

SAIGON TO BAGHDAD: COMPARING COMBAT
CORRESPONDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN VIETNAM AND IRAQ

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Master of Arts

by
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SAIGON TO BAGHDAD: COMPARING COMBAT
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Presented by Terry Ganey

A candidate for the degree of Master of Arts

And hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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This work is dedicated to my wife, Judy.

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Foreword

The seeds for this thesis were planted in 2002 when I began covering the military for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in anticipation of a war in Iraq. Beginning in December, 2002, news assignments took me to Ft. Benning, Ga., Ft. Knox, Ky., and Ft. Campbell, Ky. The Ft. Benning experience was a weeklong training program for journalists who were to be “embedded” with the military in any future operations. The excursion to Ft. Knox was to cover a Marine reserve unit’s familiarization with urban combat. The trip to Ft. Campbell was to report on the deployment preparations of the U.S. Army’s 101st Division.

My experiences accelerated in March, 2003 when U.S. forces were dispatched to Iraq, and I accompanied an engineering unit there assigned to the Army’s 4th Infantry Division. Between April 2 and May 15, I covered a series of Army activities in Iraq as an embedded journalist. In addition, I worked in Baghdad as a reporter not attached to any particular military unit.

Having “come of age” during the Vietnam War and as someone who paid close attention to it as a news consumer, I frequently wondered how my coverage experiences of the military in Iraq compared with that of colleagues of an earlier generation. The Vietnam War was an “uncensored war,” and seemed to have been covered like no other. This study helped confirm in my own mind how Vietnam War coverage differed from that in Iraq.

Chapter 1: The Military and the Messengers

Introduction

In the late fall of 2002 the United States military and the media, broadcasters, print reporters and photographers, held a series of joint, taxpayer-financed working sessions in an attempt to become reacquainted. For decades, the military and media had had a love-hate relationship particularly when the U.S. was at war. This relationship had shifted from what had been total open access for the media during the Vietnam War to a state of strict information control and news management during the war in the Persian Gulf. Now, as another war against Iraq loomed on the horizon, the military and the media were reassessing their positions. The military wanted coverage on its terms. The media wanted freedom of movement and access to information. This tension always exists, especially during wartime.

When the two institutions meet during conflict, clashes are inevitable. The press wants freedom, and the military wants control. Despite the disputes of the past, leaders in each institution understand the importance of the other. (Aukofer & Lawrence, 1995, p. vii)

In late 2002, it was apparent that there would be another war with Iraq. The military and the media concluded that if they were to work together, they needed to know each other better. It was within that context that in December, 60 radio, television, newspaper and magazine journalists participated in a weeklong, Pentagon-sponsored training session at the U.S. Army Infantry School at Ft. Benning, Ga. The journalists

were preparing to cover the military through its new “embedded” program in which journalists reporting on combat operations would live with and depend upon those they were covering. For nearly all of the reporters, this was their first experience with the military. (Ganey, 2002) During one training exercise, the journalists donned protective suits designed to guard against chemical and biological attacks. They put on gas masks and entered a cinder-block building filled with an airborne skin and eye irritant not unlike tear gas. Once inside the chamber, each journalist was required to remove his or her mask to get the full effect of the gas.

As they emerged from the chamber, many were clearly suffering from the effects of the exposure. Some stumbled blindly. Others struggled for breath. All had tears streaming from their eyes. For news photographers covering the event it was a great image-making opportunity. Michael Gordon, a *New York Times* reporter, was photographed with his eyes closed and his hands groping ahead as if blindly trying to find his way. But when Gordon realized he was going to be pictured in a local newspaper, he asked the photographer to keep his identity out of the photo caption. Gordon didn’t want it known, either in the Ft. Benning area or internationally should the photo get wider distribution, that he might be an embedded journalist. Some reporters were uncomfortable with the idea that they might appear dressed as soldiers or training with them. Some journalists feared being identified as part of the military. (M. Gordon, interview, Dec. 18, 2002)

This anecdote reflects part of the controversy surrounding the military-media embedding program. In that system, about 600 journalists were placed with front-line and rear-echelon military units for the Iraq War. In return for abiding by a set of rules that

prohibited the release of some kinds of information, journalists were given access to the soldiers, Marines, airmen and sailors they were covering. The military picked up the cost of transporting, feeding, housing and protecting a reporter for as long as he or she remained with a unit. Reporters attached to a particular unit could not move to another. Once a reporter left the unit, he or she could not return. (Task Force Iron Horse, 2003)

The embed program became the latest manifestation of the military-media relationship, an on-again, off-again pairing that has been used to keep the American people apprised of information when their military is in combat.

Since the start of the war in Iraq in March, 2003, journalists who have covered it have turned in thousands of reports on the military's activities. Initially some hailed the result as a stunning success for the American military, and a victory for a public anxious to know about its fighting men and women. The *Washington Post's* Peter Baker said the embedding experience was "a good thing, something we had been advocating since Vietnam." (Strupp, 2005, p. 32) Journalists and their corporate leadership believed the coverage brought the war home to America and was a much better alternative to the lockout that had occurred during the Persian Gulf War. "The Gulf War was sort of a fiasco from the point of view of coverage because basically the Pentagon denied access most of the time," said Ted Koppel, a network broadcast journalist. (Borjesson, 2005, p. 39)

Nevertheless, there was debate among journalists and the news-consuming public about the embedding program; especially whether the journalists covering the military under these circumstances could be truly independent. This was not the first time that journalist-military bonding had been called into question.

Reporters were “bound to be grateful,” wrote Richard West, a British free lance journalist wrote about the military-journalist relationship, and feel a “natural sympathy” for the “long-suffering” American soldiers. “In consequence, there is a danger of their becoming simply a part of the military propaganda machine.” (Knightley, 1973, p. 382)

West was talking about a war that occurred more than 35 years before the Iraq conflict. During the Vietnam War, in an attempt to counter the views of the Saigon-based press corps and to swing American public opinion to support the war, the military ferried reporters from the United States to the Southeast Asian war zone, where they were given a heavy dose of U.S. military hospitality. That practice prompted West’s remark that the good treatment could overwhelm a journalist’s independent judgment. West’s statement is presented here to show that what happened in Iraq may be nothing new. The practice, call it hospitality or call it embedding, has been questioned before. West’s remark also raised a question about why the Pentagon believed it necessary to bring in other reporters to dispute what was being reported by journalists in Saigon about the Vietnam War.

The Question Now

When measured against the tight control of the media during the Persian Gulf War, the access and mobility that has been accorded journalists covering Iraq have been judged as positive results for the news-consuming public. While reporters covering the Persian Gulf War were kept from the battlefield and forced to rely on “pool” reports, journalists in Iraq can be out with the troops covering what they do. But if one probes further into history and observes how the Vietnam War was covered, it seems that the

current embedding experience in Iraq is a far cry from a system that allowed journalists the access necessary to give readers and viewers the full measure of what's happening on the battlefield.

This historical comparative study will measure the difference between Vietnam and Iraq by comparing the methods, observations and experiences of journalists who covered the Vietnam War with those of journalists assigned to report on the conflict in Iraq. If there are differences, the study will explore what possible effects those differences may have had on the journalists' performances. To the extent that there are similarities, they will be noted as well. The study will be made by examining and comparing responses to questions posed to the two separate groups. Among those general questions are: Are journalists who depend on the military for food, shelter, transportation, protection and most importantly for information, able to cover military activities in a totally unbiased manner? If the reporters say they remain objective, are their stories inherently one-sided since they are getting only part of the story by focusing coverage on military activities rather than their effects on civilians? Were the rules for covering war in Vietnam different compared with Iraq? Do technological improvements in the delivery of news serve to improve the coverage of conflict? Are journalists in greater danger now than in previous wars? What system of coverage serves the public best?

The comparison between Iraq War and Vietnam War coverage is proposed because it is the most recent sustained U.S. conflict in which a large number of military people were committed to battle over a long period of time. While not an "apples to apples" measurement, the two conflicts share many similarities. The current Iraq conflict is comparable with Vietnam since it is the largest-scale, sustained U.S. military operation

since the Vietnam War. The length of the conflict, now nearly five years, provides an appropriate period for study. Intervening conflicts—invasions of Panama, Grenada and the Persian Gulf War—were of shorter duration, resulted in fewer casualties and generated less sustained political controversy.

A side-by-side review of the coverage of Iraq and Vietnam is appropriate because the numbers of journalists killed in each country are similar. During the 10-year period of the Vietnam War, 1965-1975, 71 television, photo and print journalists from 14 countries were killed: 33 in Vietnam, 34 in Cambodia and four in Laos. (Pyle, 2004) Between the March, 2003 invasion of Iraq and June 30, 2007, 124 journalists have been killed in Iraq. (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2007)

The conflicts in Vietnam and Iraq also share the questionable circumstances of how they began. Alleged aggression by North Vietnamese gunboats on U.S. destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin in 1964 prompted the escalation of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. But the government controlled access to that information and journalists had no details of what actually happened. (Hallin, 1986, p. 20) Similarly, reports of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq propelled public opinion toward military involvement in that country, although there was no evidence the weapons were there and no weapons were ever found.

The logic for comparing Vietnam and Iraq coverage can also be found in the officially stated reasons for why our military went to both places: to preserve and extend democracy. In the mid-1960s, President John Kennedy said the U.S. was in Vietnam to preserve democracy and to prevent the spread of Communism. (Borjesson, 2005. p. 455) In 2005, President George Bush said the U.S. was in Iraq to bring democracy to the Middle East and to fight terrorism. (Bush, 2005)

An examination of Iraq War coverage against the background of what happened in Vietnam is a valuable to the extent that it measure how clearly the public is informed about war. War is most costly in human lives and real property. And waging war is the most serious action one nation can undertake against another. Research that probes the issue of how well a nation is informed about the results of its decision to resort to violence is most crucial for any democracy. Thus, everyone should be concerned about how well journalists do their jobs when it comes to covering war. Thoughtful journalism about the costly experience of war provides the context necessary for sober reflection about whether such violence is truly necessary. And since journalistic coverage of war helps shape public opinion about it, a detailed and careful examination of that coverage is an abiding requirement for knowing whether a democracy has been well served by its messengers. On a broader scale, since history often gets its first clues about major events from journalists, it's important to know how those journalists are performing to insure that the initial record of civilization is accurate.

Comparing journalistic experiences in Vietnam and Iraq also helps determine whether there have been any changes in combat correspondence over the past 40 years. Said another way, if Vietnam was the baseline for reporting truth, perhaps Iraq will show us how far we've come, if at all, from there. This is an important area of inquiry since it could show whether any journalistic lessons emerged from the Vietnam experience and whether they are now being applied to coverage in Iraq. Certainly the technological methods for collecting and disseminating the news have improved between the two wars. In addition, there are new information outlets, namely cable television and the Internet, to help people learn about what's happening. Journalistic coverage has become more global,

as well, with the addition of Arab-language satellite outlets like Al-Jazeera. A deeper examination could measure whether the technological improvements in communications and the addition of new forums have led to an improvement in the quality of the content.

Finally, a comparison of this type adds significantly to the body of knowledge about journalism history in general and combat correspondence in particular. While a great deal of material has been assembled about Vietnam coverage, few correspondents have been debriefed in such a way as to relate their experiences to the context of the current Iraq conflict. Similarly, the volume of the literature that contrasts the Iraq coverage with that of Vietnam is relatively modest. This comparison may also be useful in shedding light on the life-and-death issue of why journalists themselves appear to have become targets in Iraq while those who died covering the conflict in Vietnam were killed in the happenstance of combat. Perhaps it will show that in a modern conflict against a militant insurgency “embedded” journalists are viewed as just another arm of the invader. If that’s the case, perhaps Michael Gordon’s misgivings about being photographed during military training were very legitimate concerns.

Before Vietnam

War, measured in the cost of lives and material, is the most resource-consuming, awesome and expensive activity that a society can undertake. Thus, there is a tremendous amount of interest and comment on the business of reporting the combat that accompanies war. “For journalists, war has always been the most urgent of stories. Human fate and the fortunes of nations hang in the balance.” (Evans, 2003. p. 7) It also

sells newspapers and attracts viewers. Phillip Knightley has written that “newspaper circulation soared and incomes increased” during war coverage. (Knightley, 1973, p. 20)

As far as the U.S. press is concerned, journalists have been accompanying armies and reporting what happened on the battlefield since the Mexican War in 1846. George Wilkins Kendall of the *New Orleans Picayune* and James Forrester of the *Delta* covered American campaigns on the Rio Grande. (Furneau, 1964, p. 32) The advent of mass media, improvements in transportation and increases in the speed of communication with the telegraph evolved contemporaneously with the coming of the Civil War. That war attracted the likes of William Russell, a special correspondent of the *Times* of London, who is said to be “the greatest war correspondent of all time,” and a man who almost single-handedly “invented his art.” (Hudson, 1995, p. xi) But many of the reporters were described as “ignorant, dishonest and unethical” who filed dispatches that were “frequently inaccurate, often invented, partisan and inflammatory.” (Knightley, 1973, p. 21)

Newspapers had to be content with printing reporters’ accounts and relying on artists to sketch battlefield scenes. At the time newspapers lacked the technology to reproduce photographs like those produced by Mathew Brady and his assistant, Alexander Gardner. In what was to be the first of many such charges against photographers in future wars, Brady and Gardner were accused of manipulating objects and moving bodies on the battlefield to make photographs of battle scenes more dramatic. (Evans, 2003, p. 33)

The coverage of the Civil War displayed a media-military conundrum that continued to a greater or lesser extent in all subsequent conflicts. “The newspapers

demanded to know the truth; the military declared that disclosure of true facts could assist the enemy and they banned their publication.” (Furieux, 1964, p. 32) The news media and the military have been arguing over access and control issues ever since.

For the reporters, there were dangers involved in covering combat. The fact that lives could be lost in retrieving war news from even small skirmishes was made evident in 1876 when Mark Kellogg, a 43-year-old reporter for the *Bismarck Tribune*, lost his life while covering Gen. George Custer’s 7th Cavalry battle with Sioux Indians in Montana. Kellogg went along to provide a first-person account of the battle and promised he would be in “at the death” which turned out to be his own. (Evans, 2003, p. 19)

Knightley writes that the Spanish-American War of 1898 was “an ideal campaign” from a correspondent’s point of view and that 200 turned up to cover it at the start. But after the American naval victory at Santiago, only nine reporters remained on the assignment. (Knightley, 1973, p. 56)

During World War I, 90 American correspondents were in Europe, searching for ways to cover a bloody conflict that covered two fronts. Many found the censorship rules and the outright prohibition against coverage to be too disgusting to remain. (Knightley, 1973, p. 116)

In World War I, censorship was used to conceal that American doughboys suffered because of chronic shortages of equipment, and that men returning from the front lines in the winter of 1917-18 were dying from pneumonia for want of dry clothing and warm housing. Heywood Broun returned home to the *New York World* office to reveal the equipment scandal. By breaking his correspondent’s pledge to submit to censorship cost him his accreditation and his paper a fine of \$10,000. (Evans, 2003, p.67)

During World War II censorship and military controls on the media were accepted without question because, according to Evans, “a common will” had formed against “an indisputable evil.” (Evans, 2003, p. 46) Reporters were on the side of the military and wore military uniforms. Their accounts took the side of the troops. The work of Ernie Pyle, America’s best-known correspondent of World War II, has often been held up as a model for reporters to match in future wars. Pyle, an embedded reporter of his time, accompanied soldiers in North Africa, Italy and Normandy, and reported from the front lines with personal stories of soldiers and their lives. He was killed by Japanese gunfire on a Pacific island in 1945. Several sources interviewed for this thesis mentioned Pyle as their ideal, spiritual mentor and hero. Sig Christenson, a reporter for the *San Antonio Express-News*, said that as he sometimes conducted interviews while on assignment in the Iraq War, he sensed that Pyle’s spirit was at his side. (S. Christenson, interview, Oct. 28, 2006)

World War II was remarkable for the fact that more women correspondents than ever had joined in the war coverage. There were technical innovations as well. Radio enabled reporters to broadcast first-person accounts that brought an immediacy and drama to the coverage never before experienced. During World War II for the first time, reporters went with soldiers on operations and delivered compelling combat accounts for radio audiences. Broadcast journalists became part of the story--a development that would be repeated later in Vietnam and Iraq.

Edward R. Murrow, that war’s most famous broadcast journalist, filed more than 500 reports. Like Pyle, Murrow arguably set the standard for broadcast reporters up to and including the Iraq War. Murrow went further than merely being an observer of

events. He became emotionally engaged in the American cause. Murrow assumed the point of view of a combatant during a bombing mission and became one with the subjects of his coverage. (Godfrey, 1993)

Murrow later used the medium of television to bring the Korean War into American living rooms. A “See It Now” broadcast in 1952 entitled “Christmas in Korea” made television history when it became the first TV combat report. (Kendrick, 1969, p. 352) Korean War coverage was also notable by the fact that it marked the first time that a woman won a Pulitzer Prize for stories about combat. Marguerite Higgins of the *New York Herald-Tribune*, shared in the prize with fellow correspondents Keyes Beech, Homer Bigart and three others. Higgins also received an Overseas Press Club citation for “courage, integrity and enterprise.” (Bartimus, 2001) The rules for covering the Korean War were similar to those applied during World War II, according to George McArthur, an Associated Press correspondent. “In Korea, of course, it was formal censorship; not strict by any manner or means, but it was formal censorship, and it was primarily concerned with troop movements and what the military would call operational matters.” (G. McArthur, interview, Oct. 7, 2006)

The next major conflict would witness substantial changes in media-military relations. There would be no censorship at all. Reporters were able to cover any story they wanted. But the reasons for the conflict were less certain; the military policy goals less clear and the cause less sure. Reporters covering the conflict were more willing to question the military.

Chapter 2: Vietnam to Iraq

The Vietnam Experience

Not all of the literature related to the Vietnam War coverage experience can be recounted here. Still, a thorough examination of much of the literature is crucial to informing the comparisons made in this thesis. The conflict in Vietnam challenged journalists as never before to balance their notions of patriotism, defined as supporting the war effort, with the compelling desire to report the truth. Print and broadcast journalists believe they reported the Vietnam War for what it was, but the media were sometimes blamed for the U.S. defeat. Melvin Laird, defense secretary from 1968 to 1972, said he had heard this opinion from military officers but that he believed the opinion was incorrect. (Aukofer & Lawrence, 1995, p. 40) Certainly, the access to the war that enabled reporters to recount what was actually happening helped undermine public support for the war. For example, in August, 1965 Morley Safer and a CBS news crew accompanying a Marine patrol were shocked to see Marines setting fire to huts in a village while Vietnamese peasants cowered in fear or begged for their homes to be spared. “Americans were accustomed to viewing their soldiers as liberators, not avengers.” (Neu, 2000, p. 19) MacDonald reports the Marines believed Safer gave them a “raw deal,” because U.S. helicopters equipped with loudspeakers had flown over the village the day before warning people in their own language to vacate the area. The Marines had been taking sniper fire from the village. Safer had failed to report both points. (MacDonald, 1973, p. 112)

Future U.S. presidents, when contemplating using military power for political purposes, took the Vietnam experience into account and made sure that media access would be more carefully controlled the next time. This attitude has affected the way the U.S. government has dealt with the media during wartime ever since.

Some contemporary commentators attempt to draw parallels between what's happening now in Iraq with what happened in Vietnam. Some similarities are evident. During the war with Iraq, the U.S. attacked a foe weakened by years of sanctions that followed a disastrous conflict in the Persian Gulf War. When the U.S. moved into Vietnam, it was weary of a long battle that had overthrown French colonial rule. Guerrillas in Vietnam were supplied by neighbors in China and it appears that insurgents in Iraq are getting help from Iran and perhaps Syria. One major difference between the two conflicts, however, is that the U.S. faced an invading, organized opponent in the North Vietnamese Army. No similar regular army has taken the field against U.S. forces in Iraq. Still, the smoldering insurgent conflict there continues to take American lives. Another distinct difference in the conduct of the two wars is that while many of the soldiers who went to war in Vietnam were drafted, all of those serving in Iraq are volunteers.

Media coverage of the Vietnam War went through three distinct phases. The first phase of "benign neglect" covered the period beginning with the French withdrawal in 1954 until the Buddhist crisis of 1963. The second phase covered the period surrounding the 1963 overthrow of the Diem regime. The third phase marked a period of disillusionment that began with the Tet offensive in 1968. (Klein, 1990, p. 47) As will be demonstrated later, the coverage of the Iraq War has gone through phases as well.

