

Press Release Tips for the Chapter

A press release is a tool we use to communicate with the media. Properly written, it will help the reporter do his or her job. It should contain all the information necessary for a story about your event. Your audience is the general public. However, you hope specifically to reach those who are eligible, or know someone who is eligible, to become members of your chapter. This includes many who are already members of national MOAA.



Prepare a press release about each significant chapter event. It should be sent to every newspaper (military and civilian), radio station, TV station, or other news outlets within the boundaries of your chapter. If you have a photo of your event, attach a JPEG photo to your e-mail.

The media prefer to receive press releases in the form of e-mail. Do not use an attached Word document to send your press release; many will not open them. Maintain a distribution list of all the e-mails of the media. If you know the reporter who handles your news, send your release directly to that person. In developing your distribution list, it is advisable to call the newspaper to learn to whom you should send press releases. In the absence of this information, send to the managing editor.

TIPS

- ___ **Use Email for Release, Not an attached document.**
- ___ **Include Your Contact Info.**
- ___ **Use Double or 1.5 spacing**
- ___ **Use Journalistic Style.**
- ___ **Send photos, in JPEG.**
- ___ **Do not be discouraged, Keep trying.**

At the top of your press release, include your e-mail address and phone number so the reporter can contact you to verify your story or request more information. You should indicate in the header when your story is to be released. In most cases, you would use FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE. Use double or 1.5 line spacing.

When you write a press release, use journalistic style. One of the most basic is to put the most important part of your story in the first paragraph. This is called the “lead.” Continue your story with items of decreasing importance. End with a paragraph that could be deleted without affecting your story. This method is called the “Inverted Pyramid.” Include in your release Who, What, When, Where, and Why. Sometimes you will need to add How.

By following these simple procedures, you will win a lot of points with your editor or reporter. It will make their work easier and improve the chances that your release will be published. Do not take it personally if your press release does not find its way into print or if it is extensively revised. Newspapers have a style to adhere to and may edit for space (the inverted pyramid helps with this). Pictures are even less likely to be used but send them anyway.

At the end, write ### or -30- to indicate the end of your story.

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/ Jim DeLaney, LTC, USA (Ret.), Past President of the Shenandoah Valley Chapter

LTC DeLaney is a retired Army Public Affairs Officer. He has a Bachelor of Journalism degree from the University of Missouri School of Journalism. He is now a member of the Virginia Peninsula Chapter (VIPMOAA) as he lives in that area. .

LOGO: When using the MOAA logo, be sure to use the latest version. The shield, at right, has the correct “R” at the bottom, not “TM”. MOAA logos and masthead are easy to obtain on MOAA website, at this link http://www.moaa.org/multimedia/multimedia_logos.htm

/ Melva Mallison, Maj, USAF, Ret, VCOC PAO

