EXPLORING NEWS FRAMING IN
MILITARY-ORIENTED NEWSPAPERS

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by
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MILITARY-ORIENTED NEWSPAPERS

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

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DEDICATION

To my husband, Derek, for your endless support and encouragement. To my parents, Bob and Jan, for always believing in my dreams.
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EXPLORING NEWS FRAMING IN MILITARY-ORIENTED NEWSPAPERS

Brittany Carlson

Dr. Tim Vos, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

This research paper explores news framing within two military-oriented newspapers, the *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times*, on the topics of sexual assault and the effects of deployment on military families, as well as the organizational and extra-media factors that influence how military news reporters frame news on these topics. Major frames for sexual assault include failures in the military justice system; a “troubling command culture” (Tritten, 2016); the difficulty that sexual assault victims in the military face in speaking out; and a worsening of sexual assault problems in the military system. Major frames for deployment effects include: not enough institutional/cultural support for military families with deployment-related issues; the need for military families to reconcile these issues; military spouses’ tendency to shelve their own emotional needs during/after deployments; and the cultural stigma military mothers face when they deploy. The *Military Times* frames articles to include a broader audience and focuses on advocating for service members’ health and career needs, while the *Stars and Stripes* focuses on a narrower military audience with emphasis on military family relationships. Both newspapers focused on pinpointing problems and causes in sexual assault articles, and solutions or moral implications in deployment effects articles (Entman, 1993). Perceptions of mission and audience appear to influence news reporting at military-oriented newspapers more than ownership.
Preface

Research on framing military news for a military audience is especially important to the researcher, Brittany Carlson, because she is a military spouse and former U.S. Army Public Affairs reporter and editor. The researcher’s inside knowledge of reporting for a military audience, as well as how government publications operate under government oversight, will help provide background for this research. Moreover, the researcher’s background fuels her passion to better understand how and why journalists frame military news in certain ways when they write for a military audience. However, her experiences writing for military publications and in living and working among a military community will undoubtedly shape the following research, including its design, data collection and data interpretation.

With this in mind, the researcher will make every effort to write reflexively about the research process, sharing how her “biases, values, and personal background” may influence her conclusions on the data collected (Creswell, 2014, p. 187). For example, the researcher’s personal background lends itself to the hypothesis that the closer the relationship a newspaper has with the U.S. government, the more that newspaper will be influenced to frame military news in accordance with government narratives. Whether this research will prove this hypothesis is yet to be seen. Further, the researcher’s background as a military spouse lends itself to partiality on behalf of military families and military spouses in particular. One of the goals of writing reflexively is to remind the reader of these biases, and remind the researcher to not only report results in line with these biases but include research that argues against them. The researcher also used other strategies to ensure that the research is valid, including data triangulation, which are detailed in Chapter 3 (Methods).
The researcher conducted this research with a primary audience in mind: journalists who write for a military audience. The researcher’s hope is that this research will help these journalists to think more about the influences that may shape how and why they write about military members and their families. In addition, the researcher hopes this research will become a springboard for future research on military-oriented newspapers, a field with surprisingly little research to date. The researcher believes studying military-oriented newspapers will lead to a better understanding of why military-oriented newspapers operate the way that they do, and how the frames used in these newspapers influence the way that members of the military community (and more broadly, Americans in general) view the United States government, military operations, and military culture.
Chapter 1: Introduction

The right for the American press to publish information apart from government control is founded in the U.S. Constitution’s First Amendment: “Congress shall make no law … abridging the freedom of speech or of the press…” (U.S. Const. amend. I). However, how much freedom do newspapers that print only military news, for a military audience, truly have? After all, these types of newspapers are reporting solely on government activity to the people who work for the government in a military or civilian capacity. Do these added ties to the government make printing anything contrary to government opinion more difficult?

Research shows that newspapers like these do have unique struggles to maintain editorial independence (Elmore, 2010; Melkote, 2009; Stars and Stripes, 2016). The Stars and Stripes, for example, has struggled against military control since its founding in World War I because it is organized within the Department of Defense and relies on government support and funding, in spite of its granted editorial independence (Elmore, 2010; Stars and Stripes, 2016). According to Elmore (2010), U.S. military officials have tried to bar the newspaper from printing stories that cast the military in a negative light or criticize military actions and decisions.