In Vietnam, the U.S. media had ready access to the battlefield as in no war ever before. As Richard Pyle of the Associated Press has written, “There was no censorship; journalists based in Saigon operated under self-policing rules that posed no serious impediment to coverage, and, except in the most egregious cases, carried minimal penalties for violations.” (Pyle & Faas, 2003, p. 14)

There was consideration of wartime censorship in Vietnam. Gen. Earle G. Wheeler, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, raised that possibility early in the war. And U.S. Rep. Richard Ichord, D-Mo, warned in a speech on the House floor on March 17, 1966 that said if the news media did not exert self-restraint “then we must be prepared to consider some form of wartime news censorship, which would include a more stringent policy toward accreditation of correspondents, a limitation in access to battle zones, and a scrutiny of the copy filed.” (MacDonald, 1973, p. 31)

While the rules were lax, there were difficulties in getting a story out. Peter Braestrup, chief of the *Washington Post’s* Saigon bureau, has written that no American reporter spoke Vietnamese and that getting a story back to the U.S. sometimes could take 72 hours or more. (Braestrup, 1978, p. 11 & 21) For television, it was especially difficult. “Delays of up to 48 hours might elapse between the filming of events in Vietnam and the film’s broadcasting.” (Braestrup, 1978, p. 38) CBS’ Morley Safer said:

There were no rules, no censorship. The only censorship was an understanding that you did not report casualties until next of kin were notified, or operations or troop movements until contact had been made. Of course, the physical business of getting a story back was much different. There were no satellite phones. There were no satellites. You’d have the best story in the world and it could take four days to get it out, rather than four minutes like today. (Romano, 2006)

Most of the film never made the evening news. “TV film editors in the states used only a fraction of the footage we sent them, usually 10 percent of less,” wrote John Laurence, a CBS correspondent who was in Vietnam from 1965 to 1970. (Laurence, 2002, p. 33)

Noting the technological evolutions that were taking place at the time, Pyle wrote that Vietnam was a war of transition for journalists.

It was the last one covered with the old-fashioned tools—typewriters, dial-up phones, radio teletype circuits, photo darkroom; the first one in which television was a presence and the news was relayed globally by satellite, although CNN broadcasting live from the scene was still two decades away. The TV networks spent staggering sums of money on war coverage, air-shipping film—not yet videotape—to Hong Kong and Tokyo for transmission; the world’s first living-room war was at least 18 hours old by the time it reached television screens in the states. (Pyle and Faas, 2003, p. 72)

But if the technology was still slow, the access was unmatched. “Uninhibited by censorship and free to venture wherever their courage or their competitiveness took them, photographers covering the South Vietnamese and American side of the war compiled a visual record that is unprecedented for its breadth and candor.” (Mills, 1983, preface)

And unlike previous wars in which the journalists generally supported the American role, some reporters in Saigon had doubts about the U.S. involvement, or whether they were getting the straight story about what was happening. These questions sometimes underlined a skeptical attitude about U.S. pronouncements and led to direct challenges of military men by the correspondents. David Halberstam wrote that when he arrived in Saigon as a reporter for the *New York Times* in 1962, he found the relationship between the American mission there and the press “quite different” from that in the rest of the

world. “In Vietnam there was a sharp and unfortunate polarization of the press reporting on the one hand and the official position on the other.” (Halberstam, 1964, p. 27)

The access the news media had to the war, the lack of censorship, and the challenging view reporters applied to the government’s accounts brought a reality to the coverage never seen before or since. The *Army Officer’s Information Guide* in 1968 said that to be effective, the Army could not ignore public opinion and must present the Army’s story in a straightforward manner and let the facts speak for themselves. The manual noted that if given “straight facts” the average reporter would try to present an “unbiased account.” But the manual also said that there could be problems in overseas areas and that the information officers “must work doubly hard to make the facts of a story easy for the reporter to gather, thus enhancing a reputation for accuracy and full disclosure.” (Department of the Army, 1968, p. 2-1 & 3-1) Some Army information officers took these words to heart and did their best to get the reporters to where the facts would speak for themselves.

In Vietnam, the military used its Saigon briefings to keep reporters informed. They became known as the “Five o’clock Follies,” and many believed they were designed to “put a positive spin on information.” (Sharkey, 2001) According to Pyle, a former AP bureau chief in Saigon, the briefings sometimes turned into shouting matches in which reporters demanded information to which they believed they were entitled. But Pyle wrote there was no “group agenda.” Quoting one former commander of the public affairs office for the Military Assistance Command-Vietnam, Pyle wrote that “the military view of the press corps was one of ‘grudging respect,’ acknowledging that its members also ‘were volunteers, courageous and intelligent,’ though inclined to

exaggerate the failures and misdeeds of U.S. and South Vietnamese forces while ignoring those of the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong.” (Pyle and Faas, 2003, p. 85)

The access that reporters had to troops in the battlefield supplied them with information that enabled them to question or even discount what the officers were saying at the “Five o’clock Follies.” Reporters were able to interview front line commanders—captains and majors—as well as privates fighting the battles. “In Vietnam, the sources that made them so angry were overwhelmingly military,” wrote R.W. Apple Jr. of the *New York Times*. “They just told us what they saw with their eyes, not what had been filtered through eight levels of command.” (Aukofer & Lawrence, 1995, p. 89). The reports sent back home influenced public opinion about the war. After the 1968 Tet offensive, CBS news anchor Walter Cronkite reported the war had bogged down, prompting President Lyndon Johnson to say, “If I’ve lost Cronkite, I’ve lost Middle America.” (Allan, 2003, p. 140)

Access to the field, the freedom to report without censorship and the ability to freely quote front line troops delivered a level of candid combat correspondence that is unmatched in American history.

“Rarely had such a small group of relatively young reporters attained such influence,” wrote William Prochnau about the early years of Vietnam War coverage. “They had exposed the government’s lies and cast light on its ineptitude, two of the most fundamental functions of their craft.” (Prochnau, 1995, p. 483)

Grenada, Panama and the Persian Gulf War

The notion that the media lost the Vietnam War played a major role in how the military dealt with the press in subsequent combat operations. The American people in the future would be spared the ugliness of war. Future war coverage would be marked by press control that had the effect of reducing the number of images of bloodshed. Jacqueline Sharkey writes that the new model combined “pre-censorship—preventing reporters from reaching the field—with other news management techniques that allowed the government to control content and spin.” (Sharkey, 2001) The first opportunity came in October, 1983 when U.S. forces invaded the Caribbean island nation of Grenada under the pretense of stopping a Communist takeover. Defense Secretary Casper Weinberger decided that the press would not be allowed to witness the invasion. No reporters were permitted to accompany American troops. Some who tried to get there by boat were intercepted by the U.S. Navy. (Seib, 2004, p. 45) Those who managed to make it found that their telecommunications were jammed so they couldn’t get their stories out. After four days, a group of reporters was allowed in. The information that was delivered during the critical early hours of the invasion came from official pronouncements from Washington, D.C. The invasion was viewed with popularity in the U.S., while European newspaper coverage was skeptical. (Servaes, 1991)

The U.S. invasion of Panama in December, 1989 provided another example of media control. It also provides a context for the Iraq War in the sense that the invasion was opposed by the United Nations and Latin American countries. The explanation for the war was to oust President Manuel Noriega and to protect U.S. citizens in the Canal

Zone who were said to be at risk. When the helicopters brought in the invading troops, journalists were not there to describe what happened. A group of pool reporters was sequestered at a military base and did no reporting. A large number of other journalists arrived and were kept at a nearby air base where there were two telephones for 850 journalists. (Seib, 2004, p. 46)

Studies of press coverage of the Panama invasion show the tight control had the desired effect. Government spokesmen set the discussion agenda about the invasion. (Dickson, 1994) Because the press and official public information officers often work together, the press became an official outlet for government pronouncements. Mainstream news magazines like *Newsweek* and *Time* offered little opposition to the invasion and for a discerning reader to get an opposing viewpoint, alternative publications like *The Nation* would have to provide it. (Gutierrez-Villalobos, Hertog et al, 1994)

The Pentagon had experienced spectacular success in Grenada, first by creating a pool of reporters and then by sending it to the island too late, and in Panama by virtually imprisoning the pool on an army base. In both cases, reporters missed the fighting entirely, and the American public was treated to antiseptic military victories minus any scenes of killing, destruction, or incompetence. (MacArthur, 1992, p. 32)

The success of the tightly controlled flow of information in Grenada and Panama convinced the Pentagon that it was in the military's best interest to carefully manage news coverage with censorship and manipulation. That became apparent in 1990 after Iraq invaded Kuwait and the U.S. began building up forces in neighboring Saudi Arabia.

Certain that a hostile media had contributed to the failure in Vietnam and concluding that war was too important to be left to the journalists, the military, with the cooperation of civilian authorities, muzzled the press. Access to the battlefield was strictly limited. All dispatches had to be submitted to military censors in Washington and in the field. To hide from the public the cost of the war, the military even restricted coverage of the return to the United States of the bodies of those killed in action. (Herring, 2000, p. 76)

From the beginning of the Persian Gulf War it was clear that the goal was to freeze out the media logistically and substantively from what was going on.

From the moment Bush committed troops to Saudi Arabia on August 7, the Administration never intended to allow the press to cover a war in the Persian Gulf in any real sense, and it intended to tightly manage what coverage it would permit. (MacArthur, 1992, p. 5)

Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams later said the Persian Gulf War coverage was the best ever. But combat pool correspondents never saw any battles, they wrote dispatches that never got back to their news organizations, and military officers controlled their every movement. (Hanson, 1991) Because the media had no images from the field, television especially relied on experts in studios to discuss what they could not see. Because of which “experts” were selected, the resemblance of an arms’ length relationship between the media and the military was lost. Retired generals sat side-by-side with television anchor hosts to describe maneuvers. One study showed that media producers had a bias against experienced university professors as experts and instead relied on former government officials, especially retired military leaders or “think-tank” experts. The study pointed out that the successful think-tank analyst is usually on friendly terms with those who control the American political establishment. (Steele, 1995)

Denied battlefield coverage, many of the images that readers and viewers saw were pictures of military hardware like stealth bombers and Abrams tanks, images that did little to convey the reality of war. A study of three major weekly news magazines showed that for every picture of actual combat, the newsmagazines printed nine non-combat photographs of American military hardware. (Griffin & Lee, 1995) Little was displayed about the civilian deaths this hardware caused. And a comprehensive number of Iraqi casualties was never reported. (Katz, 1992)

The military acted as the spigot of war information. Most of the “reporting” that took place occurred during military-supplied hotel ballroom briefings in Saudi Arabia. The briefings featured videos of precision-guided “smart bombs” devastating targets. “The Pentagon presented sanitized images of a new kind of high-tech war between machines, not men.” (Mowlana, Gerbner et al, 1992, p. 10) Studies showed that under this system Cable News Network became the prime TV news source during the Persian Gulf War. (Zelizer, 1992) Another study showed that those who read newspapers were more aware of the fact that the U.S. military maintained control over reporters through a pool system. (Pan, Ostman et al, 1994) Those who relied more on television than newspapers for information about the war were less informed about it, according to another study. (Lo, 1994)

Not surprisingly, the war was reported the way military people wanted. “It’s humiliating to look back at what we wrote during the war,” a Canadian journalist later lamented. “We were a propaganda arm of our governments.” (Bell & Webb, 1998, p. 164)

The Persian Gulf War marked the century's first major conflict where the policy was to confine reporters to escorted pools that sharply curtailed how they could talk to the troops. The people back home saw almost nothing of the military in action, and even many of the troops wished the cameras had recorded them at the gates of Basra. Hedrick Smith, Moscow bureau chief for the *New York Times* during the 1970s, wrote that American reporters "protested that they were being forced to work under similar or worse conditions than those my compatriots and I had known in Moscow." (Smith, 1992, p. xiii)

The complaint expressed by many journalists about the combat pool system was that the denial of access was worse than censorship because it meant that there were stories that could never be told, whereas if a reporter is given access—even if his or her work is subjected to censorship at the time—the story can eventually be told. (Aukofer & Lawrence, 1995, p. 17)

Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams later testified before the U.S. Senate Governmental Affairs Committee that there were examples in the Gulf War in which military officials needlessly delayed the release of information. And he said some reporters were denied interviews because military officials regarded their coverage as unfavorable. Malcolm Browne, who won the Pulitzer Prize for Vietnam coverage while he was the AP bureau chief in Saigon, covered the Persian Gulf War for the *New York Times*. He told the same committee that the pool system that existed during the Gulf War turned reporters into "unpaid employees of the Department of Defense." (Berke, 1991)

Chris Hedges of the *New York Times* summed up his Persian Gulf War experience this way:

I was told to sign a paper that said I would abide by the severe restrictions placed on the press by the U.S. military. The restrictions authorized "pool reporters" to be escorted by the military on field trips. The rest of the press would sit

in hotel rooms and rewrite the bland copy filed by the pool or use pool video and photos. This was an agreement I violated the next morning when I went into the field without authorization. The rest of the war, during which I spent more than half my time dodging military police and trying to talk my way into units, was a forlorn and lonely struggle against the heavy press control. (Hedges, 2002, p. 142)

The Iraq War

The evolution of coverage from the Vietnam War to the Persian Gulf War helped form a basis for the way the media would be allowed to report on Iraq. Some of the military leaders who became the generals had been soldiers in training at the time of the Vietnam War. Later they witnessed what effect the controls had on covering the Persian Gulf War. While one approach kept journalists from conveying the stark realities of war, this approach also left the public in the dark about whatever positive story the military had to tell about itself. Some soldiers were unhappy about the fact that their achievements on the ground during the Persian Gulf War were not reported to the American people. The military wanted that story told to the extent that it displayed positive feelings toward the military. Middle ground was sought between the free and open access of Vietnam and the tight media control of the first Persian Gulf War.

In the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War, individual journalists and news organizations protested the restrictions, complained to the Pentagon, to the White House and Congress. On Jan. 10, 1991, *Nation Magazine* sued the U.S. Department of Defense claiming its pool restrictions violated the Constitution, infringing on the magazine's news

gathering privileges guaranteed by the First Amendment. A federal judge found the case was moot. The news media's frustrating experience in the Persian Gulf War encouraged news agency executives to lobby for a system of access that evolved into the "embedded" journalists program during the Iraq War. Attacks on the World Trade Center and on the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001 produced revolutionary changes in American foreign policy and public opinion about national security. For some, it also seemed to change the notion that journalism should be detached and objective. The unbiased approach evolved into a feeling that "we're all in this together" producing a more participatory mode of reporting. No longer were journalists viewed as "critical outsiders." (Cali, 2002) If Sept. 11 really was America's new Pearl Harbor, the idea that journalists could take America's side as Murrow and other reporters did during World War II, seemed more acceptable.

In October, 2001, the U.S. launched a war against the Taliban in Afghanistan and hunted for Osama Ben Laden. It was the opening response of the "war on terror." Beginning in the fall of 2001, journalists crowded into Kabul and booked the Intercontinental Hotel solid until after the Taliban fell. The coverage of Afghanistan helped define what happened later in Iraq. New technology was demonstrated there, with satellite telephones and digital photography creating real-time coverage. (Seib, 2004, p. 46) In addition, Al-Jazeera, the Arab language cable news service, presented reports that could be seen as a challenge to U.S. military pronouncements. While the war in Afghanistan would soon be eclipsed by events in Iraq, the military-press experience there affected how coverage was handled in Iraq. (Robertson, 2003)

The groundwork for the "embedded" reporting system was laid during the Afghanistan conflict. Schechter writes that there were clashes between journalists who

wanted access to the Afghan War story on the ground and military units who physically threatened media representatives. The Pentagon agreed to an experimental “embed” program during Operation Mountain Lion and Operation Anaconda.

It gave the media access to a military campaign that had kept the press at a distance and that had fueled hostility against the administration. The experiment worked. The media could become eyewitnesses to the action while the government could count on far more supportive coverage as journalists and soldiers bonded under fire. (Schechter, 2004, p. 27)

Broadcast executives and newspaper publishers lobbied the Pentagon for access to cover the U.S. “war on terror.” A nation at war is the biggest of stories. Nothing builds circulation or attracts viewers like a war. If the U.S. was to go to war, the media wanted a front row seat. “As war with Iraq was drawing closer, the Pentagon faced a press corps that was determined not to be muscled as it had been during the Gulf War.” (Seib, 2004, p. 51) The Pentagon agreed to allow greater access provided journalists abided by rules such as nondisclosure of operational plans, precise locations of military units, and the identities of casualties until there had been notification of next-of-kin. One reason Pentagon planners agreed to provide the access was the fact that the American media provided a perspective that could counter-balance reports by news organizations like Al-Jazeera, which had played a leading role in coverage of the U.S. war against Afghanistan. “Arabs in the Middle East and scattered around the world increasingly turned to Al-Jazeera.” (Seib, 2004, p. 11)

The sheer volume of frontline footage from embeds was designed to avoid any news vacuum into which less favorable pieces or analysis or counter-responses from the Iraqi regime might seep. The second aspect of the vast embedding exercise involved providing positive images of U.S. troops. (Lewis, 2006. p. 41)

The journalists who would participate in the “embedded” program depended mostly on military officers and enlisted personnel for the news information they would report. Journalists’ reliance on official government sources for information is common practice, especially in Washington, D.C. In cases of national security, reporters rely almost exclusively on official pronouncements sometimes to the jeopardy of good journalism. (Hallin, Manoff et al, 1993) In the case of the embedded reporters, they would rely heavily on military officials for the data that would form the basis of their accounts.

With roughly 600 reporters placed with military units, once the Iraq War began there was plenty of information flowing to American audiences about the conflict. The reaction of the public, media critics and journalists themselves was generally positive. There were complaints about the one-sidedness of the reporting and the narrow perspective the reports provided. But there was no question that controlled access was better than no access. Some even approved of the idea that journalists openly took the side of the Americans.

What criticism there was came mostly from within journalistic circles. Paul McMasters thought the price of the access was steep and that the accommodations the media received made it susceptible to military pressure about what to report. (McMasters, 2003) There was consensus among some that the media was remarkably professional but offered a sanitized version of the war. Some believed embedded reporters served the White House and Pentagon by publicizing U.S. military prowess while giving the American public a closer view of war than it ever had before. (Marder, 2003)

Compared with the media's experience in the Persian Gulf War, the embedded journalists program was applauded even while it was acknowledged that it clearly took the side of the troops. Some did not complain about the fact that the ethic of journalistic independence seemed to have become obsolete, replaced by the role of providing public support for the soldiers. (Bernard, 2003) The military kept its promise about access and reporters seemed to have pulled no punches. Even when events turned out badly, they were reported. (Getler, 2003)

Television reports by embedded journalists during three of the first six days of the war showed that the reporting was both factual and dull. While material was rich in detail it lacked context. Journalists embedded with small units were unable to present viewers with the big picture of what was happening. Too often the rush to get information on the air live created confusion, errors and distorted reports. However, on balance, Americans seemed better served by the embedding system than they were from the more limited press pools during the Gulf War. (Rosentiel, 2003) But Geary reported that journalists in both the 1991 Persian Gulf War and the 2003 Iraq War "simply repeated what government and military officials said each day. The watchdog became a lap dog." (Geary, 2004, p. 111)

Some questioned the objectivity of journalists covering the military units. A *USA Today* reporter described how during a battle he was asked to help a medic treating a wounded soldier. The reporter related that he put his "objectivity" aside to help the one who might also be asked to save the reporter's life. "This was the problem that drew the most criticism of the embedded reporters in Iraq. Their perspective on the war was

necessarily that of the units to which they were attached.” (Brooks, Kennedy et al, 2005, p. 378)

From the beginning, it was clear that the embedded reporters were indeed “in bed with” their military escorts, and as the U.S. and Britain stormed into Iraq, the reporters presented exultant and triumphant accounts that trumped any paid propagandist. (Kellner, 2004, p. 72)

Journalists who took part in the program for the most part reported a positive experience. While admitting their reports told only part of the story, they were nearly unanimous in the belief that access could not have been provided in any other way. One study that compared the coverage by embedded reporters for major newspapers with independent reporters not attached to military units found that the embedded journalists produced more stories about U.S. soldiers’ lives and fewer articles about the impact of the war on Iraqi civilians. (Lindner, 2006) Another study found that 80 percent of 54 journalists polled said they did not believe their objectivity was undermined by the fact that they were living with the troops. But the reporters were unanimous in their belief that in addition to the embedded journalist program, there should be other free-ranging reporters in the field to collect information from the other side. (Kryszons, 2003)

Ronald Paul Larson, who was an embedded journalist while working for the *Daily Titan*, the newspaper of the University of California, Fullerton, acknowledged that a “possible pitfall” of the bonding experience with soldiers was clear.

