the case for improving speech by military officers in both presentations and to small groups. The piece outlines considerations for effective speaking and concludes with several references.

Townsend, Jesse F. "A Study of Selected United States Air Force Magazines." Graduate, University of Illinois, 1954.

This is an early study of "internal" Air Force journals. The thesis gives a brief history of military journals and a more detailed outline of how the Air Force structured its journals in the 1950s. The author surveyed 5 selected magazines to learn about the printing, staff organization, and editorial policies.

Tresidder, Argus. "English--a Valedictory." *Marine Corps Gazette*, April 1980.

A professor of English at the Marine Corps Command and Staff College reflects on his frustrations with military writing. He offers several reasons for continued bad writing: fear of misusing professional knowledge through jargon, deliberate obfuscation as a way to protect

the writer from critique, the influence of faddish words and jargon, and ignorance. Despite claiming this was his final article as an English professor, he continued to teach and write on military writing.

———. “The Common Errors.” *Marine Corps Gazette* 66 (September 1982): 55–60.

An advocate of effective military writing and instructor at the Marine Corps Command and Staff College distills 11 years of experience into a short article on the ten “sins” of military writing. He discusses common issues with grammar, punctuation, misuse of words, addictive words, spelling and pronunciation, idioms, cliches, wordiness, passive voice, and gobbledygook. He concludes with a call for clarity in military writing.

———. “On Gobbledygook.” *Military Review*, no. 4 (April 1974): 16–24.

This piece, by an English professor at the Marine Corps Command and Staff College, critiques the use of jargon in professional writing. The author argues that writers use jargon when they aim (1) for an air of authority, (2) to hide behind imprecise words, (3) to signal understanding of current professional fads. The author then differentiates between jargon and technical words, which have important professional value, but can confuse when used with lay audiences. The piece concludes with a call to stamp out gobbledygook.

———. “The Military Vocabulary.” *Military Review* 52, no. 12 (December 1972): 8–13.

This article skewers military English by breaking down definitions in the 1972 version of the Department of Defense dictionary. He concludes by recommending clearer definitions for military terms, that differences between military definitions and common definitions for the same words be noted, and that an effort be made to curb the use of nouns as verbs and verbs as nouns.

Unsworth, Michael, ed. *Military Periodicals: United States and Selected International Journals and Newspapers*. Historical Guides to the World’s Periodicals and Newspapers. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1990.

This book is the authoritative source on professional military writing. Though dated now and excluding web first outlets that have appeared since this book’s publication in 1990, it remains a peerless source for information on American military journals.

Weaver, Robert G. “Meet General Bafflegab, Chief of Obfuscation.” *Army* 23 (July 1973): 31–33.

This valuable article argues that bureaucratic military English deliberately obfuscates meaning to provide cover for leaders. Clear English, while helpful, can also easily attribute outcomes to a leader. Many leaders may desire some plausible deniability when things fail. The article concludes with a call to “create an atmosphere where people fear less to be wrong than to be unclear.”

Wermuth, Anthony L. “The Professional Automaton.” *Military Review* 48, no. 3 (March 1967): 3–11.

With more of a critique of busy bodies than writing on writing, this piece is an example of

military writing with great sketches and illustrations.

———. “The Split Infinitive Is Here to Stay.” *Military Review* 35, no. 6 (September 1955): 8–11.

This article argues in favor of clarity in military speech and writing. It takes down “rules” like the split infinitive, brevity over clarity, and sentence length.

“Writing in the Army.” *Infantry Journal* 59 (October 1946): 6–7.

This piece argues the Army should think about writing as “a normal and necessary tool of war for the Army man” rather than considering those who can write as “not quite as hairy-chested or levelheaded.” The piece specifically applauds General Marshall’s writing as “vigorous, accurate, and readable.” The article then makes a special plea for well written doctrine and textbooks, as these books are essential to a well-trained reserve component and ROTC students. Overall, the article argues for a change in the general attitude towards writing so the Army can benefit from practical and efficient writers.

Zoll, Donald. “The Decline of Military Literature.” *The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters* 2, no. 1 (July 4, 1972). <https://doi.org/10.55540/0031-1723.1052>.

This article in the second year of *Parameters* challenges military professionals to think harder about their profession, offering six factors that might revive “military literature.” He argues that military writing and thought suffers from (1) diminished intellectual vitality by those in uniform, (2) diminished perception of the importance of thought relative to technology, (3) preoccupation with political thought, (4) hostility to military affairs by the public, (5) changes in military education, and (6) increased classification and secrecy. Notably, this piece’s author had his career cut short by revelations he lacked a doctorate and became an elephant trainer.