



Submission policies, guidelines and procedures

Since the beginnings of the national *Young Marine Esprit* magazine in the mid-1990s, we have gone from a black and white newsletter-style magazine to a full color 32-page publication. There was a time when national headquarters staff had to, how should we say it, “beg” units to submit articles to the magazine. Those days are long gone as our Young Marine units are stepping up and sharing their experiences in large numbers.

We have set some new policies, guidelines and procedures for units to follow when submitting articles to the *Young Marine Esprit*

WHAT IS THE YOUNG MARINE ESPRIT?

The Esprit magazine serves multiple purposes within the Young Marines organization.

- A national publication for Young Marine units to report their activities that are considered **newsworthy on a national level, which means stories that are of interest to readers across the country**
- A print communication tool used by national headquarters to make announcements about the “latest and greatest happenings” in the Young Marines organization
- An internal and external public relations tool for the national program overall
- A FREE membership benefit to all registered youths and adults. There is no subscription fee for the Young Marine Esprit magazine. Magazines are sent to units in bulk based on the number of registered members within that unit at time of publication
- The magazine is a four-color, 32-page quarterly publication. This magazine is unique to other national youth organization publications considering that 95% of the submissions come directly from the membership, not from freelance reporters, and there is no subscription fee to the membership





Young Marines

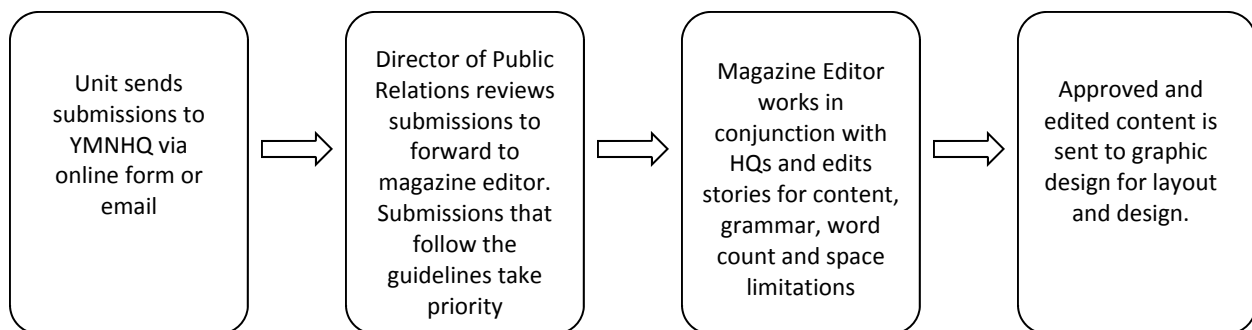
ESPRIT

These guidelines will aid you in preparing your articles for submission and assist you in determining what stories and submissions are of interest to readers across the country, or newsworthy on a national level.

Please use this as your guide to determine what submissions take priority and to help familiarize you with the various policies and procedures to submit to ***The Young Marine Esprit.***

You might notice some changes to our guidelines from years past. We have taken great care to re-evaluate our submission policies to bring them up-to-date as our organization continues to grow on a national level. All attempts have been made to assure these policies and procedures are fair and are in the best interest of the Young Marines Esprit publication.

WHEN I SUBMIT AN ARTICLE, WHAT IS THE PROCESS?



Esprit magazines are shipped in bulk to each unit that is in good standing at the time publication. Quantities of the publication that are sent to each unit are determined by the number of Young Marines and adults registered in the database.





WHAT ARE THE REOCCURRING TOPICS IN THE YOUNG MARINE ESPRIT?

Theme related articles: These are the articles specific to the theme for that issue. You will notice these articles are usually in the center spread of the magazine.

Miscellaneous articles: This is a compilation of various stories about unit activities that don't fall within a specific category.

Snapshots: Compelling action shots of a unit activity. Snapshots must be accompanied with a brief one sentence caption in order to be considered.