If you are friends with somebody, then you don’t want to write anything that would make that person look bad. I especially didn’t want to report anything that would get soldiers into trouble or make their lives more difficult. (Larson, 2004, p. 129)

A content analysis of stories written by embedded print reporters found that they displayed subtle but frequent examples of pro-military bias. (Slagle, 2006) Dan Murphy of the *Christian Science Monitor* described the embedding experience this way:

Embedding is a fancy word for letting journalists go see what the military units do, although that was much more wide open in the Vietnam War, although that was much more of an anomaly of American history. The only limitation is you go on their schedules. You are not going to get all the access you want or be able to do all you want. And you are not going to get to talk to Iraqis when you do this.” (Massing, Palattella & Novick, 2006, p. 46.)

Joe Galloway, a veteran war correspondent of the Vietnam era, said, “The ideal is free and open coverage, but in this modern wartime, embedding is the next best thing.” (Strupp, 2006)

After the first year of the Iraq War, the U.S. military deemed the embedding process an overwhelming success. The mostly positive reports about the performance of soldiers and Marines storming Baghdad told the news-consuming public at home that the U.S. military was proficient and efficient, and that the Iraqi people appreciated their work. The U.S. military was viewed as liberators. A survey by the Institute for Defense Analyses indicated that both the military and the media liked the program. Commanders were impressed by the quality of the reporters and reporters responded that while they may have bonded with the military that did not hinder their ability to report the truth. (Strupp, 2006)

“The official line from Pentagon officials was that embedding was a success, showing American forces performing well and giving the American public a good sense of battlefield rigors.” (Seib, 2004, p. 69) Col. William Darley of the *Military Review* said the reporting was a good thing for the military. “The military is not going to succeed

unless it has political—and certainly in connection with that—public support.” (Massing, Palattella & Novick, 2006, p. 46)

Sig Christenson, who was later interviewed for this thesis, wrote that reporters were recounting “events certain to reinforce the patriotism of Americans already supportive of President Bush and the war.” (Christenson, 2005)

These assessments applied to the coverage of the early stages of the war. The Pentagon-sponsored survey covered the one-year period ending in April 2004. By that time, the war in Iraq had changed. Like the Vietnam War, the conflict in Iraq evolved through different phases. There was an early indication of success, covered by many embedded reporters initially. Then, as the insurgency grew and U.S. casualties increased, the nature of the coverage and the military’s reaction to that coverage, changed. As Christenson saw it, “the positive stories had begun to fade, replaced by an increasingly combative media that saw in Iraq disturbing parallels to the war in Vietnam.” (Christenson, 2005)

The Iraq War evolved from an invasion to an occupation that was harassed by a guerilla insurgency. Tribal rivalries and religious hate created an incendiary situation and journalists were stuck in the middle of trying to explain it. The initial euphoria that accompanied the arrival of Americans eroded as the security situation deteriorated. The insurgency that grew in strength to attack the U.S. military became just as lethal for the journalists there. Reporters could not cover events out of fear of their lives. Tight military restrictions over movement coupled with stricter rules over what could be reported proved equally frustrating for reporters.

For journalists who came to Iraq for the excitement of combat correspondence, there was a steep price to pay. Instead of witnesses to violence, journalists themselves became targets. A kidnapped journalist could bring a good ransom. Without battle lines, without clear indications that identify who the enemy is, journalists became prey. (Foerstel, 2006, p. 21) Reporters were kidnapped and others killed. Some left Iraq out of fear. Other news organizations pulled their reporters out because of the high cost of security. At a time when the war in Iraq became the world's most important news story, the picture of what was happening darkened because of the lack of coverage. For the news organizations that remained behind, reporting from Baghdad became an extremely expensive proposition measured in bodyguards' salaries and life insurance premiums. Dexter Filkins, of the *New York Times*, recounted episodes in which he was chased by cars and cut off by people with guns. "It so suddenly kind of turns on you," Filkins said. "And the result of that has been that the danger has chased a lot of reporters away." (Massing, Palattella & Novick, 2006, p. 73)

Some news organizations had trouble finding volunteers within their own offices willing to go to Iraq after the *Christian Science Monitor's* Jill Carroll was kidnapped in 2006. Reporters became terrified of being stuck in traffic or working too long on an assignment for fear of being snatched or blown up. "We now have the 15-minute rule," recounted CBS' Elizabeth Palmer. "We never stay anywhere longer than 15 minutes." Palmer said the time limit reduced the chance of being kidnapped or attacked. (Johnson, 2006) For journalists on the beat, it became increasingly difficult to report because ordinary Iraqis did not want to be seen talking to Americans. As Allen Pizzey put it:

“People do not want you near them. They don’t want you in their homes. They don’t want to be seen talking to reporters.” (Pizzey, 2007)

Journalists also became victims of indiscriminate violence along with soldiers and civilians. Insurgents did not view journalists’ bearing witness to the battle as something that could help their cause. This might have been because insurgents considered journalists nothing more than an arm of the military. “The perceived lack of objectivity in Western reporting on Middle Eastern conflicts has led local insurgents to regard journalists as mouthpieces of their governments.” (Foerstel, 2006, p. 86)

Some journalists were killed or maimed as they were accompanying U.S. military units in Iraq. On Jan. 29, 2006, ABC news co-anchor Bob Woodruff and cameraman Doug Vogt were nearly killed by a roadside bomb explosion. Four months later, CBS correspondent Kimberly Dozier was critically wounded and two members of her crew, James Brolan and Paul Douglas, were killed in a similar attack. CBS’ Harry Smith, who left Baghdad 48 hours before the attack on Dozier, Brolan and Douglas, said journalists assessed risks before going out on a story. Smith asked, “Is the story you want to do worth it? Can you tilt the risk a little more in your favor?” (Montopoli, 2006) *Detroit Free Press* photojournalist Dan Gilkey said, “You cannot move; you cannot go anywhere on your own.” (Ricchiardi, 2007)

The dangers of coverage limited reporters’ ability to get out and to check on claims made during U.S. military briefings and in pronouncements from the Pentagon. If a reporter wanted to get into the field to learn first hand what was happening in a city like Basra, it would be too dangerous. “Nobody I know in their right mind would go down there,” said Seymour Hersh. “You’d get whacked.” (Greenberg, 2007) Compounding the

effect that the security situation had on coverage, the military's unwillingness to readily transport reporters to the scenes of news developments had the impact of restricting coverage. Tom Curley, AP president and chief executive officer, said while it might have taken days to get video and photographs out of Vietnam, the ability to get to places where news was happening was much better there.

What is different is that the journalists in Vietnam had almost instant access and they weren't required to be embedded in a certain way. They'd just show up at a place and hop on a helicopter and fly to a battle and fly back and go where they needed to go. That access has long since passed. (Curley, 2007)

Lt. Gen. William Caldwell, who spent 13 months in Iraq as the chief spokesman for the U.S. forces there, said some of his colleagues complained about media coverage while failing to accommodate members of the media. He said making room in helicopters for journalist to get to inaccessible places would help tell the world the Army's side of a story. (Canon, 2007) The inability to quickly get to the scene of the action meant that news organizations could not count on compelling coverage of what was happening in Iraq. The expense of coverage, the security situation and the difficulty in getting to the stories combined to reduce the ranks of the embedded reporters. For those who stayed, security became an obsession. Reporters lived in fortified bunkers. Their stays in the country were limited to six-week or eight-week rotations. Farnaz Fassihi, a *Wall Street Journal* reporter, moved eight times in a search for a safe place to live and work. "Each location was more heavily fortified than the last." Stressed-out journalists worked 14 hours a day because there was nothing else to do, and planned vacations "preferably as far from the Middle East as possible." (Fassihi, 2006)

This dangerous situation reduced the reporters' ability to provide first-hand, eyewitness accounts of what was going on, something that provided the solid foundation for the reporting that took place in Vietnam. "The danger makes the kind of boots-on-the-ground reporting that brought Vietnam home for so many American viewers almost impossible for western correspondents in Iraq who don't go anywhere without armed security and an exhaustively researched itinerary." (Guthrie, 2007)

Journalists resorted to stealing into neighborhoods, grabbing what information they could and getting back to their offices to piece accounts together. Some began using more local correspondents and fact-finders to move about among the Iraqi people to collect information, despite the fact that some material needed to be double-checked. The *New York Times*' Filkins said such work was incomplete, slow and difficult and that in such an atmosphere it was hard to pin down specifics. "Five people doing a run-of-the-mill story takes forever," he said. (Hirschman, 2006) Most of the journalists and journalist assistants killed in Iraq have been local workers. Of the 124 journalists killed in Iraq, 102 are Iraqis. In addition, 49 media supporter workers have been killed. (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2007) The U.S. military has mistakenly killed some of them because of misidentification. But most are locally-based news gatherers who became victims of violence when they were identified as "infidels" for working with Western news organizations. "A number of our people have been tailed and singled out and assassinated," said the AP's Tom Curley. "And you almost never know all the circumstances that led to the killings. (Curley, 2007)

The Iraq experiences for journalists contrasted sharply with those who covered Vietnam. Compared to Saigon, Baghdad was a prison for journalists. "Unlike wartime

Saigon's freewheeling party atmosphere, Baghdad mostly is a forbidden zone."

(Ricchiardi, 2007) "There were prostitutes in Baghdad, but you couldn't drive into town to get laid like in Saigon," said the *Washington Post's* Rajiv Chandrasekaran.

(Chandrasekaran, 2007, p. 57) Reporters who covered Vietnam said Iraq journalists faced far greater dangers. Saigon offered a relaxed almost party atmosphere to reporters in the 1960s. Peter Osnos, who covered Vietnam for the *Washington Post*, said Iraq was far riskier, "every inch of terrain is a potential battlefield." (Ricchiardi, 2007) Safer, the CBS news correspondent who covered the Vietnam War and who established the network's Saigon bureau, said Iraq was far more dangerous for journalists because they were more likely to become murder victims than battlefield casualties. Safer never wore body armor while in Vietnam and felt secure while accompanying the troops. "Vietnam was by any definition a guerilla war, but it is the difference between guerilla war and what amounts to street crime on a massive scale in Iraq." (Romano, 2006)

A survey conducted in the fall of 2007 of 111 reporters by the Project for Excellence in Journalism found that the dangers prevented effective coverage of ordinary Iraqis but that most journalists had a positive view of the U.S. military's embedding program. A majority of those surveyed (60%) thought embedding gave them access to places and people they could not otherwise reach. Two thirds of those polled said they were worried that by relying on inexperienced local reporters their accounts could be inaccurate or incomplete. "Overall, journalists working in Iraq give their own coverage a mixed but generally positive assessment." Fifty-eight percent regarded coverage as "good," 16 percent rated it as "excellent," while 23 percent rated coverage as fair and two percent said it was poor. (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2007)

Beyond the risks to life and limb, there were other limitations on reporters' ability to collect information in Iraq. The military imposed new coverage rules that limited what journalists and photographers could send back to the American people. Some reporters were denied access to some areas based on their coverage, and the officers quoted in their stories could be reprimanded for what they said. After Antonio Castaneda of the Associated Press wrote a story about families fleeing violence in Dora, he was visited by a soldier who delivered a message that his coverage was disproportionately negative. And after a story painted an unflattering but accurate picture of violence and conditions in Fallujah, one Marine public affairs officer said he was not approving any more embeds to that city." (Associated Press, 2006) The Fall, 2007 survey conducted by the Project for Excellence in Journalism found that about one third of those questioned believed that military commanders used a reporter's prior coverage to screen out the reporter from future embed assignments. One journalist reported being kicked out of a unit when it suffered casualties and another told of being locked in a room and told of being no longer welcomed. (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2007)

Some of the news briefings in Baghdad took on the appearance of Saigon's "Five o'clock Follies," when military officers briefing reporters became incensed by negative questions from the media. (Massing, Palattella & Novick , 2006, p. 31) In Vietnam, reporters relied on military sources who provided information that risked their careers. But in Iraq "no high-ranking soldier or civilian has been audacious enough to get fired for telling the truth." (Packer, 2007) Gen. Caldwell, who had been the military's chief

spokesman in Iraq, said individual soldiers feared that in interviews with journalists they would say something that their superiors would look at disapprovingly. “The attitude is, ‘What good can possibly come out of a media interview?’” Caldwell said. (Canon, 2007)

The biggest restrictions fell on photographers and whether their images could depict the brutal realities of war. For war photography, Vietnam set a standard that no subsequent conflict could match in terms of the frankness of the pictures. In 1968, a *Time* magazine story about the Tet offensive was accompanied by photos showing dozens of dead American soldiers.

No war was ever covered like the Vietnam War, and no war ever will be covered like it again. That war lasted 10 years and there was no censorship. The violence was captured in excruciating detail,” said Hal Buell, the former head of the Associated Press photo agency, who saw plenty of images of dead Americans in the Vietnam years. (Carr, 2006)

By comparison, there are no pictures published of dead American soldiers in Iraq. A reporter and photographer for the *New York Times* had their embedded status challenged after publishing video and a photograph of a soldier dying in Iraq. In a report broadcast March 27, 2003, NBC’s Andrea Mitchell said, “The Pentagon is not allowing images of flag-draped coffins coming back to Dover Air Force Base, which critics say is a heavy-handed way of managing the message.” (Geary, 2004, p. 89) Photojournalists were prohibited from publishing pictures of wounded soldiers without a signed agreement from the soldier. (Hedges & Pinkerton, 2007) Photos of dead soldiers were prohibited.

‘They are basically asking me to stand in front of a unit before I go out with them and say that in the event that they are wounded, I would like their consent,’ said Ashley Gilbertson, a freelance photographer who had been to Iraq several times. ‘We are already viewed by some as

bloodsucking vultures, and making that kind of announcement would make you an immediate bad luck charm. They are not letting us cover the reality of war. I think this has got little to do with the families or the soldiers and everything to do with politics.’ (Carr, 2007)

Bilal Hussein, a photographer who helped the Associated Press win a 2005 Pulitzer Prize, was arrested by the U.S. military, detained as a security threat, and accused of working with the insurgency. Hussein’s photographs depicted a battered ambulance reported to have been damaged in a U.S. air strike, and wounded children said to be victims of a U.S. attack. Hussein’s colleagues said his photos were “stunning and honest” and “completely at odds with the U.S. government portrayal of conditions in Iraq at the time.” (Lang, 2007)

Because of the arbitrary nature in the way commanders applied rules, some photojournalists could be “un-embedded” simply for taking pictures of damaged equipment. Lou Hansen, a reporter for the *Virginian-Pilot* in Norfolk, who embedded in 2005, was kicked out for publishing a photograph of battle-damaged Humvee in Kuwait. (Hansen, 2005) Police in Iraq blocked news photographers and TV camera operators from taking images in the aftermath of deadly bombings. Iraqi officials said photos could not be taken until one hour following an explosion to protect evidence and the privacy of the victims. Media groups were concerned that the order was designed to prevent the dissemination of scenes of violence. “Reporters without Borders” feared that a “total news blackout” would be next. (Reporters Without Borders, 2007)

A review of the available literature on the Iraq War unearths one final aspect worth noting: the emergence of “web logs” or “blogs,” as a way of conveying the news. Web logs service a niche news market, and it’s difficult to measure their effect.

Conventional journalists facing space or time restrictions in their own news organizations found “blogs” useful as another way to tell their stories. And free lance journalists willing to risk the physical danger, could find a place to report the war on the Internet using “blogs.” The minimalist aspect of the equipment required—a laptop computer and a digital camera—meant that they could cover the war on a low budget. Some free lance journalists claimed a share of the audience by filing reports that contradicted stories filed by the larger, media organizations.

Pizzey, a 60-year-old war correspondent for CBS, turned to the web after his network could not find space for all of his reports from Baghdad. And blogging enabled him to convey more of the reality of the Iraq experience. Pizzey’s blog accounts reflected “a deep-set frustration that the real story of the war is not getting through.” (Gold, 2007) Blogging also opened Iraq coverage up to what must be defined as “non-traditional journalists.” Michael Yon, an ex-Green Beret, went to Iraq and spent 10 months embedded with military units and mostly reported success stories. He often reported from northern Iraq where insurgents were less active. Yon offered his reports free of charge to members of the National Newspaper Association, and was described as “an embedded independent reporter that only states the facts of how the war is going.” (Deggans, 2006)

The review of literature related to the Iraq War demonstrates potential differences that help inform this study. It shows that for reporters in Iraq, the situation is much more dangerous than it was for journalists covering the Vietnam War. Access to information and the rules under which reporters must operate are more limiting. At the same time, there are benefits from technological improvements that greatly assist reporters’ work in

the field. Satellite telephones, digital photography and video and the Internet speed the process of getting reports back to the U.S.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

Interviews Conducted

This comparison of the experiences of Iraq War reporters with those of journalists who covered the Vietnam War was made by conducting interviews with 10 individuals. Five reporters and two photographers who had covered the Iraq conflict during its various stages of development were interviewed. Three correspondents who had served long stints of duty covering the Vietnam War were also questioned. The interviews were face-to-face encounters that were digitally recorded similar to the way that oral histories are collected. The interviews were then transcribed and indexed.

The interviews took place during a period from Aug. 5, 2006 to March 3, 2007 at designated meeting places, offices or the homes of those who participated. The amount of information collected filled 216, single-spaced transcript pages of notes. The transcript of each interview was emailed to the appropriate participant to make corrections, clarifications or additions.

Those who were interviewed and the dates, times and places of the sessions were:

1. C. David Kotok a reporter for the *Omaha World-Herald* at his home in Omaha, Aug. 5, 2006.

2. Jeff Bundy, a photographer for the *Omaha World-Herald* at a meeting place in Smithville, Mo., Sept. 2, 2006.

3. George McArthur, a former correspondent for the Associated Press, at his home in Vienna, Va., Oct. 7, 2006.
4. Andy Cutraro, a former photographer for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, at his home in Washington, D.C., Oct. 8, 2006.
5. Ron Harris, a reporter for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, at the home of Andy Cutraro, Oct. 8, 2006.
6. Michael Phillips, a reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*, at the newspaper's Washington, D.C. bureau, Oct. 9, 2006.
7. Sig Christenson, a reporter for the *San Antonio Express-News*, and
8. Ron Martz, a reporter for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, interviewed jointly following a conference of the Military Reporters and Editors in Chicago, Oct. 28, 2006.
9. George Esper, a former reporter for the Associated Press, at his office in Morgantown, W. Va., Feb. 3, 2007.
10. Richard Pyle, a reporter for the Associated Press, at the AP headquarters in New York City, March 3, 2007.

These individuals were selected for interviews because of their extensive experience in war coverage and because of their willingness to cooperate in this project. All 10 have accomplished much in the field of journalism. Many are well known in the area of combat correspondence. Some have retired after distinguished careers. And several have authored books about their experiences or about military history. This research is limited to the extent that only print journalists were included in the study.

Interviewees' Biographies

Kotok, 59 at the time of the interview, was a veteran reporter for the *Omaha World-Herald* when he took the assignment to go to Iraq in the fall of 2005. He had been with the newspaper since 1980 and had been a state, regional and national political reporter. He had paid two visits to Vietnam, in 1990 and 1999, for retrospective stories. In his early career, Kotok had covered the state capital in Little Rock for the *Arkansas Democrat*. Originally from Iowa, Kotok has an undergraduate degree in political science and a master's degree in journalism from the University of Iowa.

Bundy, 37 at the time of the interview, had been with the *World-Herald* for 16 years. He had worked as a free lance photographer for the Associated Press when he was a junior in high school. He was hired as a full-time photographer by the *World-Herald* at age 20, while he was attending the University of Nebraska-Omaha. While in Iraq, Bundy captured a photograph of a wounded Marine flipping a defiant gesture to those who had tried to kill him with a roadside bomb. Bundy's photo of an angry Gunnery Sgt. Michael Burghardt got wide distribution on the Internet, became a screensaver for Marines around the world, and made him and Kotok readily accepted journalists when they met with Marines and soldiers in Iraq. Kotok and Bundy were in the Middle East from Sept. 9-Oct 22, 2005, covering the activities of a Nebraska National Guard unit in Ramadi and U.S. Marines at an outpost in Anbar Province.

