



WRITING FOR *ARMCHAIR GENERAL* MAGAZINE

Thank you for your interest in writing for *Armchair General* Magazine.

Our mission is to bring history to life through an interesting, innovative and interactive experience. As a *Chicago Tribune* selection as one of the world's "50 Best" magazines, *Armchair General's* unique editorial approach immerses readers in the *real* military history that has shaped our world and continues to impact the course of human events. We put YOU in command!

The best way to prepare yourself to write for *Armchair General* is to read the articles we've previously published. You should note our style of narrative in the various features and departments as well as our emphasis on telling our readers exciting stories. Here are the articles we most often solicit and their standard word counts:

Articles and Word Count

<u>FEATURES</u>	Word Count
BL - Battlefield Leader	3,500
WF - Walk Where They Fought	3,500
WNG - What Next General?	3,500
SF - Special Feature	3,500
BA - Bonus Article	1,200 -1,500
<u>DEPARTMENTS</u>	Word Count
Spy Wars	900
WTW – Witness to War	900
YC - You Command	3,000 (+ 1,500 Solution)

Articles in the following categories are in immediate demand:

1. **Battlefield Leader** – 3,500 word, in-depth analysis of a battlefield leader, enhanced by photos/images, maps and appropriate sidebars.
 - a. The article answers the question, “What was this leader like and how did he exercise command”? It must tell an interesting story that explains the leader’s life and “what made him tick.” Our readers want to know about the *real* person whose decisions and combat leadership changed history and influenced the course of world events. Make the leader come alive for our readers and make them want to read the article through to the conclusion.
 - b. Battlefield Leader is NOT a “standard” biography. We don't publish the ordinary military history found in other magazines--there are plenty of others that do that. So, don't model your article on what you've been reading in the other military history magazines. Read our previously published articles, note our exciting, innovative approach and write something *interesting*.
 - c. We want to capture our readers' attention from the first paragraph and then hold it throughout the article. Begin with a dramatic example of what made this leader special and why he's worth reading about. Keep in mind the question, “What's the *story*?”

2. **Special Feature** – 3,500 word articles on any military history topic from any era that provide readers with the “inside story” about that topic.
 - a. Topics for Special Feature run the gamut of military history and include ACG's annual update on the current state of the world as well as those taken from a broad range of interesting and compelling subjects that don't easily fit any of our other categories.
 - b. Written in a dramatic narrative, this article is a “behind the scenes” story told with verve and panache that goes far beyond the “standard” recounting of dates and events that too-often passes for military history in other magazines.
 - c. ACG's Special Features truly are “special” in their subjects, approach, narrative and overall presentation of an interesting topic.
 - d. All Special Feature topics **MUST** be closely coordinated with ACG's Managing Editor well beforehand, and a detailed article proposal with outline must accompany each prospective article from potential authors.

- 3. Bonus Articles** – 1,200-1,500 word articles that include various stand-alone subjects as well as such recurring features as our “History’s Mysteries” series.
- a. Due to its shorter length, any Bonus Article must be concise, coherent and exceptionally well-organized. Prospective authors should always keep in mind that the article’s subject must be introduced, analyzed/discussed and significance explained within the restrictions imposed by a short word count. This puts a premium on striving for economy of words used for their maximum impact. [Prospective Author’s Tip: Read something by Ernest Hemingway, particularly his short stories.]
 - b. Bonus articles are hard-hitting expose pieces that feature a fast-paced narrative on a compelling subject that most readers will not have heard about. However, better-known subjects will be considered, if the article takes a fresh approach and/or offers a new perspective on the subject.
 - c. Articles that are simply a re-hash of well-known facts or a dry recounting of dates and unit movements will not be acceptable. Key words to keep in mind are: new; fresh; interesting; insightful; and dramatic.
 - d. Prospective authors who would like to propose a “History’s Mystery” article should concentrate on subjects that feature an unknown aspect on a famous leader, battle or event. Examples of such articles are our previously published “Where’s Adolf?” (about the final disposition of Hitler’s remains) and “Did Wind and Fog Save the American Revolution?” (about the miraculous survival of George Washington’s army after the Battle of New York, 1776).
- 4. Walk Where They Fought** – 3,500 word analysis and modern tour of a historical battle supported by maps and photos/images and including a modern day map of the battlefield tour.
- a. The first half of this article is an analysis of the battle and the concluding half is devoted to a modern day tour of the historical battlefield. This 50-50 “battle to tour” ratio is mandatory, and any articles submitted that are mostly historical battle analysis with a one-page tour stuck on at the end will NOT pass muster.
 - b. The modern tour is the *major focus* of this article, although the write-up of the battle must be accurate, concise, interesting and presented in an exciting manner. Plan on about 8 to 12 tour points. Each tour point must relate to events, etc., mentioned in the battle analysis—preferably, these are major “decision points” that the commanders faced historically or other key points during the battle.

- c. Writers are responsible for providing *all input* for our cartographer to create the modern tour map and the historical battle map. We also require plenty of modern photographs of the tour points.