Units on the Go: Short summary of 75 words or less that describes an activity a unit did outside its normal unit training. These must be accompanied with a photo to be considered.

Special Achievements perfect PFT or national recognition: It is the responsibility of the unit to submit special achievements to the Esprit magazine, even though recognition was awarded on a national level. Submit unit name, name of Young Marine and award earned.

Honoring veterans all year long

This is where we highlight the good work our Young Marine units are doing to honor America's veterans.

Graduation announcements: Submit unit name, state, date of graduation, honor graduate's name (only one) and unit commander's name. Stories about graduation ceremonies are not considered.

In Memory (when appropriate/needed)

This is where we honor the memory of people that are, or were, registered with the Young Marines program at one time. Due to space limitations, we regret we are unable to honor those that were special to a unit if they weren't registered with our program. A nice way to honor those individuals is in a unit newsletter or special consideration at a unit meeting.

Seasonal topics:

Veterans Appreciation Week, Raising Awareness to the Flag, Adult Leaders Conference, Memorial Day, Red Ribbon Week, SPACES, etc.





Precedence is set for articles about activities and events that are meaningful to readers across the country

WHAT TOPICS SHOULD I WRITE ABOUT?

There are multiple topics you can write about. First of all, consider the theme for that particular issue of the magazine. Keep in mind, the theme is just where we are placing an emphasis for that issue. If you have a story that isn't related to the theme for that issue, feel free to submit it anyway. Precedence is set for articles that are ***newsworthy on a national level, which means articles about activities and events that are meaningful to readers across the country.***

Anything that you, as a Young Marine, have done with your unit, or how your community has been positively impacted because of your unit's efforts is welcome. Likewise, a story about your whole unit's activity, or a set of activities, is welcome.

IS THERE A WORD LIMIT TO MY SUBMISSIONS?

Articles should not exceed the 300-word limit

YES, we have a word limit: ***All articles should be between 100 and 300 words.***

Reason: To leave enough space so that the growing number of articles sent in by Young Marines can be accommodated. We would like to showcase as many newsworthy articles as possible.

We reserve the right to edit articles down to the suggested word limit of 100-300 words. All efforts are made to maintain the integrity and voice of the author during the editing process. Please consider editing down your articles to the suggested word limit prior to submission.





***Articles written by
Young Marines take priority***

WHO SHOULD WRITE THE ARTICLES?

Articles written by Young Marines take priority for publication consideration. The best articles in our magazine are the ones our Young Marines write, based on their actual experiences. Adult volunteers are also welcome to write articles, of course, but we always give preference to the articles Young Marines write.

CAN ADULTS HELP YOUNG MARINES WRITE OUR ARTICLES?

Of course! But let them know that the kind of help that works best is for an adult volunteer to read your draft (the first version you write) and suggest details for you to add or take out and to help you proofread for mistakes. We don't want adults to *write* articles that have a Young Marine's name on them. In the editing process after submission, we will assist with grammar and proper use of wording while maintaining the voice of the author.

***Ask your adult volunteers
to proofread your
articles, they might offer
great suggestions***

DO I NEED TO GET PERMISSION FROM MY UNIT COMMANDER TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE?

The answer to this is yes and no. Any registered Young Marine or adult volunteer is welcome to submit articles directly to the magazine. But, out of courtesy to the leadership in your unit, it's always recommended as a professional courtesy to inform your unit commander or your unit's public relations officer of the story you are submitting. Ask your adult staff about the protocol within your unit.

***Everyone is welcome to
submit articles directly to the
magazine. It is advised to
inform your unit staff of the
articles you submit.***





CAN WE BRAG?

Tell us in your own words how your unit achieved its goal rather than sending in a list or summary of accomplishments

Yes, but brag “the right way.” If your unit has achieved something unique, you have earned the right to tell us all about it. Tell us in your own words how your unit achieved something that is newsworthy on a national level. The wrong kind of bragging is when, instead of explaining how you achieved your goal, you write down a long list of your awards or other accomplishments. That can be boring to read for other Young Marines that have earned the same recognition, and lists don’t help any of us learn from your experience.