McArthur, 82 at the time of the interview, has been described as "central casting's version of a foreign correspondent." (Pyle and Faas, 2003, p. 75) He joined the Associated Press in 1949 in Atlanta after getting a degree at the University of Georgia

where he edited the school paper. He covered the Korean War for the AP before getting assignments in Paris, Cairo and Manila. He joined the AP's Saigon bureau in 1965 and later became bureau chief. McArthur wrote insightfully of the death of Ho Chi Minh in 1969, describing him as a national hero in both North Vietnam and South Vietnam. Braestrup (1978, p. 211) credits McArthur as being the first reporter to undercover "Vietcong terrorism" when civilians were massacred in Hue during the Tet offensive. McArthur later became the Saigon bureau chief for the *Los Angeles Times*, and did not leave the city until 10 p.m., April 29, 1975 as the South Vietnamese surrendered.

Cutraro, 33 at the time of the interview, talked his way into covering a U.S. Marine company during the Iraq War and went on to revisit the same unit there when it was on its second tour. For both assignments, Cutraro was a photographer for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and teamed with reporter Ron Harris. Cutraro joined the *Post-Dispatch* in 1998 and covered the Palestinian Intifada in 2000 when he paid his own way to Israel to cover the story. While studying photo journalism at Western Kentucky University, Cutraro landed internships at the *Kalamazoo Gazette* and the *Knoxville News Sentinel*. The experience convinced him he had enough of college. He was never officially "embedded" with the Marines during the invasion of Iraq, but developed a relationship with troops he had been covering during the build-up that enabled him to gain acceptance. He went through the entire experience of covering the invasion without any official credential.

Harris, 53 at the time he was interviewed, began his journalism career at the *Memphis Press Scimitar* and went to work for *Ebony Magazine* in 1978. He later became a metropolitan editor, recruiter and national correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times*. A

graduate of Clark Atlanta University, Harris joined the *Post-Dispatch* as an editorial writer but was a general assignment reporter when he covered the Iraq war with Cutraro. Harris and Cutraro covered a company of Marines from January, 2003 until they moved to Baghdad in April. They returned to cover the same unit in March and April of 2004 in Husaybah, where five Marines were killed in one day on April 17, 2004.

Phillips, 43 at the time he was interviewed, had been to Iraq five times as a reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*. Like Harris and Cutraro, Phillips has always covered the same unit, the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines. If you added up all the time he had been in the theater, including the invasion and waiting in camps in Kuwait, it would total six months. Phillips is the author of *The Gift of Valor: A War Story*, which recounts the heroism and death of Marine Corporal Jason Dunham, who covered an insurgent's grenade with his Kevlar helmet to save the lives of two comrades. Phillips has an undergraduate degree in political science and a master's degree in public affairs from the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton. Before joining the *Wall Street Journal* staff, Phillips worked for the Associated Press for three years in Madrid and covered assignments in Angola and Somalia.

Christenson, 49 years old at the time he was interviewed, is the senior military writer for the *San Antonio Express-News*. Since covering the initial invasion of Iraq with the Army's 3rd Infantry Division in 2003, Christenson has been back to the country four times to report on the conflict there. A graduate of the University of Houston, Christenson has also reported from South Korea, Kosovo, Bosnia and Macedonia. He is a founding member and former president of Military Reporters and Editors, and his descriptions of the media-military relationship have appeared in *Nieman Reports*.

Christenson has won awards from the Associated Press and Hearst Newspapers. He was named “Reporter of the Year” by his peers in 2004 for his work in Iraq.

Martz, 60 at the time he was interviewed, has more than 40 years experience as a journalist. As a military reporter for the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, Martz covered the Persian Gulf War in 1991 and the invasion of Iraq in 2003. He was named the 2003 Journalist of the Year by the Atlanta Press Club and was runner-up in the National Headliner awards for his reporting from Iraq. He is the co-author of four books on military history, including *Heavy Metal: A Tank Company’s Battle to Baghdad*. A graduate of the University of South Florida, Martz is a vice president of Military Reporters and Editors.

Esper, who was 74 at the time of his interview, is widely considered as the reporter who wrote more words out of Vietnam than any other. As an Associated Press reporter, Esper covered the Vietnam War for 10 years and was the new service’s Saigon bureau chief when the South Vietnamese army surrendered in 1975. He later covered the Persian Gulf War as well as U.S. peace missions in Somalia and Bosnia. Esper is the author of *The Eyewitness History of the Vietnam War*, and is now a journalism professor at West Virginia University, his alma mater. Esper was raised in Uniontown, Pa., and worked at the *Uniontown Morning Herald* and the *Pittsburgh Press*, before he joined the AP in 1958.

Pyle, 73 when he was interviewed, covered the Vietnam War for the Associated Press for nearly five years and was bureau chief in Saigon from 1970 to 1973. He covered the Persian Gulf War in 1991 and wrote *Schwarzkopf: The Man, the Mission, the Triumph*. With Horst Faas, Pyle also wrote *Lost Over Laos, a true story of tragedy*,

mystery, and friendship. Pyle is a graduate of Wayne State University in Detroit and joined the AP there in 1960. Among Pyle's many assignments, he was aboard a U.S. Navy warship in 1988, when the United States fought a little-known, one-day war with Iran.

All who took part in this study were fully informed of its purpose. Prior to each interview, each participant was instructed with the "informed oral consent script" serving as a guideline for the instruction. The guideline script was: "I am conducting a study that involves research. The purpose of the research project is to compare the journalistic coverage of the Vietnam War with the conflict in Iraq. As part of my research, I am requesting the opportunity to interview you about your experiences as a journalist covering the Vietnam War/Iraq conflict. Your voluntary participation in this research would involve sitting for face-to-face interviews lasting at the most four hours, but more likely two to three hours. These interviews will be tape recorded. I will transcribe your remarks that will become part of oral histories that will be used to inform a master's thesis I am writing on this subject. I will use the material gleaned from these interviews to provide authority for the thesis. A copy of my thesis proposal will be made available at your request prior to the interview. In addition, a transcript of the interview will be available to interview subjects who request it. If you should have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact my faculty advisor, Brian S. Brooks, professor and associate dean, Missouri School of Journalism, 120 Neff Hall, Columbia, MO. 65211. (573) 882-0847. For additional information regarding human subject participation in research, please feel free to contact the University of Missouri-Columbia campus

Institutional Review Board office at (573) 882-9585. Thank you for your consideration of this request.”

Sample Questions

The direction of any research project must first find its bearings by determining what information is being sought. In this case, the study attempts to compare the experiences of war-covering journalists in Vietnam with those who were working in Iraq. To elicit the kinds of information required to make a comparison—either in search of similarities or differences—a baseline list of questions is necessary to lead to discoveries of where comparisons can be made. At the same time, it is important that any inquiry not be limited to a formal list of questions, but be flexible enough to plow new ground not contemplated at the threshold of the research. It is impossible at this point to list all questions that emerged in the research as each interview prompted various avenues for exploration. However, each participant was asked identical questions based on the following:

1. Why did you decide to cover a war?
2. What is your background?
3. What additional skills did you acquire in anticipation of covering combat?
4. What was your view of the war?
5. What were your methods of collecting, writing and transmitting information?
6. What type of equipment did you take to the field?
7. What were the policies the military applied to your journalistic endeavors?

8. What were the mechanics of your food, lodging and transportation in the field?
9. To what extent did editors or other supervisors attempt to recast your reports filed from the field?
10. What processes did you use to select news events to cover?
11. What was the reaction by military and government officials to your news reports?
12. Was there any censorship or self-censorship of your stories that took place?
13. What special procedures did you follow, if any, for the care and handling of sources?
14. Were you compensated any more for combat coverage?
15. To what extent was your personal safety an issue in covering stories?
16. What was the length and duration of your stay in an area of conflict?
17. What was the nature of competition between your news organization and others news agencies?
18. What experience, if any, did you have in the military?
19. How often did you have to file stories?
20. How would you characterized your experience overall?

Once the interviews were transcribed, the pages of notes were carefully reviewed and indexed according to responses. As the responses were compiled, patterns emerged that demonstrated support for particular findings. Findings were based on clear demonstration of agreement among those interviewed. A comparison of these findings shows that there were answers to questions that demonstrated some very clear differences

between the ways journalists worked in Vietnam with the experiences of reporters in Iraq.
The answers provide examples of similarities as well.

Chapter 4: Differences and Similarities

Iraq Most Dangerous

The most strikingly obvious difference between covering Iraq and Vietnam is the level of danger the Iraq reporters have faced. Those who covered Vietnam respect the level of courage journalists in Iraq need to do their jobs. The nature of the danger in Iraq severely limits a reporter's ability to get to the source of the news. Executing an idea that journalists go out and collect on-the-street opinions about policy or the economy was impossible. "You aren't seeing a lot of anybody interviewing anybody," said David Kotok of his experience in Ramadi. "It's one of the huge problems. When we were there and since then, it has become more and more and more dangerous. And I've talked to other reporters who were there and who were not embedded and about the best they could do is to find a taxi driver they had finally come to trust and he would take them and they would interview his family."

The inability to collect first-person accounts of what is happening erodes the credibility of any report. George McArthur said he was able to visit the Vietnamese countryside to conduct interviews with local residents who would help him answer questions when "the war didn't add up." Comparing the ability to collect that kind of information with what's happening now in Iraq, McArthur said, "They seem to me to miss an awful lot of incidental detail that if you sit back and put it together would make for better rounded stories in certain areas. We are missing an awful lot of the threads to make up the genuine fabric in Iraq. That's my personal impression." He said that in

Vietnam “you could get out and see such a wide range of people that you felt that the spin factor so to speak was frequently absent, that people were talking more or less honestly. In Iraq obviously, the reporters are facing a much more difficult situation.”

Jeff Bundy said the only contact he had with Iraqis was when he was with troops pointing guns at a group of local residents. “In Ramadi, you didn’t go outside the wire unless you had a mission,” Bundy said.

Speaking as a photographer, Cutraro said to do the same type of work in Iraq as what was accomplished in Vietnam “you have to be on a death wish, I think.” Asked about interviewing Iraqis, he said, “No, we did not do many on the street; impossible it was so treacherous. You could not go out alone. No way.” Cutraro was in Fallujah in April 2004 when four private contractors were murdered and their bodies hung from a bridge. “That’s what happens when you went out with guns.” Comparing the situation with Vietnam, he said, “You are dealing with a guerilla insurgency. There aren’t any lines. And they weren’t kidnapping journalists and cutting their heads off back then. There was some discrimination, I think. It’s a different war.”

The randomness and unpredictability of the violence weighs on the minds of the journalists. Ron Harris began to realize the level of the danger when he went out on his first patrol during his second tour of Iraq. He noticed Marines putting sandbags on the floor of the Humvee that was to transport him and he saw the proliferation of armor plating. He realized “the Marines can’t really protect you. You can get blown up in the same Humvee that they are going to get blown up in. There is no protection against that.”

Situations like this require the reporters to carefully weigh the risks of going out on an assignment, according to Michael Phillips. “I never covered Vietnam,” Phillips

said. “But I don’t think journalists were targets in Vietnam. It’s one thing to go unarmed into combat and sort of hope that the fact that it says ‘press’ on your flack jacket will catch you a break to the extent that a break can be caught. But it’s another thing where you’re going into a situation and putting ‘press’ onto your flack jacket is equivalent of saying ‘shoot me.’ And Iraq is that place.”

These limits on reporters’ movements forced news organizations to rely on locals to collect material for stories. Richard Pyle said the number of deaths of these fact gatherers was what accounted for many of the journalistic casualty figures in Iraq. “Most of the journalists killed now in Iraq are murdered,” Pyle added. The use of the locals affects the quality of the work, Pyle believes. “The press in Baghdad is heavily dependent on what these local employees can do. Photographers, and I mean most of the pictures being taken are by Iraqis, some of whom I don’t think were photographers when the war began. This also raises questions about the quality of some of the work. There are some disputes in the blogosphere about doctored pictures and this kind of thing. Some of that goes on. But I think by and large there is an element of amateurism that enters into it.”

The dangers mean reporters don’t stay as long in Iraq as their counterparts did in Vietnam. They get “cycled through,” according to Pyle, meaning there are less experienced journalists covering the war. “The depth of experience, the accumulated knowledge and the feel for the story in the country and the people and everything was a very powerful strength of ours in that (Saigon) bureau, which I have never seen any place else quite like that.”

George Esper drew sharp contrasts between the confining nature of covering the war from Baghdad compared with life in wartime Saigon. He said in Saigon he never felt

in danger but believed life in Baghdad was very restricting because “you can’t go anywhere” You could be kidnapped right off the street and it’s happened. In Vietnam, that was very unlikely. In Vietnam, you knew where the bad zones were. In other words, you knew if you went into this area ‘A’ you would be subject to ambush or kidnap. In my 10 years in Vietnam, I can’t recall a single person being kidnapped in Saigon, a reporter. I don’t think that ever happened.”

By contrast, Esper said the reporters in Iraq “really put their lives on the line and it shows a passion and a dedication to reporting of which we can all be proud. “Indeed, I admire the Iraqi war correspondents because I think covering Iraq is much more dangerous than was Vietnam. And I think most people agree on that. It’s a more dangerous war to cover because you don’t have a structured government there, really, whereas in Vietnam, you had a government recognized by the United States and by other countries.” Unlike Baghdad, Esper said he had no trouble getting to and from the Saigon airport. In fact, Esper said life was good in Saigon.

“I hate to say this because there was so much death and destruction there, but the lifestyle couldn’t be topped anywhere. We worked very hard as they do in Iraq. We took risks but after we had filed our reports, we could go out and have drinks and relax all over Saigon. There was no off-limits there. And you could live in luxurious townhouses or apartments, which some did. Some of us had drivers, housekeepers, chefs. It was a good life. It really was. We worked 16 or 18 hours a day but we had a lot of fun and I don’t think you find the camaraderie that we had in Vietnam in Iraq. Not because people don’t get along, but because you can’t move. You can’t go to somebody else’s house. It’s too dangerous. In Vietnam there were all these cocktail parties, receptions; it was a great

lifestyle and some of the best food I've had in my life when you talk about the wonderful French restaurants. Saigon is a beautiful city. You could go out early in the morning, say 30 to 40 miles from Saigon, drive to a battle site, watch a vicious battle and watch a lot of people get killed and come back that afternoon and write your story about all these casualties and detach yourself and then file your story and then go take a shower, change clothes and go out to the roof of the Caravelle Hotel and have a nice bottle of wine and dinner and watch the fighting across the Saigon River. All the flares going off. Listening to artillery strikes. It was somewhat of a contrast. It's so surreal in a sense."

Esper said working in Iraq was more like covering Somalia where there are "just thugs and criminals" who "have no qualm about beheading people." And Esper believes the war in Iraq is "too dangerous to cover. You have to ask yourself how important is this story? Is it worth getting wounded or killed for? And the answer now is 'no,' because first of all you really have from what I can observe, no major fixed battles as you did in Vietnam. Here you have roadside bombs, improvised bombs, just terrorist attacks. You don't have let's say a battle for Khe Sanh or Dak To or for the old imperial capital Hue. That's the difference. As a result of that, your access, I mean getting access may not be worth it because some of these actions although tragic and you have Americans killed in them, the bigger story now is the political story." Esper doubted whether he could have lasted in Iraq and he saluted the reporters covering the war there.

Obstacles to Reporting

Almost as big a difference as the suffocating nature of the danger, the rules imposed on coverage by the military on reporters in Iraq and the unwillingness of the military to accommodate reporters there, substantially lessened journalistic opportunities in comparison with Vietnam. While the military in Vietnam helped facilitate news coverage, in Iraq the military is an obstacle to be negotiated. The reporter-soldier 'rules of engagement' are different as well. It was much easier to quote anonymous sources in Vietnam. The military was more willing to transport a reporter to the scene of the action. There were more reporters and competition was fiercer. In Vietnam, it was possible for reporters to be tipped in advance to impending action and to plan for coverage. In Iraq, it's an entirely different war in which attacks amount to almost unpredictable roadside bombs and small skirmishes. Even when there are U.S. operations in the offing, military public affairs officers are reluctant to give journalists a heads-up.

The rules that applied to "embedded" reporters in Iraq welded the journalists to one unit there, lessening freedom and mobility to get quickly to places where news developed. Reporters who have worked in Iraq said local commanders have wide discretion as to whether they will accommodate a visiting journalist. In a few cases they have kicked reporters out if they were unhappy with coverage. Reporters in Vietnam and Iraq had similar experiences in that they were not subject to formal censorship. But there was a tendency among military public affairs officers to keep an eye on reporters in Iraq while in Vietnam the reporters appeared to be unfettered. In fact, the military in Vietnam aided and abetted reporters' movements.

Unlike the reporters who covered Vietnam, in Iraq, the journalists signed an agreement acknowledging that all comments of military personnel are “on the record.” Not all reporters, however, abided by that agreement, and nothing happened to them as a result. “You make certain agreements with the military,” said Kotok. “But the most important thing is everything is on the record. So when you are there, we were in embed status all the time over there. Now we got kicked from unit to unit to unit. We would be embedded with one today and somebody else Thursday and then back to another one and they would track you.” Kotok said the only trouble he had with military press officers was in Baghdad because “they wanted to be right on top of you.” The problem with military minders being present is that it has a tendency to chill an interview with soldiers and Marines, particularly those in the enlisted ranks who are afraid of saying something that would antagonize superiors or which would get him or her in trouble.

Sig Christenson said “it doesn’t work” to have “public affairs people sitting in on interviews with young soldiers or airmen or Marines. It’s counter productive. It completely transmits the wrong message. We are sitting there defending freedom. What freedom: the freedom to be intimidated by public affairs officers? That’s nuts.”

Pyle said that when reporters went into the field in Vietnam, there were “almost always” escort officers accompanying them. “As far as interviews were concerned you could sit down and talk to anybody and the escort officers really did not intervene. They might listen and once in a while you might meet some uptight guy who might try to steer it you know a little, and you would say ‘come on, leave me alone, let the guy talk’ You could intimidate the escort officers more than they could intimidate you and most of the

soldiers were not going to be intimidated. ‘What are they going to do to me? Send me to Vietnam?’ And that was kind of the attitude that they had so we didn’t have a problem.”

The fact that reporters were likely to quote the soldiers and Marines by name may have had the greatest effect on the content coming out of Iraq. The embedded rules agreement that contained the “on-the-record” interview requirements “looks as long as a car contract when you get a new car,” according to Christenson. “And it had sub clause C and B and D, and you forgot about that damn thing as soon as you left the building.” Not all reporters abided by it. Harris said there were times when he didn’t identify a Marine source to protect him from retribution. When a Marine had said something derogatory about the war, “he never said to me don’t use my name,” Harris said. “He just said what he said. I knew if I printed his name, he would get in trouble. If I felt like I needed his name to make a fact stand up, yes, I will use it. I needed his sentiment, which was much more important.” Harris said he did not identify a Marine on another occasion as the source of a quote, and that later there was an inquiry about who made the remark. Harris said he told the Marine officers asking about the source of the quote that he wasn’t going to divulge the name. “They never came back and asked,” Harris said. On another occasion, a Marine officer provided Harris with information with the understanding that it would not be attributable to him. Harris abided by that agreement.

The ability to promise anonymity to a source is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, the tactic smoothes a relationship in the sense that a source might be more willing to provide information to a journalist, knowing that the source bears no responsibility or faces no possible repercussion for providing the information. Crucial material that might not otherwise be disclosed comes to light that way. The journalist carries the professional

responsibility of weighing the information within the context of the source's credibility. The protection of an identity can provide information that could bring down a presidency as in Watergate. But not naming sources can also undermine the credibility of an account. In recent years, the practice has fallen into disfavor, generally, and the fact that the embed rules required "on the record" interviews without a doubt further discouraged the use of confidential sources in Iraq.

By contrast, in Vietnam, both Pyle and Esper said they routinely relied on confidential sources. "We could quote people without divulging who they were," Pyle said. "Today this is very rare. We can't do this anymore. We don't do it the same way. But then, we were able to do that. And you look at some AP stories and there would be a whole story with no names in it. And we knew who they were and they were reliable or we wouldn't be using them. They were senior officers. We couldn't use their names. New York understood that. That changed over the years and new criteria were introduced after Vietnam in which you have to...you can't use 'sources said' the way Sy Hersh invented the term 'sources said.' You know you don't do that anymore."