5. What Next General – 3,500 word “What if?”, counterfactual history article. This feature takes a battlefield commander to a critical decision point (possible courses of action) and then follows each of the courses of action through to each one’s most likely possible outcome. It is supported by maps and photos/images.

- a. The article’s focus is on the dilemma faced by the commander in this battle, i.e. what was the strategic and tactical situation facing the commander, what were the most reasonable options available and what were the advantages and disadvantages of each option?
- b. Plan on *three* courses of action the commander develops, the third and final of which will be the historical course of action that was actually followed by this leader. The courses of action should differ substantially so that none of them are too much like any of the other options.
- c. The introduction and the first two courses of action narrative are written in the second person (ie “you” take action, etc.) and the third, historical course of action is written in the third person (ie “he” took action, etc.).
- d. Each course of action must make tactical and operational sense, i.e. given the situation facing the commander, each of the alternative options must appear as a reasonable course of action. The amount of text devoted to following each course of action through to its logical conclusion should be about equal for all three.

6. Spy Wars – 900 words of a dramatic story of spies, secret weapons, codes & code-breaking, commandos, secret missions and anything about espionage.

- a. This department covers all eras of warfare from ancient times to modern warfare.
- b. We want an exciting story – a “good read” – and not a lot of technical information on weapons and the tools of spy-craft.
- c. Images, photos and/or suggestions for them should accompany the completed article. Our Image Editor will track down the originals based upon author suggestions, etc.

- d. Since the department is limited to 900 words of text, it is important to be concise in order to cover the entire story.

7. Witness to War – 900 words of a dramatic, personal story of combat with photos of the person described in the story.

- a. Specific era of warfare is not as important as getting a really good, exciting combat story.
- b. Photos of the subject are mandatory. We prefer “then” and “now” photographs (eg a WWII-era photo of the subject and one taken recently). Author is responsible for providing images/photos and any other supporting material (e.g. maps, when appropriate).
- c. The 900-word limit must be strictly adhered to and this means the article must be well-composed and tautly written. The main thrust of these articles is the combat story, so biographical information about the individual and other introductory narrative must be kept to the “bare bones.”

8. You Command – 3,000 word Combat Decision Game (CDG) that presents a tactical situation at the company through brigade level. Readers are asked to submit their own solutions on a removable map with space to write their course of action on the back. Winners and honorable mentions are selected by *Armchair General* staff and their names are published along with a follow-up YC Solution article two issues later.

- a. In addition to the 3,000 word You Command, authors are required to submit a You Command Solution of not more than 1,500 words that explains the historical outcome of the battle.
- b. The focus of You Command is a tactical problem that faces a lower-level commander (lieutenant, captain, lieutenant colonel, colonel) and for which he has developed three possible courses of action. One of these courses of action is the historical option. Other options should be reasonable, believable and differ substantially from one another.
- c. The You Command must include several subordinate units (platoons, companies, battalions) which become “playing pieces” for the Combat Decision Game. Readers are asked to arrange the pieces to explain their solutions. As a rule of thumb, there ought to be at least 3 but no more than 6 “playing pieces”.
- d. Text of You Command is written in the first person, as if the commander were speaking to his subordinates and they were

answering. The text of the You Command Solution is written in the third person (ie “he” did this, or took some action).

Always contact us first with your proposal before you start writing to make sure your article will fit our specific department formats and our editorial plans for upcoming issues. **ACG does NOT accept unsolicited manuscripts. Do NOT send in a previously-written article or a completed new article “for consideration,” as we only publish articles that we commission after coordination with the author.**

Footnotes

We do not use footnotes/endnotes in any of our articles. Do not include them in your draft submission. Nonetheless, even though we do not use footnotes, we expect the articles to be well-researched, authoritative accounts based upon the most recent scholarship available on the article’s subject.

Maps and Images (Photos, Art and illustrations)

As you know, photos, images and maps are critical to magazines and we will need your help in creating these for your article. This is how we handle maps and images:

Maps -- send us whatever you have in digital format and we will create the maps. You can send us scans of maps from other books or sources and we will adjust them to make them our own. If you use PowerPoint, you can send us a map and annotate it as you wish to show us various options or possibilities.

Images – Original photos are welcome and can be sent in digital or hard copy format. Photos must be 300 dpi or higher, and as large as you can make them [8x11 is perfect] – but note that the smaller the photo [less than 8x11], the higher our dpi requirements. To include illustrations or images in your article you can use the same process as with the maps. We can have our artists create an original image from almost any image you send us.

Author Compensation and Article Ownership

The amount of compensation we pay for articles is negotiated individually with each prospective author. The contracted payment is made to the author upon publication of the article.

We require all authors to sign a contract for each article we publish. The standard terms of this contract specify that ownership of each article published in *Armchair General* magazine belongs to the magazine and any subsequent re-use in any form by the author requires permission from ACG. Additionally, each contract specifies that ACG is under no obligation to publish any contracted article and we may edit any or all of the article, to include the original title.

Best of Luck and Good Writing!

Once you have decided on which feature you want to write, please send me a detailed outline and we'll discuss this further.

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