CAN WE SUBMIT MULTIPLE ARTICLES ABOUT THE SAME ACTIVITY?

Yes and no. Only one article per activity will be considered for publication. So, here are some important guidelines to follow if multiple Young Marines would like to write about the same activity:

For example, if your unit went on an encampment in the mountains, four of you might decide you had such a great experience you’d all like to write about it. Now ask yourself: Would it make sense for the magazine to print four separate stories all describing the same event? Probably not, but you do have two options: .

- (a) One of you can write the story, and the other three can each write up a single sentence (with their names attached) so that we can print those short statements along with the article, or
- (b) Four of you can write one article together, as a team effort, either by talking through the details as you write or by writing separately about four different aspects of your encampment. Remember, though, that the total word count still needs to be under 300.

If more than one Young Marine from your unit is writing about the same activity, make it a group effort and co-author the story together instead of sending in multiple stories about the same subject.





TIPS FOR WRITING GREAT ARTICLES

In preparing your stories, considering the following tips:

WHO: Name the people involved. Include any ranks or titles. If you meet or interview somebody, please tell us their name. Make sure names are spelled correctly!

WHAT: What was the activity? Was it a memorial ceremony, a fundraising event, a sporting event, a parade, etc.?

WHERE: Be sure to tell us where the activity occurred. Be sure to tell us the name of the event, park or building. Give us the full official name.

WHEN: Tell us when the activity took place. Was the activity in conjunction events that are relevant to the theme of that issue or a campaign such as Veterans Appreciation Week, Red Ribbon, Relay for Life, Memorial Day, Raising Awareness to the Flag, an event important in your community, etc. We do not normally print the actual dates of your events in articles, but we do want to include the event in the context.

WHY: Tell us why your unit participated in this activity, and how it relates to our program's core values of discipline, leadership, and teamwork or our mission of "Strengthening the lives of America's youth". Maybe it's about our commitment to living a healthy, drug-free lifestyle or our outreach to America's veterans. Maybe it is a local initiative or a unique activity that your unit was interested in participating in.

ALSO: Remember to take a minute to check the facts of your story, particularly as they relate to historical events or important dates in our nation's history.

REMEMBER

THE FIVE W's

when preparing and editing your articles for submission





TIPS FOR WRITING GREAT ARTICLES (continued)

*In your submissions,
tell us what was exciting,
surprising or fun about
the activity.*

*What makes the story
uniquely interesting to
readers from across the
country?*

*Pick 1-3 photos
to accompany your article*

*Refer to the S.L.I.C.K.
guidelines on page 13*

TELL THE STORY

Young Marines want to read about your experiences—what did you do, why did you do it, how did you do it, and how did it turn out? **What did you, personally, learn from it?**

FILL IT WITH ACTION & FUN

Action! Make sure you tell us what happened at the museum or the boat dock or the obstacle course. It's easy sometimes to get "stuck" telling us the names of the places and events and people and never get around to telling us what happened. And of course, even if an event was "just the usual", there is bound to be something that you did that was especially exciting, or surprising, or fun.

And remember: Just writing that your experience "was a lot of fun" isn't very exciting. Give us some of the details that show how much fun it was.

PHOTOS ENHANCE YOUR SUBMISSION AND CAN TELL A STORY

Each submission should include a photo. When considering what photos to submit with your article, pick the photos that tell a story. Always include a caption with your photos. We need to know who is in the photo and some brief background information. Please pick your top 3 pictures to submit, at the most. More than 3 photos can be redundant and we can usually only accommodate 1-2 photos per article due to space limitations. **Refer to the SLICK! guidelines on page 13 of this document when submitting your photos.**





TIPS FOR WRITING GREAT ARTICLES (continued)

Please double check the correct spelling of first and last names

If you have a long list of names of people you'd like to thank, consider thanking them in a unit newsletter instead and make sure they receive a copy

CHOOSE CAREFULLY WHEN YOU NAME PEOPLE

The right place to thank *all* the people who helped you with a great event is locally, in your unit newsletter, on your unit website, and most of all, by telling them or writing them directly. Since *Esprit* is a national magazine, we need to limit the listing of names that are important to units on a local level, otherwise names would fill up half the space. And, don't forget to double-check the spelling of names; if you can't check with them directly, ask someone in their family. Remember, you can personally thank individuals that supported your unit or event in your unit newsletter, or by sending them thank you cards.