Pyle said he favored the change with some qualification. "I'm all in favor of sources being identified. I think it's important that that be the standard. I also recognize where there are circumstances where you have to amend that standard. You have to deal with the question that if you use somebody's name you are not going to get the person to talk. You get the information only on the basis of anonymity and you have to have established a reputation that entitles you to be trusted. People have to have confidence that you are not making this up; that the person you are talking to said it and that that person had the authority and knowledge to say what he said. It's a tough thing because in

wartime there are a lot of cases where people aren't going to want to do that: going public. Mostly in Iraq, you are going to see anonymous quotes, but it is held to a minimum, much less of that than there was in Vietnam. We did whole stories where nobody was quoted by name. It didn't make the stories less authoritative. They were absolutely right, you know."

Esper said he believed the requirement that all sources must be identified inhibits the flow of information. "In Saigon, we just used 'sources' or 'a senior military official.' Let's say you have to quote everybody by name. If I'm sitting down with a captain who is a career officer is he going to tell me anything that would be critical because he knows somebody is going to read this and see somebody's name there and they are going to take action against him? Maybe not directly, but his career is ruined. They will put something in his personnel file and so they are not going to take that chance because this is their career. So it hurts your chances of having any ...well not hurts... it kills any chance of having any sources. When you say we have to quote you by name, they won't agree to that, especially a military person."

Esper had an elaborate network of sources, including public affairs people, who would tell him what was going on, even if it was critical of military operations. He reported on secret air strikes the U.S. was carrying out in Cambodia and Laos, relying on information supplied by an Air Force public affairs officer with the Strategic Air Command. Because the ground fighting was getting most of the publicity in the war, the public information officer was giving tips to Esper because "he wanted publicity for the B-52s."

The military's willingness to help correspondents get to the scenes of battles or to provide a berth is another big difference between Vietnam and Iraq. In Vietnam, the military was more accommodating.

"Access is critical," Christenson said. "If you don't have access, you can't report." But Christenson said local commanders have tremendous discretion on whether they want to allow an embedded reporter to visit their units. "And then the commander also has complete control in dis-embedding you if he just doesn't like your looks. He can say 'I want you out of here' and you've heard some of the people in the military today, maybe the commander figures the reporter has been there too long. The people out there who are making those decisions seem to be making those decisions either because they have a visceral dislike of the media, or because they are worried how bad stories are going to affect their careers, and don't doubt that that isn't an issue in any commanders' minds all the way down to captain, and reporters in turn have gotten turned off on the process because they have gone to the point where they no longer believe that this is a fair process."

Christenson cited the case of a reporter and photographer for the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, who was kicked out of his embedded slot for publishing photographs of battle-damaged vehicles. "The *Virginian-Pilot* is probably not going to be interested in embedding again, not for a long time," Christenson said. He pointed out that newspapers across the country were aware of the incident, which will bear on whether they want to have reporters embedded with the military. He said the "good vibrations" that were established between the media and the military at the beginning of the Iraq War later evaporated. He used as an example the difficulty he had in writing a story about military

medicine and the resistance he encountered attempting to visit a field hospital that treated wounded soldiers flown in from Baghdad.

Christenson said it seemed that field commanders were reluctant to let journalists spend time with their units. “Maybe those guys aren’t as squared away or as gung ho about the war as they want us to think.” He said a Marine training guide encouraged Marines to emphasize the positive. “Are we suggesting that when they do Marine media training that they are suggesting to the young Marines that they lie or that they dissemble in some form or fashion?” Christenson said he had an interview with a high-ranking Marine officer, and that he knew he wasn’t getting truthful answers about the levels of Iraqi troops who had been successfully trained. He believed that the officer should have told him truth because the lieutenant colonel is supposed to abide by a code. “I’m sorry but you can’t advertise yourself as a man of honor and then not tell me the truth.”

Michael Phillips of the *Wall Street Journal* believes that embedding gives him much better access than he would otherwise have, but that the military doesn’t like the press in general. “You will find there are lots and lots of officers and enlisted who have this Vietnam era mindset, even if they weren’t even born during Vietnam, that the press is their enemy and much more liberal than they are.” Phillips said reporters have to win their trust by writing accurate and fair stories about what they are doing.

“Some days being an embedded reporter and you wake up and they love you and they see a story and say, ‘That’s great, you know. That’s it. That’s our life.’ And sometimes they wake up and they hate you.” Phillips said he has been threatened with expulsion from covering a Marine battalion on three different occasions. “Is it easy to have 900 people angry with you, heavily armed young men, angry with you in the

morning? No. But you don't go into journalism to be loved. Nobody loves to get a bitching phone call in the morning; nobody loves to get a bitching phone call from somebody who has an M-16, but you have to do it. Otherwise you are not doing your job. I hope that I have been able to achieve the balance of writing objectively but also writing intimately."

Bundy said from the books he's read about Vietnam, it was a much easier war to cover simply because of mobility. "When you talk to those guys, they just jump on a Huey and they go out," Bundy said. "There was no jumping on a Huey for us. You had to be manifested and you were 'space A' (space available). I think it would have been easier to tell the story in Vietnam if it's bad because there was no way the government or the military back then would really get that. By the time they got it, you could be a hundred miles upstream, whereas they know exactly what we do tomorrow. Now you have to do the paperwork and the disclaimers and get yourself on a flight. Because of the way the world has moved, it's tougher to move throughout the country."

George Esper said the "huge advantage" reporters in Vietnam had over those in Iraq was access. "The best way to report a story is to be there. And you were able to do that in Vietnam for the most part." The difference in the level of access between Vietnam and Iraq is best demonstrated by an anecdote that Esper told. One of the best known examples of the limits placed on the media during the Iraq War is the prohibition on taking photographs of flag draped coffins as they arrive in the United States. One of Esper's most vivid Vietnam stories recounted a trip he took in a U.S. military transport plane that was filled with the bodies of dead soldiers. Esper and the plane's loadmaster were the only living people in the freight section of the plane. Esper was in the

demilitarized zone and had covered some fighting. When it tapered off, he asked a pilot if he could hitch a ride back to Saigon. The pilot agreed and told Esper the flight would leave later in the day.

“A few hours later the crew comes back and he said we are ready to go, get aboard. So they went into the cockpit and I went into this freight section of this big C-130 and I was just stunned, and I looked around and I saw these scores of body bags and I am sitting in the middle of them in a bucket seat. I don’t know how I kept my sanity. Now, can you imagine this happening in Iraq where say recently a helicopter crashed? I think there were 12 dead. Who is going to allow you to get on a flight with 12 dead Americans? It just would never happen.

“The other thing is we had I think in Vietnam just hundreds of helicopters, and a lot of our travel was by helicopter which I don’t see in Iraq. And if you had the courage and stamina, you could go anywhere you wanted. That I think is the big difference between Vietnam and Iraq. With Vietnam, the access, it was just unbelievable. And even the military would cooperate with you. They would take you anywhere you wanted to go and we also would go into battles. And in Iraq, the military is not cooperative fully I think with the correspondents. In other words, you can’t in Iraq say today call the public affairs officer and say ‘hey, captain, I need a ride to wherever there is some action going on. You got a helicopter going in there?’ In Vietnam, you could drive to an air base, check in with the public affairs person and say ‘where is the action?’ And they’d tell you and they’d say ‘you want to go in’ and you’d say ‘yes’ and they’d arrange for a helicopter to fly you in. It was a great war to cover. I don’t think we’ll ever again see a war ever where you had the access that we had in Vietnam.”

By contrast in Iraq, according to Bundy, “now you have some PAO come up to you and say ‘we have something going on but I can’t really tell you.’”

“There were no controls on us,” added Esper. “And if the commander approved and he wanted you there, he had no problem. I think the troops in Vietnam wanted their story told and we were given that freedom to do it to a certain extent. Whereas in Iraq, the Bush administration has completely taken control of that story and they want to shut out the news, the bad news. They want to shut it out.”

Esper believes the military of today wants to limit the press because of the Vietnam experience and the notion that the press lost the Vietnam War. “Once they perceived that the press lost the war, which is silly, you know their perception was, you were sending all these horrible photos back and your reports were negative. The photos I mentioned were the execution of the Viet Cong in the street and the little girl hit by a napalm strike. So the military said, ‘all right we learned a good lesson. We are not going to give them access anymore’ and they haven’t. And they’ve gotten tighter and tighter.

“After Gulf War I, there were so many protests and reporters and TV crews were up in arms. They said ‘hey, this system isn’t going to work.’ So they came up with this system of embedding. To me, it was a little improvement but again I think to me the only thing is open access because look at the embedding system. You sign all these agreements that you have to quote people by name, and I’m told it’s a nine- or 10-page document and I don’t like that. And again the military exercises control over you. The other thing I don’t like about embedding is if you decided to leave, okay, but you can’t get back in and they you have to go and embed all over again. In other words, under this embedding system, if you are with a unit and they have no action, you can’t switch to

somewhere where it is. It would take days. In the Vietnam War, let's say I'm in the Central Highlands and nothing is going on, I can get out on the first helicopter. They can get me out and I can go somewhere else with no paperwork, nothing. So that's the difference: access and flexibility. You didn't have that in Gulf War I and you don't have it now in Gulf War II."

Access difficulties reduced the numbers of reporters in the field in Iraq. Ron Harris said he and Cutraro were the only journalists covering the attacks on a Marine outpost in Husaybah on Iraq's border with Syria, while more reporters were in Fallujah, which is closer to Baghdad. "Here's how that works. Fallujah is 40 minutes out of Baghdad. You can get in your car and drive over to Fallujah, cover that war, drive back and sleep in a nice hotel and eat good food. But if you go all the way up to Husaybah, you eat crappy Marine Corps food, you are getting shot at every day and you are sleeping on a cot in an un-airconditioned place and it's not a lot of fun. I don't think they ever had two journalists up there at the same time. And it's that old thing if the tree falls in the woods. The trees were falling everywhere but there was no one there to report it." Harris and Cutraro covered an intense battle in Hsaybah in April 2004, when five Marines were killed in a coordinated attack launched by insurgents who wanted to relieve U.S. military pressure on Ramadi and Fallujah. Harris and Cutraro were the only journalists present to report the battle.

Similarly, Kotok and Bundy said they were the only reporters who covered a Marine outpost at a place called Camp Korean Village near the Syrian border. "Most of the time we were the only journalists there," Kotok said. "I think we were the only reporters who had ever been there. You know 700 Marines in the further outpost west."

The village was named during the regime of Saddam Hussein for the Korean workers who lived there during the construction of the highway between Baghdad and Amman, Jordan. Kotok said he and Bundy were often times the only journalists with the military. “Most of the bases we were on, we were the only reporters there,” Kotok said.

George McArthur said the military’s attempt to influence coverage in Iraq was nothing new. But the difference between the two wars appeared to be access and the number of reporters to cover what was happening. “The military information officers were always employing what we call today ‘spin;’ they’ve been doing that as far as I’ve had anything to do with them,” McArther said. “In Iraq, the guys say they are restricted to official sources in that so-called ‘green zone.’ I’m disinclined to be critical of their inability to get out of that green zone mentality because they are risking their ass and I’m not. So you have to leave it up to their judgment.” McArthur believes the press coverage in Vietnam was more diverse with much more competition. “At one time there were more than 1,000 people accredited to MAC-V (Military Assistance Command-Vietnam) in Saigon. They were people ranging from the gardening news to the *New York Times* and everything in between. So you had a lot more coverage of lesser stories.”

Richard Pyle said he didn’t realize how few reporters there were in Iraq. “Everybody’s left. Basically this press corps must number 50 people, if that, including technicians, whereas in Vietnam, the press corps was an amorphous group that would swell up and then shrink depending on the crisis of the moment. We would have as many as 400 people in the press corps down to 150 to 200. Most of the time, it was probably round 150 to 200.”

Technology Speeds Communication

Coverage of Iraq and Vietnam differs substantially because of improvements that have taken place in communication. The news travels faster and reaches people through more media. Using a laptop computer and a satellite telephone, reporters can whisk stories from the field by way of the Internet. Satellite telephones enable reporters to dictate live from the battlefield. If an editor has a question, he/she can call the reporter by satellite or query him or her by way of the Internet. Developments don't have to wait until the next edition of the newspaper is delivered, or even until the next television or radio newscast. Reports can be posted instantly on the Internet or cable television. Talk-back communication enables the readers/viewers to become involved as well. Families and friends of the soldiers involved in the stories can access the reporters and question them. Feedback from the soldiers themselves is possible now with the fact that laptops enable them to quickly read what the reporters have written by way of the Internet. None of this was possible in Vietnam, and this is a huge difference.

During the invasion of Iraq, Ron Martz was able to call in developments and observations as the war unfolded. "I remember particularly April 9th, the night we were going into Baghdad to stay. We were right on deadline and remember I was on the satellite phone dictating to a guy back in the office, about first American troops into downtown Baghdad. And I can remember the guy, who was very good at taking dictation on the other end, and there was machine gun fire and noise and RPGs (rocket propelled grenades) all over the place and he said 'what's that noise in the background?' And I said, 'machine gun fire,' and he said 'you're dictating!' And I'm like 'yeah.' And I got

done with that and I called CNN describing, too, what's going on. It was the immediate communications almost instantaneously being able to get stuff back from the battlefield almost instantaneously as it was occurring."

Christenson said: "We were filing in real time. I could file a battle story two hours after the battle had happened or as quickly as I could file a story. As quickly as I could file it, it would be up and it would be on the Internet. I didn't really appreciate what dramatic changes in technology were going to bring. It had a lot of effect on us. We just saw a big increase in our Internet web site. We saw an increase in circulation of our newspaper."

Harris said the technology was "huge. Our ability to file was so dramatically improved because of the Internet and because of the satellite phone and because of thumb drives and all that stuff. And you can write it on Joe's computer and take your story and run it 50 miles away and plug it into something else's and send it via email even though your computer is trashed."

By contrast, reporters working in Vietnam dealt with typewriters, telephones of dubious quality and a radio link that was often disconnected. "We had...what's the standard rate of the teletype, I think it's 64 words a minute," said McArthur. Esper described how paper tape was punched with a teletype machine and how the tape was fed into a transmitter. He said the communications out of Vietnam "were just terrible. You had only a radio signal which was very erratic and that radio signal depended on atmospheric conditions. That's the only way you could send out the wire stories. You had no satellite, no cable, a radio signal, and it often broke down. It was so frustrating because you'd be sitting on a big story but the wire is down. Usually, when the wire went

down, so did the telephone, down, which were also radio signals and so our photos were all sent by radio signals. We spent probably 50 percent of our time reporting and writing, 25 percent on communications and 25 percent on logistics, getting to places. But getting to places was pretty easy. The communications to me were the biggest problem. Often for example, the photos would be washed out. In other words at the other end, the images were just blurred and sometimes we would have to send our photos, they called them radio photos, two or three times before they were useable. I often think in Vietnam, in 1965, when I was up in the northern zone, can you imagine if I had had just a computer and a satellite dish or a generator? Unbelievable how you could have been writing your story in the middle of a battle because there was no censorship so you could have been with a rear company back there sending stories immediately.”

The new technology would also have aided free lance reporters who needed an infrastructure in Vietnam just to get stories back to their publications. “If you didn’t have a headquarters in Saigon to relay your copy you were dead,” said McArthur. “If you were a free lancer for example in Vietnam, your difficulties were great. You had to have a friend or buddy or somebody in Saigon who would take it and give it to somebody going out to the airport to take it to Hong Kong and do things like that. If you were a freelancer, you scrounged on your own. Or you had to come back to Saigon and go down to the PPT (cable telegraph company) and file it yourself.”

Kotok and Bundy, working for the *Omaha World-Herald*, had no infrastructure to support them while in Iraq. Each had separate computers and they had a satellite telephone system with a dish. Kotok said stories were often written on their computers, stored on a thumb drive and then sent via a military system. Sometimes the satellite

system was used if the military system was too slow. “Most of the time, we used email,” Kotok said.

The reporters who covered Vietnam believe that having this technology would have made stories more accurate. Fixes to copy could have been communicated more quickly. Misunderstandings caused by delays or interruptions in communications could have been avoided. If the reporters could have seen instantly how their copy was edited, problems in interpretations could be clarified quickly. And because the troops could read the final product, it was more likely to be carefully written and handled. “I think it would require him (the reporter) to be more honest, or should I say a bit more careful with his facts and that would improve the final product,” McArthur said of the Iraq reporting experience.

Pyle said he couldn't imagine what it would be like to have a satellite telephone and calling New York with developments. “Who knows how it would have affected the war,” Pyle said. “It may have shortened it for all I know.” Pyle believes it would have made the reporting more accurate, since a reporter in the field could call an editor immediately with corrections. “It removes some of the excuses that reporters would have for making mistakes: the time lapse or bad connection or all the different things that might have happened or somebody at the other end having to fill in the blanks because the whole story didn't arrive. The technology today is so different and so advanced that it almost requires that everything to be error free.”

The fact that troops could quickly read what had been written about them adds an entirely new dimension to the coverage. And the fact that parents and friends back home can communicate with the troops and the reporters by way of the Internet provides

another facet foreign to Vietnam coverage. Reporters in Iraq said the instant feedback did not substantially affect what they reported, although it may have caused some adjustments to approaching some sensitive stories. In all cases the reporters said feedback from troops and families did not affect story content.

Kotok said the fact that soldiers could read what had been written about them was “probably a huge difference from Vietnam. Everybody’s on computers. Everybody’s getting it like that. They are getting emails right back. They are hearing from Aunt Shirley: ‘read about you today.’” Asked how that affected reporting, Kotok said early on during his tour he sat down with a commander of the National Guard unit they were covering because Kotok knew there would be concern about how the families back home would be reading about what was happening to the troops. “And so we had to tell them right away we cannot sugar coat what we are doing, what’s going on and we will not do that,” Kotok said. “But we can also not scare them and not over-dramatize.” The first day Kotok and Bundy were with the Nebraska unit in Ramadi, five soldiers in an accompanying unit were killed. “And so we wrote about that,” Kotok said. “That was a tough one. We actually probably pulled our punch a little bit there only because our first day we didn’t want to piss people off. So we held it a day. That’s a safe one.”

In stories that Kotok wrote about the violence, he was sensitive to who was reading them. “I guess the way it changed the stories we wrote for example was on the story where the Humvee got blown up that I was with, I made sure in that story by the second or third graph everybody knew that the people in that Humvee got up and walked away. Rather than...you could have written it several ways. That could have been the end of the story. So did I protect the families? Yes. Did it change the story? No.”

Reporters in the field got several different reactions from the troops through this feedback loop. Kotok said one very tough staff sergeant complained to him that his copy was “scaring the families” who otherwise did not know what the Army unit was doing. Kotok responded that he’d already discussed the situation with the commander. “We understand that it’s sensitive. It’s our families, too. I said we can’t sugar coat it. We won’t over-dramatize it. We won’t make it sound like you are going through hell every single minute because you aren’t. But we can’t sugarcoat it either.”

Cutraro said he never had any problems because Marines would see his photos published on the Internet. “I think they view it as they are sacrificing themselves because they are asked to do that, and I think they have no problem with us reporting that,” Cutraro said. “I think actually the opposite is true. When there is no one there to do that (reporting), it hurts them a lot more.”

Harris said the Marines read his stories on the Internet the day they were printed. “The command elements saw it. The guys who were in the story saw it. Everybody saw the story. It’s wasn’t going to be two weeks.” He said that when the Marines did bad things “we wrote about them.” Harris reported on how Marines in the initial invasion mistakenly killed two television reporters. “We wrote that story and put it in the newspaper the next day.” He said he admired the Marines because “if you got it right, they never got mad at you. If they trust you to be fair and accurate and explain what really happened. ‘Don’t make apologies for us. If we screwed up, we screwed up.’”

The Internet played a big role in forming the audience for the stories Harris wrote and the photos that Cutraro published. While both worked for a St. Louis newspaper, they developed a following among those who lived near Twenty-Nine Palms, California, the

home base of the Marine unit they were covering. Families and friends of military men and women kept track of their loved ones on the Internet with the help of embedded reporters. “Families there realized we were the only ones giving news about their loved ones,” Cutraro said. “We became celebrities out in California.”

“It’s interesting,” said Phillips. “I think the biggest fans of the embedded reporters program are the mothers, fathers, wives, husbands, brothers and sisters of the troops. Without a doubt, they almost don’t care what you write. They just want to know what their guys are going through. And I’m still in contact with parents, a lot of parents, widows, you know who just have something that I wrote or the fact that I wrote meant something to them because it was their only connection to their 21-year-old uncommunicative soldier or Marine who was out there in the middle of danger doing something that at home they could not understand.”

