

Introduction to the #WhyWeWrite Series

The Forge editors

Many of us never share an idea or thought outside of our circle of colleagues for fear of coming across dim-witted, coming across as a braggart, or the misguided fear that our careers will be negatively impacted by our professional thoughts. Our own personal sea monsters keep us from growing and innovating as a force, and it is about time we wipe them off the map.

Joe Byerly, 'Writing in the Professional Military' ¹

Any institution that relies on professionals for success and seeks to maintain an authentic learning climate for individual growth must require its members to *read* (to gain knowledge and insight), *discuss* (to appreciate opposing views and subject their own to rigorous debate), *investigate* (to learn how to ask good questions and find defensible answers), and *write* (to structure thoughts and articulate them clearly and coherently).

Gregory D. Foster, 'Research, Writing and the Mind of the Strategist' ²

The Forge editors are proud to present our first series, called #WhyWeWrite. The series will showcase some current ADF military writers, with the intention of encouraging others, particularly at the rank of O5 and above, to consolidate their thinking and experience into a written form. The contributions are very honest and open accounts of why officers have chosen to contribute to the discourse on the myriad matters that affect the military profession.

Some of the reasons for 'why we write' include:

- Sharing knowledge and ideas with other professionals, not just limited to other military members.
- Sharing military experiences with wider society, as part of a duty to enhance the understanding of society about the cost of war – in blood and treasure.
- The enjoyment of creating something new and exploring novel ideas.
- The preservation of ideas and hoping to inspire others to inquire further into complex issues related to war.
- Build communication skills and influence.
- Writing as part of the natural process of learning.
- Writing as therapy for frustration and anger, and movement towards understanding and acceptance of being wrong on a particular issue.

Contributors have also offered tips on how to get started, and some insights into how to find the time to write within a busy schedule of work and family life. This includes a discussion of factors that cause people *not* to write, and how to overcome these common stumbling blocks.

The contributions in this current series are just the beginning! This series will be an enduring part of *The Forge*, and we are opening the series to a broader range of contributions. If you want to share 'why you write', send us your contribution: the.forge@defence.gov.au. We will consider submissions from all ranks, military and civilian, and from the international military and national security community.

We hope you enjoy the series, and that it inspires you to put pen to paper on that idea or issue that you want to explore.

¹ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/01/29/writing-in-the-professional-military-i-tried-it-and-i-was-not-attacked-by-sea-monsters/>
² <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/jfq/jq019620.pdf>