Compare these examples:

WRONG WAY (*listing too many names*)

The parade preparation would not have been possible without the help of Mr. Robert Smith, Mrs. Joselynn Smith, and USMC Capt. Sam Smith. Our color guard was YM Pvt Minny Smith, YM SSgt Cynthia Smith, and YM GySgt Joe Griffin. We met a lot of veterans to include Sgt Vernon Schmidt, Maj John Johansson, and Cpl Allen Anderson.

RIGHT WAY (*listing just the name of the individual that you tell us something meaningful about*)

The parade preparation was made possible by a lot of adult volunteers. Our color guard included YM Pvt Minny Smith, who was proud that this was her first time appearing in a parade. We were honored to personally meet veterans from World War II and the Korean War who shared their stories with us.





TIPS FOR WRITING GREAT ARTICLES (continued)

DO SOME FACT CHECKING

If you've spoken with a veteran and want to mention a battle he told you about, don't rely only on your memory or even the way he named it. Any famous event, person, or place deserves to be checked so you can be sure you are naming it and spelling it correctly. Likewise, if you went to a park or museum, check the name before you send in your article. Nowadays this is much easier to do than it used to be. You can do a smart Google search very quickly. If you're checking a military person, place, event, or thing, try adding ".mil" next to your search term; that way you'll get an answer from a military site. If you're checking a famous civilian, museum, national park, you might try adding ".edu" next to your search term, so you get answers from a school rather than a silly website.

Always check your facts to confirm you have the information correct

Consider writing about what is new and exciting and think about what other readers from across the country can learn from your experiences

HIGHLIGHT WHAT IS NEW OR WORKED BEST

Remember that a lot of readers are hoping to learn something new that they can use for their own unit's next event. Any time you describe a unit activity, be sure to let us know what about it was new for your unit, if anything was, and of course tell us what seemed to work best for everyone too. Even though your article should include your personal experience ("What I enjoyed most was..."), it's important to talk with others before you write so you can be sure to include what was best or newest for the whole unit. It might be something you didn't notice while you were there.





Young Marines ESPRIT

AT ESPRIT, WE NEED YOUR PHOTOS



All photo submissions to the *Esprit* Magazine are encouraged and welcomed. We recommend that you take plenty of photos to document your activities and share them with your fellow Young Marines.

Send us your best photos as JPEG attachments. If you're shooting with a digital camera, a camera of 4 Megapixels or above should be satisfactory.

Here are a few suggestions for improving the quality of photo submissions:



As a general rule, ACTION or ACTIVITY photos are preferred over lining everybody up against a wall for a group photo. Sometimes group photos in the field of journalism are referred to as "grip and grin" photos. It's best to not to show too many people at one time. We also recommend only 3-4 people per shot when you can.

This doesn't mean that you shouldn't take group pictures, but remember that photos of large groups of people aren't necessarily preferred for a national publication, for the simple reason that we seldom have enough room to publish the photo large enough to be able to identify those in the photo.



Get some "action" in your pictures. For example, people talking to each other, shaking hands, participating in an activity, etc. Just think, what makes a better picture, the basketball player shooting a basket or the same player sitting on the bench during a time-out?

Refer to the SLICK guidelines on page 13 for tips and tricks for taking great photos





Young Marines ESPRIT

AT ESPRIT, WE NEED YOUR PHOTOS (continued)



Try not to have everyone lined up and looking directly at the camera. One way to avoid this is to ask your subjects to look over your shoulder.