Christenson said the Internet might have facilitated the embedding process because Internet access was a way for soldiers to verify the competence of reporters covering them. “The soldiers could get on their laptops and they would look at our stories. They could see what we were writing. There was a pretty instant way of verifying that these were good reporters or these weren’t good reporters and as they saw our work, they were very impressed. They said ‘this was very professional’ and we said ‘it better be; we’ve been doing it a long time.’” Christenson said for the folks back home, the reporters were like the “canary in the coal mine,” because families would use the reporter’s presence as an indication of the safety of the unit.

The fact that the Americans were winning at the beginning of the war played a role in the military’s acceptance of what Christenson was doing. “If they were losing, it

would have been much tougher to do stories and it would have been much tougher to get them in the paper because nobody wants to read about losing. Americans love a winner. They can't stand losing and they don't want to hear about it."

In addition to advancing the speed of war stories, Internet technology provided new story platforms and new news forums never envisioned at the time of the Vietnam War. The Internet provided the opportunity for web logs and "happy snaps," and gave the reporters the chance to ingratiate themselves with soldiers by letting them use their advanced technology to maintain contact with their families. In the early weeks of the war, before the soldiers got their own Internet connections established, journalists sent and retrieved email messages between soldiers and their families.

Christenson sent news stories by way of a web log, which he said people loved. "I have had so much reaction to those blogs, it just blows my mind. I am so shocked by it. I expected nothing from the blogs."

When Richard Pyle was in Vietnam, sometimes he'd see a soldier who would ask him, "would you call my mom and tell her something?" Pyle's response was, "Well, it's pretty hard to do. I can't really make phone calls from here. This is Vietnam. I'm here, too.' Phone calls were difficult. We didn't have much communication with New York. Only in emergencies when everything collapses."

But by the time of the Iraq War, things had changed dramatically. So much so that reporters, contrary to prohibitions imposed by military commanders, allowed soldiers and Marines to use their satellite telephones to call home. "Andy and I would hand the satellite phone to the Marines and say 'okay, you've got 20 minutes, divvy up the time,'" Harris said. "'You've got three minutes each. I'll be back for the phone that I forgot that I

gave you.” Harris said he remembered when he came back from Iraq the father of a Marine said he was so grateful when his son called him on the satellite telephone and “what that meant to me.”

“That kind of thing helped us out a lot in terms of getting in to some degree with the Marines,” Harris said. “And there were times when you just felt like look, it was a battle. They expected a big battle. This might be the last time this guy can talk to his wife, to his girlfriend or his parents. Go ahead and take the phone. The likelihood of me dying was much less so than him. I would say, ‘go ahead and take the phone.’ I would say ‘I’ll be gone for 30 minutes. I’ll come back and expect my phone to be laying the same place and I will pick it back up.’ Those things were really important from a morale standpoint.”

Christenson said soldiers used his satellite so much that his newspaper had a \$30,000 phone bill in April of 2003. “But you know what, that was all good. Nobody was unhappy about that. It was the right thing to do. It endeared us to the soldiers but I didn’t do it for that reason. I just thought I’m not going to be a pig. If they want to use the phone or the laptop...I used to go to sleep at night when we finally got to Baghdad, I’d just say ‘go ahead and use the computer, just shut it off and bring it in.’ And so I just asked them to bring it inside and put it in my backpack. And I’d go to sleep. And I don’t know how long they would use that damn thing.”

Reporters also used the Internet to do favors for the military people they were covering. Harris said that before the war began, while the Marines were getting ready to fight from their staging area in Kuwait, he and Cutraro would come down the base and let the troops write emails, which they would send back from their hotel. “I would send them

all out and the families would respond and I'd give them back to them." Cutraro said he got messages from families "constantly. They want to know everything. 'Give us any bit of information. Deliver this message.'"

Both the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and the *Omaha World-Herald* used their Internet presence to provide photos and text for vignettes that would not otherwise appear in their printed editions. The *Post-Dispatch* called them "postcards from Kuwait" and the *World-Herald* called them "happy snaps." In the weeks leading up to the start of the war, as Harris and Cutraro tried to build a relationship with the Marines they hoped to cover, they collected material for an Internet feature that readers, and especially families, loved. "We'd find guys from our readership area and we'd say 'look we are going to shoot your picture and do a little bio on you and we will publish it on-line back home,'" Cutraro said. "It was a tremendous amount of work. It was crap work. But the readers and the families loved it. It was such a simple solution to justify us being there and since there was nothing happening news wise. It was like we were the lifeline for the families and the unit we were with at Twenty-nine Palms, California. And the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* started getting subscriptions from California."

Bundy supplied the *World-Herald* with a steady stream of photos, most of which were destined for Internet distribution. "I tried to shoot as many faces as I could so we would put them on line. Everyday they'd run two to three pictures in the paper and 10 to 12 pictures on line. I would put the pictures 'web use only,' and they would go on the web. That wouldn't be a picture from the newspaper, but you know some mom sees that, it makes them happy. The outpouring was unbelievable that the newspaper got. I could not believe how many families members were relieved that they could see their loved

ones. I had no idea what the outpouring would be. A girlfriend told us she cried because she saw a picture of (her loved one) and he looked good. We called them ‘happy snaps’ and I tried to get as many of those out as I could. I’ve never had this type of reaction from as many people on one assignment.”

Military Experience

Reporters who covered the Vietnam War were more likely to have had military experience than those who covered the Iraq War. Of the three interviewed journalists who worked in Vietnam, all had served in some branch of the military. Of the seven journalists who covered the Iraq War, only one had been in the military. Precisely how this affected their coverage of military operations, if at all, is difficult to discern. However, it’s clear that those who had military experience had a head start in understanding how the military worked, and may have had a better ‘feel’ for the story. In at least one case, a reporter with military experience believed that experience engendered more trust in him with a unit commander.

Although this is a small sample, it’s likely to hold true for most of the male journalists who served in Vietnam. Most of them likely would have had some military experience, since they had been subject to the draft, which ended in 1973. Most of those who covered the Iraq War were too young to be subject to the draft. The mere fact that the military had training exercises for journalists prior to the Iraq conflict was an indication of the fact that the Pentagon knew most reporters had no first-hand experience

with the military. Journalists who covered Vietnam believed that their military experience helped them better understand what was developing.

Harris said he didn't know anything about the military prior to going to Iraq. "I couldn't tell a staff sergeant from a gunny sergeant. I didn't know if a cluster was a major or a lieutenant colonel or what the difference was with a bird colonel." Cutraro, Phillips, Christenson, Bundy and Kotok all said they had no military experience. Ron Martz, the oldest of the Iraq War reporters interviewed, served in the U.S. Marines from 1965 to 1968. He believed that relationship helped him get on friendly terms with Maj. Gen. Barry McCaffrey, the commander of a U.S. Army division during the Persian Gulf War, which Martz covered. The relationship that Martz struck up with McCaffrey provided access to battle plans before the war began.

McArthur was in the Navy during World War II. Esper was in the Air Force for two and one half years after getting out of college. Pyle dropped out of college for a while and went into the military to complete his draft obligation and then finished college on the GI bill. "Two years in the military was the greatest education I ever had," Pyle said. He was a company clerk in the Army, assigned to Japan. "I got a chance to go overseas and become a more well-rounded person. And I was in the middle of Tokyo. It was a great assignment and what I learned from that and was able to apply as a war reporter was the understanding of military structure, the military nomenclature, and understanding the military mind, understanding why things happen the way they do and why people do certain things. What causes events to take place in a certain way; the disposition of forces, all the simple mechanics of running a military operation. I had never been in a war situation before Vietnam, but I understood how it worked. I could

speak their language, and I think the difference between that and reporters who had not been in the military was significant. It's interesting to me that at the time during the Vietnam War, many if not most reporters, had military experience like I did. We had been of that age group. We had been obligated to serve. The press corps in Saigon was a much more military-savvy press corps than any have been since for those reasons. After this, the drafted ended and people didn't go into the military. You didn't have automatic military background or knowledge that we had and this showed in reporting, and every war comes along and you get a whole new educated cadre of reporters who learn about this stuff for the first time. The press in the first Gulf War was almost ludicrous, the lack of military understanding, competence, the grasp for how things worked; people covering this war, not only had they never heard a shot fired in anger, they had never talked to anybody in uniform. I remember a woman asking 'what's an azimuth?' talking to an artillery guy. Well, you know he's explaining what azimuth means. They didn't understand the language. And it's a great advantage in having been there in such a way that you could understand the language. I knew what these people were about."

The Lure of the "Big Story"

A bond that transcends these two generations of reporters and unites them across time is the reason each expressed for wanting to cover war. The allure of covering the "big story" is the prime attraction for those who went to Vietnam and to Iraq. Some, when presented with the opportunity, didn't feel as though they could turn it down. Despite the dangers, the journalists were drawn to the challenge. Some admitted to

getting a “high” from being in combat; some so much so, that they either returned or wished they could. At least one is embarrassed by the feeling that he wanted to cover a war. And all agree that the experience broadened them as journalists and advanced their careers. Some had trouble readjusting to life outside of war.

Kotok, at 58 years of age, got his chance when another writer turned down the newspaper’s offer. He has three grown children, and his wife knew it was something he always wanted to do. “Probably because I am of the Vietnam generation, I mean the generation just preceding me, that just barely preceded me, their journalistic careers were really made in Vietnam.” Kotok believed war correspondence is “where really good journalists try to test themselves.” Asked if he’d like to go again, Kotok said, “In deference to my wife, no. I’m glad I didn’t do this when I was younger because I would have wanted to do it all the time. It’s nice. It’s something I wanted to do in my career. I’m nearing the end of my career. I’ve done it. I’m pleased with the work I was able to do. It was professionally very fulfilling. Do I need that adrenalin rush every single day? No.”

Bundy viewed the chance to cover war as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that he didn’t want to pass up. “I’d love to go back,” he said. “It’s just you get used to that hustle and bustle, that adrenalin. I really enjoyed that. Coming home and shooting the pet of the week got a little harder.”

As a photographer, Cutraro’s ideas about going to Iraq have evolved. He admits that his original attraction was “purely selfish.” While he wanted to be among those making a record of what had happened, he also acknowledged that being a “witness to war or combat was one of my deepest curiosities as a human being. That part was like an

unknown and I felt like I had to go do it.” At the same time, he said that part of him must have been in denial about the dangers involved and what the experience might do to him. He believes that if he were presented with the opportunity again, he probably would not go. “And I’m looking at this from a purely personal level, and I’m going to be totally honest about it and I think a lot of people aren’t when they talk about this. And that is a rush over there. That’s a complete high to go do that kind of work and to have survived it. And with any other drug there is a real danger that if you don’t realize what that is, that you are going to keep pushing it and trying to get a higher dose. I feel like I’ve gotten really cynical since doing this story and I’m trying to find out why. And so part of this is almost therapeutic in a sense in that I’m trying to justify in having done it and trying to justify not doing it again. And those are all deeply rooted in the fact that what I did by going over there was extremely selfish.”

Harris said any reporter would want to cover Iraq since it is the biggest story of its time. “What journalist doesn’t want to cover the biggest story? It was as simple as that. I had never covered a war, which is a challenge. Every journalist likes that challenge.” Harris said he wasn’t sure if he felt any “adrenaline rush” while he was there, but there was a unique level of excitement. “You are on a high wire act,” he said. Harris believes the assignment helped his career and enabled his appointment to the Washington bureau of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

To Mike Phillips, “There is no more vivid experience than covering a war.”

After his first assignment in Iraq, Christenson went back a second time “because I missed it. I missed the action. I missed the camaraderie of it. I liked going back. It’s not that I’m an adrenaline junkie because I really don’t like getting shot at, but I really liked

the sense that when I'm there I feel like I'm doing what I was born to do." In all, Christenson has made five trips to Iraq.

In 17 years as a foreign correspondent, Richard Pyle covered six wars beginning with Vietnam. The others were in the Middle East—the Arab-Israeli war in 1973, Lebanon in 1976 and 1982, Iraq-Iran in 1987-88 and the Persian Gulf War in 1991. In examining his willingness to go to Vietnam, Pyle concluded it was based on the observations of his own father, who was too old to serve in World War II. Pyle believed his father was a great man, a high school principal, but that his father always thought he had missed out on something by not being involved in the fight against Fascism, the defining event of his generation. "I had decided that I would not let this happen to me. I would not spend the rest of my life wishing I had done something and wondering what would have happened if I had. So, I made the decision to do it no matter what the risks were. Vietnam was there. That was the big story. It wasn't for everybody. I'm glad it wasn't everybody's cup of tea. But it was mine, and I didn't know that. I didn't know whether I could handle that. I was scared to death. But I thought I could do this for a year or something like that. And five years later, they had to drag me out of the place. I thought it was the greatest story of our time."

For Esper, the experience of covering the Vietnam War marked the defining years of his career and advanced him far beyond where he ever hoped to land at the Associated Press. He was a young reporter in New York in 1965 when American forces were building up in Vietnam and he was asked if he was interested in joining the AP's expanding bureau in Saigon. Esper didn't hesitate. He knew it was good policy in the AP to never turn down an assignment. Also, he said, "I recognized it would be a big story at

the time and it was the first time I had been overseas.” Esper’s initial stay in Vietnam was for one year. “I came back in September of 1966 because I always follow orders and I was told we want you to stay a year.” Back in New York, Esper found himself covering stories that he considered “fluff,” like the English model, Twiggy. He missed Vietnam and he’d read the wire’s Vietnam stories “where there was a lot of action.”

“I thought, God, I got to get back there. I want a piece of the action. I never should have left. I missed my colleagues there: Peter Arnett and Horst Faas.” Esper talked to the AP’s human resources office and the Saigon Bureau Chief Bob Tuckman, who wanted Esper to come back. Esper returned to Vietnam in April of 1967. After two or three years, he was asked if he wanted to return to the U.S. and he said “no.” Then, they stopped asking. Esper stayed through the fall of Saigon and was expelled when the AP bureau was closed in June, 1975. He made periodic revisits to the country. And when the AP was allowed to re-open its bureau in Hanoi in 1993, Esper was its first bureau chief. “I think it propelled me far ahead of where I was intended to go. After having been in Vietnam, 10 years total, having stayed when the Communists took over, the AP treated me very well. I received several promotions. I was made a special correspondent. Personally, I had a difficult time adjusting after the war ended because I had been covering war for 10 years, and now trying to come back and fit into a structured lifestyle, a structured job, was very difficult for me and I wasn’t sure where I belonged or what my future would be.

Esper said he felt “more worthwhile” covering war than anything else he’d done. “I felt I could never do anything, and I feel this way now, more important than covering the Vietnam War. And I think a lot of journalists felt this way. The other factors were I

think it was a story of such great magnitude and any top journalist wants to be involved in a top story; page one every day, your byline, these things meant a lot to me also, to be recognized, to not have to do any minor work. And the third reason was I think the lifestyle: freewheeling, adventurous, exotic.”

Bonding with the Troops

The biggest issue that arose from the debate over the embed system focused on the extent to which reporters living with the troops they are covering would be compromised, if at all, by that experience. How independent can a journalist be, if he/she is living with those being covered and depending upon them for safety? It’s obvious that to recount the events in peoples’ lives, war included, one must get close enough to be in a position to observe and record. However, when is close too close? This issue becomes even more critical in the situation of the Iraq War, in which soldiers and Marines view reporters with suspicion and distrust. To overcome this suspicion and distrust, reporters work to ingratiate themselves with their subjects to gain their confidence.

Journalists who covered the Vietnam War and the Iraq War acknowledged that gaining intimate familiarity with the military was a necessary tactic in their coverage but that it didn’t affect their objectivity. It’s clear from the remarks of many, however, that the relationships made and the experiences endured created bonds of mutual friendship and respect. In some cases the journalists identified with and sympathized with the soldiers they were covering. Still, they said, this relationship would not affect what they reported.

The story that Kotok and Bundy planned to cover was what happened to a Nebraska National Guard unit, Troop A of the 167th Cavalry, once it got to Iraq. But long before the troop went overseas, Kotok and Bundy got to know the soldiers better by covering training activities, preparations to go overseas and the unit's send off. "There is some antagonism between the press and the military and for the short time we were going to be there, we basically eliminated that before we got there," Kotok said. Once there, the journalists tried to keep the soldiers happy by going to the PX for them, buying beef jerky, chewing tobacco or non-alcoholic beer. They accompanied them on missions and witnessed some attacks on their unit. When they returned to Nebraska, they continued to cover them with an eye toward what effect the Iraq experience would have on the soldiers. "We built up this close personal relationship with this particular group and our readers," Kotok said.

Bundy said the soldiers he was covering got used to having him around. "We had done so much with them before, that it was just like second nature. And I think we got better stories and better access. There are very few times when they stopped talking around us if there was a mission being planned because they did trust us not to violate that role." Bundy did not believe this relationship affected his coverage. "When guys got hurt, we reported it. I don't know how I would have handled it if one of them was killed. I don't think that really did affect how I shot pictures because it wasn't negative. I never really had something terrible."

Cutraro said any journalistic relationship has to be built on familiarity. The best sources in Washington, D.C. are created that way. "If you're a Washington reporter you wine and dine the lobbyists and the sources and you remember birthdays and the names

of kids. Why is that a bad thing? You are really trying to cover a story and you can't do that from a bubble. You really have to get close to the story you want to tell and for the American side of the war in Iraq that means you've got to sleep and eat dirt with the service people."

The notion of covering only the American side is one of the issues with the embedded experience. But according to Cutraro, that's something that should be dealt with by editors and others making supervisory decisions about what to cover and how to cover it. "We are not doing a big, broad, sweeping patchwork of the conflict in Iraq. We are doing one guy's story." Asked whether his relationship with the unit affected his coverage, Cutraro said, "Yeah. It made our coverage of them better. It was sympathetic." He said the relationship that was developed with the Marines he was covering was not based on the fact that he was depending on them. "I think the bond we had was that we were all suffering the same, not that we were in debt to them."

Harris said the level of respect and appreciation he and Cutraro achieved with the Marines enabled them to do stories they couldn't do otherwise. "They developed a level of respect for how hard we worked at our craft," Harris said. "They saw how hard we worked to be accurate." At the same time, Harris developed a level of respect and kinship with the Marines—so much so that when they were sent back to Iraq a second time he felt compelled to accompany them. "That brotherhood thing kicked in," Harris said. "Not necessarily a brotherhood but you did have an affinity for the guys who were there, but you did have a feeling, at least Andy did and I did, we needed to go back and continue to tell their story. It was sort of like, if they were there, we should be there. And I have to admit there was a feeling of obligation that you needed to tell their story, because you did

make friends. Honest to God, I didn't realize how many friends I had made until I got there and the next thing I know, I'm hugging guys."

Harris said this relationship did not affect his coverage. After five Marines were killed in a coordinated ambush, Harris covered the unit's retaliation in the town, kicking in doors and searching aggressively for insurgents. "When I wrote that everybody went in and kicked the doors in, I expected to get a little chill. But they said 'good story, Ron, good story, good job.' It reflected what they felt and it reflected what they did and the story basically was that these Marines had turned mean."

George McArthur, who covered wars in Korea and Vietnam, said the idea of becoming buddies with the troops is nothing new. "You develop very lasting friendships in those circumstances. You keep going. You like to go back to specific units because you know people. They would talk to you once you got down with the troops as if you were one of them. No inhibitions at all. 'General So-and-so is a farhead.' 'Sgt. So-and-so is not worth the powder it would take to blow him to hell.' When you were not embedded, you didn't get that bonding that was there, and you didn't get the free flow of information that you would if you were embedded."

During the initial invasion of Iraq, Ron Martz was criticized for helping soldiers. Accompanying an armored unit, a sergeant asked Martz to hold a drip bag for a wounded Iraqi and to accompany him atop an armored personnel carrier back to an aid station. The sergeant said he had no one he could spare. In another incident, Martz helped comfort two wounded American soldiers. Martz wrote stories about both experiences. Journalistic ethicists said Martz had "crossed the line" by becoming part of the battle and abandoning

objectivity. Martz's response: "If it came down to being known as a journalist or a human being, I'd prefer to be known as a human being."

Pyle does not believe a reporter's stories would be affected by living with the troops he or she is covering. "Once again, if you are a professional, you know how to do that job. You can separate that out. I think that's a red herring, basically for any professional reporter. I'm not going to be gulled by these guys. I know when they are trying to do that to me, and I'm not going to put up with that. I'll ignore it or whatever."