If you are taking photos with something in the background (i.e., skyline, famous structure, or statue) don't forget what the focus of the photo is: **the people.**

Focus your camera on the people in the picture and get close enough so that you can see them and they are the center of the attention. Move in on your subject and minimize the background.



Have your subjects remove sunglasses. If they are wearing hats, or covers, be sure that you can see their eyes.

Seek out photo opportunities that show emotion, not blank expressions. For example, when talking with a veteran, it's perfectly acceptable to smile or maintain a respectful expression, whatever is appropriate. Be yourself!

Search for good lighting conditions. Since you can't control the weather, if it happens to be a sunny day then just be aware of the shadows in your pictures.



Take pictures with varying frames. This means, take some vertical (also known as "portrait") and some horizontal (also known as "landscape"). Take multiple pictures of the same scene. Then, pick the very best one 1-3 to submit to the *Esprit*. Any additional photos you capture can still be used for various purposes such as unit newsletters, websites, unit brag books, etc.





Young Marines

ESPRIT

PHOTO GUIDELINES

HERE AT ESPRIT, WE'RE GETTING SLICK!

In order to help remember some of the general guidelines for taking good photos, think of the acronym **S.L.I.C.K.**



The SLICK acronym will help you remember some of the general guidelines for taking good photos. Not only for the Esprit magazine but for unit newsletters, websites, etc.

SUBJECT: Make sure that your main subject is at the center of your photo and in focus. Know your subject -- who are they? Write down their first and last names and any ranks or titles. If they are elected officials, obtain that information, also.

LOCATION: Consider what's in the background, and use that to help tell the story. It's not always easy to control what is in the background, but sometimes moving a few feet to one side or another will help make for a better photograph.

IN FOCUS: Check that your photos are in clear focus.

COMPOSITION: Take a few brief moments to group people closer together. Take an additional shot or two, with people standing in a different grouping.

KNOWLEDGE: Know who and what is being photographed. Jot down details, titles, spelling, or contact information. Obtain a business card, website, or e-mail information from the persons in your photograph, so you may contact them with any questions.





ARE THERE ANY TOPICS THAT WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR PUBLICATION?

All submissions are considered, yet some submissions do not make it to publication due to space restrictions and irrelevance to the national scope of the Young Marines organization. Here are some examples of articles that might be best suited for publication in a unit newsletter or website instead of the Young Marine *Esprit*.

- Accomplishments unrelated to the Young Marines program will not be considered. For example, if you have completed a great social studies project in school, and it touches on the history of World War II--that's great, but it's not a newsworthy Young Marines story on a national level.
- After action reports (AAR). While after action reports are a useful tools to measure needs for improvement and provide lessons learned from a unit outing or activity, the *Esprit* magazine is not the appropriate communication venue for AARs. If you can rewrite your AAR as a story, however, then it may qualify as an article.
- Graduation ceremony articles. We agree that Young Marine graduations are special and exciting; yet, these regular events are not newsworthy by themselves. Don't forget to send us your graduation announcements for publication in our listing, though. Include the following in your graduation announcements: unit name (state), graduation date, unit commander's name, honor graduates name (only one honor graduate per recruit training).
- Thank you lists. We agree that it's important to thank your local sponsors and various individuals that make things happen within, or for, your unit. Those are best served in a unit newsletter, unit website or a special event within your unit.
- News articles already printed in your local papers. We are unable to accept publications from media outlets as submissions to the *Esprit* magazine. Instead, consider writing an article in your own words to submit to the *Esprit*.
- Poems, works of fiction, speeches, unsolicited essays, opinion columns or lessons learned articles will not be accepted as a regular feature. This doesn't mean you shouldn't consider writing these types of articles if they are important to you. From time-to-time we may hold special contests to solicit this material. Contest judging criteria will be announced in the *Esprit* magazine each time a contest of this nature occurs so be on the look out for contest announcements.