War Views

Vietnam and Iraq were very complicated conflicts in terms of political goals and strategic interests. The reasons for fighting were less discernible than previous wars. The 10 journalists interviewed for this study acknowledged that they harbored views about the particular war they were covering but that they did not allow those views to affect coverage. Some began covering the war with no particular view in mind but then one was formed. Others came to the conflict with an understanding of it, only to have it changed in the process. Not all journalists interviewed for this study wanted to share their views. The more distant the war, the greater likelihood it seemed that the reporter was willing to share his view of it. All said it is virtually impossible not to come to some conclusion about a war's value while covering it. And on the nature of whether a reporter is biased, some said the notion of bias might be nothing more than a reflection of how the war is going at any one time.

Bundy said he considers himself a Republican and believed in the Iraq War. But he didn't know what to expect when he arrived in Ramadi. "I went into it open-eyed. I tried to be as fair as possible because you hear all the things you know are embedded journalists biased." Bundy's partner on the assignment, David Kotok said, "I was confused before and I was confused coming back." He said he saw some things that made him angry. For example, all of the improvised explosive devices maiming and killing people, including American troops, were made from weapons that had not been successfully secured in the initial invasion. A lot could have been avoided if more troops had been sent in the first place, Kotok believes. Another conclusion that Kotok reached was that "nobody likes an occupier. That's the history of the world, so why would we think the Iraqis would be any different? At Ramadi, there was no question we were an army of occupation." At the same time, Kotok could understand the level of frustration among American troops confronted by an aggressive insurgency and a population unwilling to help root it out. When they came back from Iraq and were asked to speak to service clubs in Nebraska, Kotok and Bundy were often asked why the journalists never told the good stories about what was happening in Iraq. "We say we were in Ramadi," Kotok said. "There are no good stories."

Harris had a view of the war that he did not wish to share, and said that view did not affect his coverage. "I think sharing your opinion makes readers think that it will affect your coverage and so I've never shared my opinion publicly about the war. The Marines used to ask me all the time, 'Ron, what do you think?' And I would tell them, 'it doesn't matter what I think. What counts is what you think. What you say, what you do, where you go.'"

Cutraro said it's impossible to come at a war story from a completely objective perspective. He said the story he's telling is not a happy story. At the same time, he's documenting what's happening with the aid of his camera lens. "The universal story is you are sending young men and women off to risk their lives and to commit horrible acts of violence on other human beings. And it's not a new story and it's not going to go away. So my interest photographically was documenting that. It's totally apolitical. This is not about this war but about war in general from my perspective."

Phillips has a view of the war that he does not discuss publicly. He hopes it does not affect his coverage. He wrote an entire book about an incident in the war and believes the reader could not come away from the story knowing how Phillips felt about the war. "The question of bias comes up a lot. I am constantly asked by military audiences 'well the media is all liberal so how can we trust their points of view.' People will accuse reporters of having a view of the war." Phillips responds to people by saying to judge the product, and not the person. "Everybody has a point of view about something. If you've covered this war for three years and don't have an opinion about it, then you're a dolt. You haven't been paying attention one way or another. You have to come to some conclusion about it. Are reporters more liberal than your average Marine? Yeah. I'm sure that's the case. Does that mean your reporting is biased? No. Not necessarily. In some cases, I'm sure it is. In some cases, biased in the other way. Remember during the invasion, everybody accused the embedded reporters of being cheerleaders for the military. After the insurgency started to grow, everybody accused the reporters of being anti-military. Maybe what's changed is simply the war and not the nature of the reporters who are covering it."

The Vietnam correspondents are more open about their opinions. Both McArthur and Pyle said they supported the American side. “Yes, it affected how I covered it,” McArthur said. “I was a hawk and I am an unrepentant hawk to this day. And I am sure that I covered things that other reporters would not have covered. My rationalization was that I was giving a full picture of what was going on in certain areas. If I saw a unit building an orphanage, I would do a story about it. Of course, I was working for the AP and there is always a market for that kind of thing. A lot of guys would never even think of that kind of stuff.” McArthur said there were “big picture” reporters who preferred covering the death and destruction. He used as an example John Laurence, a television broadcast journalist, who would only report on the violence. “He never covered anything but the ‘boom booms;’ if he couldn’t hear gunfire in the background, the rest of the country could go piss off that night because he wasn’t going to get on the air because that’s all he cared about. And he made quite a name for himself because he sought that out.” Laurence later wrote a book, *A Cat from Hue*, which McArthur said he would make required reading for every field grade officer if he were in the military. He said the book would show “how narrow reporters can be and narrow and self-centered some of them are.”

McArthur also said he did not believe that most reporters covered the war as Laurence did, and that he believes Vietnam was covered fairly and adequately by the press corps there. He didn’t recall any instance in which the press failed to report what was happening in Vietnam, Korea or Iraq. “The press as a rule will get it done. It’s like an ugly football game. It may be sloppy, but we will take a win. But at the end of the game, the job has been well done, you know what the score was and you know there were

a few bad calls by the referees but you haven't missed a significant detail. And afterward, history in all these instances shows that graphically.”

Pyle said he, too, wanted the U.S. to win, but that the attitude didn't affect coverage. “I think everybody looks at this from the standpoint of your nationality and you look at what's at stake here and what are the interests of this country. You'd be mystified by reasons for the decisions being made to commit to this place. You could be puzzled by that. You wouldn't necessarily understand the all the nuances of the subtleties of that decision being made or even whether it was Eisenhower or was it Kennedy. Who was responsible for us really being there? The debate was going on. All those things aside, when you looked at it you saw the vested interests of the United States of America, the vested interests of western democracy; the vested interests of us versus them and the Cold War. And all the elements of these things, the Vietnam War was the truest proxy war of the Cold War. Korea was the first one. But by the time the Vietnam War came around it was much more clearly defined as to what the Cold War was and what was at stake and the Chinese and the Russians were hating each other already but they were both contributing to the support of the Communist side in Vietnam. If you were there you understood that this was not just a local war. You realized that the action of the Vietcong, even then it had been sponsored. So you looked at it and analyzed it and thought that if the war is here and it is going on, I don't have any doubt who I would like to see win it. I'd like to see us win it. But you didn't take that approach in your journalism, especially in the AP. You can separate these things out. And if you look at the reporting on the Vietnam War from the AP and others there is a lot of stuff in there did not reflect this cheerleading. As a matter of fact we took pride in not being cheerleaders. Not

aggressively anti-military or anti-U.S., but merely cognizant that things were not going very well and this story needed to be told. What went wrong was that the reporters early on discovered they were being lied to; that things were not what they appeared to be, that there was corruption, double dealing, hypocrisy. There was incompetence and there was rampant corruption and in order to tell the story accurately they had to tell that story and that's where it got nasty. The policy might have been good but the execution of it, the implementation of it was a frigging disaster. That was the story that we were telling.”

Esper said he approached the war from a position of neutrality. “I had always hoped the war would end one way or another so people would stop dying, but I never had a bias and I just always prided myself on that, also that I was so objective. I wasn't anti-war. I wasn't pro-war. I was neutral and you had to be in the AP and I think most correspondents were the same way. They didn't have personal opinions about the war. They were out there to report.”

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Limitations of the Research

If a comparison of the wartime experiences of journalists in Vietnam and Iraq is to be precise, the limitations of the study should be clearly identified. For example, while those interviewed were authoritative, the sample is small. In addition, only print reporters were surveyed and no women were included in the sample. In addition, it is in a sense an “apples to oranges” comparison. Consider that for the Vietnam era, AP reporters who spent years there were interviewed as opposed to embedded newspaper journalists who spent months in Iraq. A better comparison would have been to match the longer-serving correspondents in Baghdad with the veterans of Saigon. In addition, this study makes no allowance for the systemic changes that have taken place in journalism that may have affected coverage of these two wars in a broader sense. There has been a gradual deterioration of journalism economics in recent years, affecting news organizations’ abilities to cover all stories, including war stories. Since this research began, two of the veteran journalists who covered Iraq and who were interviewed for this project, Martz and Harris, have taken buyouts offered by their newspapers that had the effect of reducing payroll and eliminating the positions of senior writers. A third person interviewed, Christenson, has also been offered a buyout. These men are casualties of a different sort.

Another major, unmeasured variable affecting the outcome of this research is the nature of the military being covered. An all-volunteer army is probably less likely to be

critical of and quotable about the situation in which they find themselves. In Vietnam, the soldiers and Marines were more likely to be draftees, who were probably more willing to complain about their lot and challenge the decisions made by their commanders. Officers in charge might be more willing to be frank as well, if they were not career leaders but were simply serving out their military commitments. And they would likely be more willing news sources if the reporter would be able to offer them anonymity for their comments.

Avenues for Future Study

This research raises many questions and points to the need for future study. For example, in the area of war correspondence, a simple comparison could be made of attitudes and knowledge of readers and viewers who learned about the two different wars from news organizations. Interviews or surveys of these consumers of wars news could provide one way to measure the perceived differences in coverage. Such a survey may inform about how well Americans were informed about the two different wars and demonstrate what the differences mean in terms of forming public opinion about the wars.

A content analysis of the reports made by those interviewed for this study may shed light on how the rules and conditions affected their reporting. A content analysis, too, might show how much more information was obtained in stories in which reporters were allowed to use anonymous sources in their reports.

Finally, the technological changes that have taken place in the media offer a wide array of potential fields of future study. Content analysis comparisons or surveys of news consumers could be made to show how much material was disseminated by the Internet. Questionnaires might also demonstrate the effect, if any, that web log hosts had on war coverage. A content analysis could be undertaken that measures the differences and similarities of the three kinds of web logs: traditional journalists who supplemented their coverage with blogs, independent, free lance bloggers who challenge mainstream media views, and finally the military blogger who files his or her reports on the Internet while wearing a uniform.

What This Research Means

The coverage of the war in Iraq is the latest stage in an evolution of the relationship between the press and the military. At various stages along the continuum of this relationship, access by the media to the realities of war, and its ability to publish, has varied. From all the literature and all the oral histories, it seems clear that the access the press enjoyed during the Vietnam War was the least encumbered of all. Thus, in any comparison made with regard to the military-media relationship in Iraq, that benchmark of the Vietnam War needs to be noted. It may be unfair to compare the Iraq War with what many believe to be the most accessible and visible war in U.S. history. But it is worth noting that the Vietnam experience has informed all subsequent encounters between the military and the media in the years since: Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf War and now the war in Iraq.

If we view it on a 10-point scale, and the Vietnam War was rated at “10” for most accessible, and Grenada, Panama and the Persian Gulf was came in at “1” for being least accessible, then Iraq War coverage must fall somewhere in between. Certainly access and the ability to tell the story in Iraq were far better than in the Persian Gulf War when reporters were kept in pools, but it is no where near the level of Vietnam coverage. Precisely placing where the Iraq coverage falls is difficult, and any comparison between Iraq and Vietnam must be made with reservations. For example, while some might make a general statement that the reporters in Iraq are showing less of the brutality of war than in Vietnam, one answer is that there is less brutality to show. The casualty figures in Iraq are much smaller. There are no pitched battles. Carnage from a roadside explosion does not equate with the slaughter of a battlefield. Thus, it’s dangerous to compare the coverage of wars without taking into account the fact that the wars themselves are different.

Still, the interviews validate and enhance much of what already exists to some extent in literature. There is an authenticity in the oral history accounts that give authority to some conclusions that can be drawn. In fact, they appear to be indisputable. One finding is that journalists, writers and photographers, in Iraq are constrained from freely covering the war by the dangers of the situation, the military’s unwillingness to facilitate movement of reporters to where the action is, and rules covering embedded journalists that limit what can be published. These explanations partially account for the fact that less of the brutality of war is being shown the American people. If reporters cannot get out into the field to double-check the claims made by the military, there is a greater chance that the pronouncements made by the military will go unchallenged.

While in Vietnam, reporters and photographers faced dangers, but not the random violence that has made journalists in Iraq casualties just like the soldiers. In Vietnam, the military facilitated the movement of reporters to help them do their jobs, while in Iraq mobility is bogged down by red tape. Photojournalists in Vietnam gave the reading public pictures of dead American soldiers. Contrast that with the fact that in December, 2005, the military pulled the press credentials of reporter Louis Hansen and photographer Hyunsoo Leo Kim for publishing photos of battle-damaged Humvees in the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*. In Vietnam, reporters freely quoted sources and protected some with anonymity if necessary to protect a source of information. In Iraq, the rules for reporters required all interviews be “on the record.” For these reasons it’s clear that reporters in Iraq were more constrained than journalists in Vietnam in terms of getting the complete story to the American people.

However, the ability to deliver what they could was greatly facilitated by improved technology. Digital imagery, the Internet, laptop computers, satellite telephones, and storage systems that enabled the transfer of the written word and color photos enabled reporters and photographers to travel light, move quickly and to instantly communicate with their news organizations. People at home could learn faster than ever before what was happening on the battlefield. Reporters in the field could instantly whisk developments onto the Internet for news consumption. Space in a newspaper, or time on the airwaves, were no longer impediments to comprehensive reporting. The Internet provided a limitless forum with multiple feedback systems to enhance communication. The feedback could pay dividends by helping reporters to develop more sources while

servicing as a governor to make sure stories were accurate. The Internet provided the place for more forums and web logs where the news could be found and dissected.

Information that could not be considered legitimate “news” became material that journalists used to fill new roles of personally keeping families informed about their loved ones with “happy snaps” and “postcards from Kuwait.” The ease of communication could have made accounts more accurate since communication was enhanced between reporter and editor. And subjects of the stories, and other involved parties could access and assess stories quickly. The technological improvements might have added to the volume of material being reported by war correspondents and made it easier for free lance reporters to operate. But whether these technological improvements by themselves improved the quality of the information is open to question. The boosts in technology could not solve the problems of getting access to the battlefield or negotiating the rules that limit news coverage. Technology may speed things up but restrictions may mean there is less of a story to tell.

It’s speculation, of course, but it seems clear that if reporters in Vietnam had the technological wonders of the next generation of journalists, the war there would have been a “perfect” war to cover, with speed, accuracy, economy and an unprecedented level of access.

The data also shows that Vietnam era reporters were more likely to have had military experience and thus had a head start over those in Iraq who had none. Any experience that broadens a journalist’s background is valuable. Having been in the military would seem to have at least given reporters better insight into the frustrations of soldier life. Knowledge of such subtleties informs some reporting. A journalist who’s

never been in the military might wonder at an event or development while those with experience would recognize it as being common and un-newsworthy. And having been a soldier might have helped a journalist at least have some common experiences with which to begin to form the basis for a relationship. Those without that experience might be more challenged to demonstrate a kinship with the soldiers which could help “break the ice.”

Similarities are readily identified by this study, as well. Reporters were drawn to cover the wars in Vietnam and Iraq for the same reasons: the challenge of the big story, the possibility of adventure, the unwillingness to miss an opportunity, the desire to test the unknown. Many agreed that the experiences advanced them professionally. In the case of both wars, reporters recounted similar “bonding” experiences in which they purposely covered the military units they were most familiar with, and became friends with some members of these units. The journalists said these relationships did not affect how they covered the units. This claim defies human nature and is open to question, especially for the Iraq journalists who were required to stay with the same units. The claim is difficult to test objectively. Both sets of journalists also said that they harbored personal feelings about the wars they were covering, although only those furthest away from the war in terms of time were willing to discuss those feelings. They said that while they had personal beliefs about the war, they did not let these attitudes affect their reporting.

The differences demonstrated here indicate that Americans have been given less about what is happening in Iraq than Americans saw and heard from Vietnam. If we recollect some of the visual images from the Vietnam War—the summary execution of a

terrorist in the street, a child whose clothes have been burned off by napalm, the bodies of dead American soldiers lined up on the ground—it's obvious that the American people were given a truer sense of the brutality of the conflict then as opposed to now. There is no doubt that the coverage is different, but the margin of that difference is solely attributable to the comparisons that were demonstrated by this research.

This study makes absolutely no finding on whether one war was better covered than the other. The differences in the reporting that emerged from the two theaters have nothing to do with the courage, interest, competence, or energy of the journalists. Journalists of the Vietnam era say, however, that Iraq reporters labor in nearly impossible conditions and face much greater life-threatening danger than ever existed in Vietnam. There's nothing to show that the journalists of the Vietnam era were better or worse than those covering Iraq. There are fewer reporters covering Iraq than the number that covered Vietnam, which in itself drives the amount and quality of reporting. Having more reporters usually means greater competition and should improve the amount and quality of the reporting. However, this whole issue goes to the level of public interest in the war itself. The level of the reporting in Iraq may be directly related to the level of American curiosity or lack of it about the Iraq War. The whole component about whether people want to read about the Iraq War is not addressed in this research but it would bear on any generalizations that could be made. Similarly, the overall quality of journalism in general and the economic challenges of these times that are bearing on journalism resources are variables that are not measured. Finally, the whole attitude that exists between the military and the media today is an unmeasured element that probably had substantial impact on the differences in coverage. Would a U.S. military public information officer

today be bold enough to provide data to a reporter like George Esper that would enable the reporter to disclosed secret bombings? If so, would that reporter be able to protect his source?

Appendix

GROUND RULES FOR EMBEDDED MEDIA TASK FORCE IRONHOUSE

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. EMBEDDED MEDIA. EMBEDDED MEDIA OPERATE AS PART OF THEIR ASSIGNED UNIT. AN ESCORT MAY BE ASSIGNED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE UNIT COMMANDER. THE ABSENCE OF A PA ESCORT IS NOT A REASON TO PRECLUDE MEDIA ACCESS TO OPERATIONS.

A. COMMANDERS WILL ENSURE THE MEDIA ARE PROVIDED WITH EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE ACTUAL COMBAT OPERATIONS. THE PERSONAL SAFETY OF CORRESPONDENTS IS NOT A REASON TO EXCLUDE THEM FROM COMBAT AREAS.

B. IF, IN THE OPINION OF THE UNIT COMMANDER, A MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE IS UNABLE TO WITHSTAND THE RIGOROUS CONDITIONS REQUIRED TO OPERATE WITH THE FORWARD DEPLOYED FORCES, THE COMMANDER OR HIS/HER REPRESENTATIVE MAY LIMIT THE REPRESENTATIVES PARTICIPATION WITH OPERATIONAL FORCES TO ENSURE UNIT SAFETY AND INFORM THE TF PAO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. GENDER WILL NOT BE AN EXCLUDING FACTOR UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE.

C. IF FOR ANY REASON A MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE CANNOT PARTICIPATE IN AN OPERATION, THEY WILL BE TRANSPORTED TO THE NEXT HIGHER HEADQUARTERS FOR THE DURATION OF THE OPERATION.

D. MEDIA WILL PAY THEIR OWN BILLETING EXPENSES IF BILLETED IN A COMMERCIAL FACILITY.

E. MEDIA WILL DEPLOY WITH THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT TO COLLECT AND TRANSMIT THEIR STORIES.

F. THE STANDARD FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION SHOULD BE TO ASK "WHY NOT RELEASE" VICE "WHY RELEASE." DECISIONS SHOULD BE MADE ASAP, PREFERABLY IN MINUTES, NOT HOURS.

G. THERE IS NO GENERAL REVIEW PROCESS FOR MEDIA PRODUCTS. SEE PARA 6.A. FOR FURTHER DETAIL CONCERNING SECURITY AT THE SOURCE.

H. MEDIA WILL ONLY BE GRANTED ACCESS TO DETAINEES OR EPWS WITHIN THE PROVISIONS OF THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF 1949. SEE GROUND RULES.

I. HAVING EMBEDDED MEDIA DOES NOT PRECLUDE CONTACT WITH OTHER MEDIA. EMBEDDED MEDIA, AS A RESULT OF TIME INVESTED WITH THE UNIT AND GROUND RULES AGREEMENT, MAY HAVE A DIFFERENT LEVEL OF ACCESS.

J. IF A MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE IS KILLED OR INJURED IN THE COURSE OF MILITARY OPERATIONS, THE UNIT WILL IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE TF PAO. OASD(PA) WILL CONTACT THE RESPECTIVE MEDIA ORGANIZATION(S), WHICH WILL MAKE NEXT

OF KIN NOTIFICATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE INDIVIDUAL'S WISHES.

K. MEDIA MAY TERMINATE THEIR EMBED OPPORTUNITY AT ANY TIME. UNIT COMMANDERS WILL PROVIDE, AS THE TACTICAL SITUATION PERMITS AND BASED ON THE AVAILABILITY OF TRANSPORTATION, MOVEMENT BACK TO THE NEAREST LOCATION WITH COMMERCIAL TRANSPORTATION.

1: GROUND RULES. FOR THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF U.S. FORCES AND EMBEDDED MEDIA, MEDIA WILL ADHERE TO ESTABLISHED GROUND RULES. GROUND RULES WILL BE AGREED TO IN ADVANCE AND SIGNED BY MEDIA PRIOR TO EMBEDDING. VIOLATION OF THE GROUND RULES MAY RESULT IN THE IMMEDIATE TERMINATION OF THE EMBED AND REMOVAL FROM THE AOR. THESE GROUND RULES RECOGNIZE THE RIGHT OF THE MEDIA TO COVER MILITARY OPERATIONS AND ARE IN NO WAY INTENDED TO PREVENT RELEASE OF DEROGATORY, EMBARRASSING, NEGATIVE OR UNCOMPLIMENTARY INFORMATION. ANY MODIFICATION TO THE STANDARD GROUND RULES WILL BE FORWARDED THROUGH THE PA CHANNELS TO CENTCOM/PA FOR APPROVAL. STANDARD GROUND RULES ARE:

1.A. ALL INTERVIEWS WITH SERVICE MEMBERS WILL BE ON THE RECORD. SECURITY AT THE SOURCE IS THE POLICY. INTERVIEWS WITH PILOTS AND AIRCREW MEMBERS ARE AUTHORIZED UPON COMPLETION OF MISSIONS; HOWEVER, RELEASE OF INFORMATION MUST CONFORM TO THESE MEDIA GROUND RULES.

1.B. PRINT OR BROADCAST STORIES WILL BE DATELINED ACCORDING TO LOCAL GROUND RULES. LOCAL GROUND RULES WILL BE COORDINATED THROUGH PAO CHANNELS WITH CENTCOM.

1.4.C. MEDIA EMBEDDED WITH U.S. FORCES ARE NOT PERMITTED TO CARRY PERSONAL FIREARMS.

1.D. LIGHT DISCIPLINE RESTRICTIONS WILL BE FOLLOWED. VISIBLE LIGHT SOURCES, INCLUDING FLASH OR TELEVISION LIGHTS, FLASH CAMERAS WILL NOT BE USED WHEN OPERATING WITH FORCES AT NIGHT UNLESS SPECIFICALLY APPROVED IN ADVANCE BY THE ON-SCENE COMMANDER.

1.E. EMBARGOES MAY BE IMPOSED TO PROTECT OPERATIONAL SECURITY. EMBARGOES WILL ONLY BE USED FOR OPERATIONAL SECURITY AND WILL BE LIFTED AS SOON AS THE, OPERATIONAL SECURITY ISSUE HAS PASSED.

1.F. THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES OF INFORMATION ARE RELEASABLE.

1.F.1. APPROXIMATE FRIENDLY FORCE STRENGTH FIGURES.

1.F.2. APPROXIMATE FRIENDLY CASUALTY FIGURES BY SERVICE. EMBEDDED MEDIA MAY, WITHIN OPSEC LIMITS, CONFIRM UNIT CASUALTIES THEY HAVE WITNESSED.

1.F.3. CONFIRMED FIGURES OF ENEMY PERSONNEL DETAINED OR CAPTURED.

1.F.4. SIZE OF FRIENDLY FORCE PARTICIPATING IN AN ACTION OR OPERATION CAN BE DISCLOSED USING APPROXIMATE TERMS. SPECIFIC FORCE OR UNIT IDENTIFICATION MAY BE RELEASED WHEN IT NO LONGER WARRANTS SECURITY PROTECTION.

1.F.5. INFORMATION AND LOCATION OF MILITARY TARGETS AND OBJECTIVES PREVIOUSLY UNDER ATTACK.

1.F.6. GENERIC DESCRIPTION OF ORIGIN OF AIR OPERATIONS, SUCH AS "LAND-BASED."

1.F.7. DATE, TIME OR LOCATION OF PREVIOUS CONVENTIONAL MILITARY MISSIONS AND ACTIONS, AS WELL AS MISSION RESULTS ARE RELEASABLE ONLY IF DESCRIBED IN GENERAL TERMS.

1.F.8. TYPES OF ORDNANCE EXPENDED IN GENERAL TERMS.

1.F.9. NUMBER OF AERIAL COMBAT OR RECONNAISSANCE MISSIONS OR SORTIES FLOWN IN CENTCOM'S AREA OF OPERATION.

1.F.10. TYPE OF FORCES INVOLVED (E.G., AIR DEFENSE, INFANTRY, ARMOR, MARINES).

1.F.11. ALLIED PARTICIPATION BY TYPE OF OPERATION (SHIPS, AIRCRAFT, GROUND UNITS, ETC.) AFTER APPROVAL OF THE ALLIED UNIT COMMANDER.

1.F.12. OPERATION CODE NAMES.

1.F.13. NAMES AND HOMETOWNS OF U.S. MILITARY UNITS.

1.F.14. SERVICE MEMBERS' NAMES AND HOME TOWNS WITH THE INDIVIDUALS' CONSENT.

1.G. THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES OF INFORMATION ARE NOT RELEASABLE SINCE THEIR PUBLICATION OR BROADCAST COULD JEOPARDIZE OPERATIONS AND ENDANGER LIVES.

1.G.1. SPECIFIC NUMBER OF TROOPS IN UNITS BELOW CORPS/MEF LEVEL.

1.G.2. SPECIFIC NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT IN UNITS AT OR BELOW THE AIR EXPEDITIONARY WING LEVEL.

1.G.3. SPECIFIC NUMBERS REGARDING OTHER EQUIPMENT OR CRITICAL SUPPLIES (E.G. ARTILLERY, TANKS, LANDING CRAFT, RADARS, TRUCKS, WATER, ETC.).

1.G.4. SPECIFIC NUMBERS OF SHIPS IN UNITS BELOW THE CARRIER BATTLE GROUP LEVEL.

1.G.5. NAMES OF MILITARY INSTALLATIONS OR SPECIFIC GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS OF MILITARY UNITS IN THE CENTCOM AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY, UNLESS SPECIFICALLY RELEASED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OR AUTHORIZED BY THE CENTCOM COMMANDER. NEWS AND IMAGERY PRODUCTS THAT IDENTIFY OR INCLUDE IDENTIFIABLE FEATURES OF THESE LOCATIONS ARE NOT AUTHORIZED FOR RELEASE.

1.G.6. INFORMATION REGARDING FUTURE OPERATIONS.

1.G.7. INFORMATION REGARDING FORCE PROTECTION MEASURES AT MILITARY INSTALLATIONS OR ENCAMPMENTS (EXCEPT THOSE WHICH ARE VISIBLE OR READILY APPARENT).

1.G.8. PHOTOGRAPHY SHOWING LEVEL OF SECURITY AT MILITARY INSTALLATIONS OR ENCAMPMENTS.

1.G.9. RULES OF ENGAGEMENT.

1.G.10. INFORMATION ON INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION ACTIVITIES COMPROMISING TACTICS, TECHNIQUES OR PROCEDURES.

1.G.11. EXTRA PRECAUTIONS IN REPORTING WILL BE REQUIRED AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF HOSTILITIES TO MAXIMIZE OPERATIONAL SURPRISE. LIVE BROADCASTS FROM AIRFIELDS, ON THE GROUND OR AFLOAT, BY EMBEDDED MEDIA ARE PROHIBITED UNTIL THE SAFE RETURN OF THE INITIAL STRIKE PACKAGE OR UNTIL AUTHORIZED BY THE UNIT COMMANDER.

1.G.12. DURING AN OPERATION, SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON FRIENDLY FORCE TROOP MOVEMENTS, TACTICAL DEPLOYMENTS, AND DISPOSITIONS THAT WOULD JEOPARDIZE OPERATIONAL SECURITY OR LIVES. INFORMATION ON ON-GOING ENGAGEMENTS WILL NOT BE RELEASED UNLESS AUTHORIZED FOR RELEASE BY ON-SCENE COMMANDER.

1.G.13. INFORMATION ON SPECIAL OPERATIONS UNITS, UNIQUE OPERATIONS METHODOLOGY OR TACTICS, FOR EXAMPLE, AIR OPERATIONS, ANGLES OF ATTACK, AND SPEEDS; NAVAL TACTICAL OR EVASIVE MANEUVERS, ETC. GENERAL TERMS SUCH AS "LOW" OR "FAST" MAY BE USED.

1.G.14. INFORMATION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF ENEMY ELECTRONIC

WARFARE. 1.G.15. INFORMATION IDENTIFYING POSTPONED OR CANCELED OPERATIONS.

1.G.16. INFORMATION ON MISSING OR DOWNED AIRCRAFT OR MISSING VESSELS WHILE SEARCH AND RESCUE AND RECOVERY OPERATIONS ARE BEING PLANNED OR UNDERWAY. .

1.G.17. INFORMATION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF ENEMY CAMOUFLAGE, COVER, DECEPTION, TARGETING, DIRECT AND INDIRECT FIRE, INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION, OR SECURITY MEASURES.

1.G.18. NO PHOTOGRAPHS OR OTHER VISUAL MEDIA SHOWING AN ENEMY PRISONER OF WAR OR DETAINEE'S RECOGNIZABLE FACE, NAMETAG OR OTHER IDENTIFYING FEATURE OR ITEM MAY BE TAKEN.

1.G.19. STILL OR VIDEO IMAGERY OF CUSTODY OPERATIONS OR INTERVIEWS WITH PERSONS UNDER CUSTODY.

1.H. THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES AND POLICIES APPLY TO COVERAGE OF WOUNDED, INJURED, AND ILL PERSONNEL:

1.H.1. MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES WILL BE REMINDED OF THE SENSITIVITY OF USING NAMES OF INDIVIDUAL CASUALTIES OR PHOTOGRAPHS THEY MAY HAVE TAKEN WHICH CLEARLY IDENTIFY CASUALTIES UNTIL AFTER NOTIFICATION OF THE NOK AND RELEASE BY OASD(PA).

1.H.2. BATTLEFIELD CASUALTIES MAY BE COVERED BY EMBEDDED MEDIA AS LONG AS THE SERVICE MEMBER'S IDENTITY IS PROTECTED FROM DISCLOSURE FOR 72 HOURS OR UPON VERIFICATION OF NOK NOTIFICATION, WHICHEVER IS FIRST.

1.H.3. MEDIA VISITS TO MEDICAL FACILITIES WILL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH APPLICABLE REGULATIONS, STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES, OPERATIONS ORDERS APPENDIX 2 (NEWS MEDIA GROUND RULES) TO ANNEX V (PUBLIC AFFAIRS) TO TF IRONHORSE OPLAN 03-05/II (ROSI) (OPERATION IRONHORSE COBRA II)

AND INSTRUCTIONS BY ATTENDING PHYSICIANS. IF APPROVED, SERVICE OR MEDICAL FACILITY PERSONNEL MUST ESCORT MEDIA AT ALL TIMES.

1.H.4. PATIENT WELFARE, PATIENT PRIVACY, AND NEXT OF KIN/FAMILY CONSIDERATIONS ARE THE GOVERNING CONCERNS ABOUT NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE OF WOUNDED, INJURED, AND ILL PERSONNEL IN MEDICAL TREATMENT FACILITIES OR OTHER CASUALTY COLLECTION AND TREATMENT LOCATIONS.

1.H.5. MEDIA VISITS ARE AUTHORIZED TO MEDICAL CARE FACILITIES, BUT MUST BE APPROVED BY THE MEDICAL FACILITY COMMANDER AND ATTENDING PHYSICIAN AND MUST NOT INTERFERE WITH MEDICAL TREATMENT. REQUESTS TO VISIT MEDICAL CARE FACILITIES OUTSIDE THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES WILL BE COORDINATED BY THE UNIFIED COMMAND PA.

1.H.6. REPORTERS MAY VISIT THOSE AREAS DESIGNATED BY THE FACILITY COMMANDER, BUT WILL NOT BE ALLOWED IN OPERATING ROOMS DURING OPERATING PROCEDURES.

1.H.7. PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW OR PHOTOGRAPH A PATIENT WILL BE GRANTED ONLY WITH THE CONSENT OF THE ATTENDING PHYSICIAN OR FACILITY COMMANDER AND WITH THE PATIENT'S INFORMED CONSENT, WITNESSED BY THE ESCORT.

1.H.8. "INFORMED CONSENT" MEANS THE PATIENT UNDERSTANDS HIS OR HER PICTURE AND COMMENTS ARE BEING COLLECTED FOR NEWS MEDIA PURPOSES AND THEY MAY APPEAR NATIONWIDE IN NEWS MEDIA REPORTS.

1.H.9. THE ATTENDING PHYSICIAN OR ESCORT SHOULD ADVISE THE SERVICE MEMBER IF NOK HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED.

2. IMMUNIZATIONS AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE GEAR.

2.A. MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD ENSURE THAT MEDIA ARE PROPERLY IMMUNIZED BEFORE EMBEDDING WITH UNITS. THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL (CDC)-RECOMMENDED IMMUNIZATIONS FOR DEPLOYMENT TO THE MIDDLE EAST INCLUDE HEPATITIS A; HEPATITIS B; RABIES; TETANUS-DIPHThERIA; AND TYPHOID. THE CDC RECOMMENDS MENINGOCOCCAL IMMUNIZATIONS FOR VISITORS TO MECCA. IF TRAVELING TO CERTAIN AREAS IN THE CENTCOM AOR, THE CDC RECOMMENDS TAKING PRESCRIPTION ANTIMALARIAL DRUGS. ANTHRAX AND SMALLPOX VACCINES WILL BE PROVIDED TO THE MEDIA AT NO EXPENSE TO THE GOVERNMENT (THE MEDIA OUTLET WILL BEAR THE EXPENSE).

2.B. BECAUSE THE USE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE GEAR, SUCH AS HELMETS OR FLAK VESTS, IS BOTH A PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CHOICE, MEDIA WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROCURING/USING SUCH EQUIPMENT. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE GEAR, AS WELL AS CLOTHING, WILL BE SUBDUED IN COLOR AND APPEARANCE.

2.C. EMBEDDED MEDIA ARE AUTHORIZED AND REQUIRED TO BE PROVIDED WITH, ON A TEMPORARY LOAN BASIS, NUCLEAR, BIOLOGICAL, CHEMICAL (NBC) PROTECTIVE

EQUIPMENT BY THE UNIT WITH WHICH THEY ARE EMBEDDED. UNIT PERSONNEL WILL PROVIDE BASIC INSTRUCTION IN THE PROPER WEAR, USE, AND MAINTENANCE OF THE EQUIPMENT. UPON TERMINATION OF THE EMBED, INITIATED BY EITHER PARTY, THE NBC EQUIPMENT SHALL BE RETURNED TO THE EMBEDDING UNIT. IF SUFFICIENT NBC PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR EMBEDDED MEDIA, COMMANDERS APPENDIX 2 (NEWS MEDIA GROUND RULES) TO ANNEX V (PUBLIC AFFAIRS) TO TF IRONHORSE OPLAN 03-05/II (ROSI) (OPERATION IRONHORSE COBRA II)

MAY PURCHASE ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT, WITH FUNDS NORMALLY AVAILABLE FOR THAT PURPOSE, AND LOAN IT TO EMBEDDED MEDIA IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS PARAGRAPH.

3. SECURITY

3.A. MEDIA PRODUCTS WILL NOT BE SUBJECT TO SECURITY REVIEW OR CENSORSHIP EXCEPT AS INDICATED IN PARA. 3.A.1. SECURITY AT THE SOURCE WILL BE THE RULE. U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL SHALL PROTECT CLASSIFIED INFORMATION FROM UNAUTHORIZED OR INADVERTENT DISCLOSURE. MEDIA PROVIDED ACCESS TO

SENSITIVE INFORMATION, INFORMATION WHICH IS NOT CLASSIFIED BUT WHICH MAY BE OF OPERATIONAL VALUE TO AN ADVERSARY OR WHEN COMBINED WITH OTHER UNCLASSIFIED INFORMATION MAY REVEAL CLASSIFIED INFORMATION, WILL BE INFORMED IN ADVANCE BY THE UNIT COMMANDER OR HIS/HER DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OR DISCLOSURE OF SUCH INFORMATION. WHEN IN DOUBT, MEDIA WILL CONSULT WITH THE UNIT COMMANDER OR HIS/HER DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE.

3.A.1. THE NATURE OF THE EMBEDDING PROCESS MAY INVOLVE OBSERVATION OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION, INCLUDING TROOP MOVEMENTS, BATTLE PREPARATIONS, MATERIEL CAPABILITIES AND VULNERABILITIES AND OTHER INFORMATION AS LISTED IN PARA. 4.G. WHEN A COMMANDER OR HIS/HER DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE HAS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT A MEDIA MEMBER WILL HAVE ACCESS TO THIS TYPE OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION, PRIOR TO ALLOWING SUCH ACCESS, HE/SHE WILL TAKE PRUDENT PRECAUTIONS TO ENSURE THE SECURITY OF THAT INFORMATION. THE PRIMARY SAFEGUARD WILL BE TO BRIEF MEDIA IN ADVANCE ABOUT WHAT INFORMATION IS SENSITIVE AND WHAT THE PARAMETERS ARE FOR COVERING THIS TYPE OF INFORMATION. IF MEDIA ARE INADVERTENTLY EXPOSED TO SENSITIVE INFORMATION THEY SHOULD BE BRIEFED AFTER EXPOSURE ON WHAT INFORMATION THEY SHOULD AVOID COVERING. IN INSTANCES WHERE A UNIT COMMANDER OR THE DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE DETERMINES THAT COVERAGE OF A STORY WILL INVOLVE EXPOSURE TO SENSITIVE INFORMATION BEYOND THE SCOPE OF WHAT MAY BE PROTECTED BY PREBRIEFING OR DEBRIEFING, BUT COVERAGE OF WHICH IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE DOD, THE COMMANDER MAY OFFER ACCESS IF THE REPORTER AGREES TO A SECURITY REVIEW OF THEIR COVERAGE. AGREEMENT TO SECURITY REVIEW IN EXCHANGE FOR THIS TYPE OF ACCESS MUST BE STRICTLY VOLUNTARY AND

- IF THE REPORTER DOES NOT AGREE, THEN ACCESS MAY NOT BE GRANTED. IF A SECURITY REVIEW IS AGREED TO, IT WILL NOT INVOLVE ANY EDITORIAL CHANGES; IT WILL BE CONDUCTED SOLELY TO ENSURE THAT NO SENSITIVE OR CLASSIFIED INFORMATION IS INCLUDED IN THE PRODUCT. IF SUCH INFORMATION IS FOUND, THE MEDIA WILL BE ASKED TO REMOVE THAT INFORMATION FROM THE PRODUCT AND/OR EMBARGO THE PRODUCT UNTIL SUCH INFORMATION IS NO LONGER CLASSIFIED OR SENSITIVE. REVIEWS ARE TO BE DONE AS SOON AS PRACTICAL SO AS NOT TO INTERRUPT COMBAT OPERATIONS NOR DELAY REPORTING. IF THERE ARE DISPUTES RESULTING FROM THE SECURITY REVIEW PROCESS THEY MAY BE APPEALED THROUGH THE CHAIN OF COMMAND, OR THROUGH THE TASK FORCE PAO CHANNELS TO CFLCC PA. THIS PARAGRAPH DOES NOT AUTHORIZE COMMANDERS TO ALLOW MEDIA ACCESS TO CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.

3.A.2. MEDIA PRODUCTS WILL NOT BE CONFISCATED OR OTHERWISE IMPOUNDED. IF IT IS BELIEVED THAT CLASSIFIED INFORMATION HAS BEEN COMPROMISED AND THE MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE REFUSES TO REMOVE THAT INFORMATION NOTIFY THE TF PAO AT THE APPENDIX 2 (NEWS MEDIA GROUND RULES) TO ANNEX V (PUBLIC AFFAIRS) TO TF IRONHORSE OPILAN03-05/II (ROSI) (OPERATION IRONHORSE COBRA II)

DMAIN OR DSE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SO THE ISSUE MAY BE ADDRESSED WITH THE MEDIA ORGANIZATION'S MANAGEMENT.

4. MISCELLANEOUS/COORDINATING INSTRUCTIONS:

4.A. USE OF LIPSTICK AND HELMET-MOUNTED CAMERAS ON COMBAT SORTIES IS APPROVED AND ENCOURAGED TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE.

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