Even newspapers that are not organized or supported by the Department of Defense have struggled to maintain editorial independence from government or military control when reporting on military actions. Melkote (2009) notes that journalists
reporting on wartime events often feel pressured by the need to appear patriotic and support their own country, as well as the pressure to put government officials in a positive light. Newspapers that serve a military audience, including the *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times*, which is privately owned, have the added pressure of reporting on the government for the government (Military Times, 2016; Stars and Stripes, 2016).

The *Stars and Stripes* is “unique among Department of Defense authorized news outlets” because it is “guaranteed First Amendment privileges that are subject to Congressional oversight” (Stars and Stripes, 2016). The *Stars and Stripes* serves a military audience of active duty service members, government civilians, contractors and their families, serving about 1 million readers per day all over the world, and operating out of news bureaus in the U.S., Middle East, Pacific and Europe (Stars and Stripes, 2016). Although it is part of the Defense Media Activity, the *Stars and Stripes* is “editorially independent of interference from outside its own editorial chain-of-command,” according to its website (Stars and Stripes, 2016).

The *Military Times* (2016) website notes that this newspaper is a “trusted, independent source for news and information” for the military community. The *Military Times* is published by Sightline Media Group, owned by TEGNA, the largest U.S. newspaper publisher (Military Times, 2016). The *Military Times*’ audience includes “all branches of the U.S. military, the global defense community, the U.S. federal government, and several special interest, defense-oriented industry sectors” (Military Times, 2016). According the *Military Times* website, the newspaper focuses on “important issues for the military community,” including military news, financial services, pay and benefits, healthcare, education, promotions, product reviews, gear,
transitioning to civilian life and travel and leisure (Military Times, 2016). The *Military Times* is a part of Army Times Publishing, which began in 1940 (Military Times, 2016). In sum, both of these newspapers serve a similar audience and write about similar topics, but while the *Stars and Stripes* operates within Congressional oversight as part of the Defense Media Activity, the *Military Times* is privately owned and operated. This provides the proposed research with a point of comparison between one newspaper with ownership ties to the government and another without these ties.

This research explores how two editorially independent, military-focused newspapers, the *Military Times* and *Stars and Stripes*, portray the U.S. military within the scope of domestic military news. This research includes a textual analysis of recent articles in the *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times* that focus on a more politically-charged topic (sexual assault) and a less politically-charged topic (the effects of deployment on military families), paying particular attention to emerging frames and the descriptors used to portray military members and their families. This research investigates how military-oriented newspapers portray the U.S. military within these two topics through the lens of framing theory.

Journalists use frames to tell readers about certain problems in society, and point to causes and potential solutions for those problems (Entman, 1993). Frame indicators include, but are not limited to, word choice, the use of cultural symbols and stereotypes, types of sources, inferences, narrative style and value statements (Borah, 2011; Entman, 1993; Melkote, 2009; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). This research examines how the military is framed in military-oriented publications and how frames used in the *Stars and Stripes* compare to those used in the *Military Times*. The goal of this research is to explore how
military-oriented newspapers frame military news in two ways: by analyzing specific texts and by interviewing editors and reporters who work for these publications. The interviews discuss the influences that guide journalists’ decisions to cover and frame military news in certain ways.

The purpose of this research is to explore how military-oriented newspapers frame military news, specifically addressing sexual assault in the military and the effects of deployment on military families. Very little research to date has been conducted on military-oriented newspapers and the role they play in reporting military news to a military audience outside of direct government control. Much of the research done on framing military news concerns wartime reporting and embedded journalism (Brandenburg, 2007; Buchanan, 2011; Fahmy and Johnson, 2012; Haigh et al., 2006; Kuypers & Cooper, 2005; Melkote, 2009; Ryan, 2004). This research is designed to provide readers with a better understanding of how these newspapers endeavor to remain editorially independent, with implications for other newspapers that report on military events. This research explores the editorial process of framing military news, with special attention to the unique factors journalists and editors who serve a military audience consider. This research also adds to the considerable research field exploring framing of the news by adding a new dimension: framing domestic military news for a military audience. This type of research has many implications for future research, including how military members and their families perceive themselves and how Americans in general perceive the U.S. military, which will be further explained in the conclusion.

The next chapter will introduce the current literature on framing theory, as well as literature on military news coverage, tying the literature to research questions. Chapter 3
details the methods used for data collection in this study, how the researcher analyzed the data and how the researcher used framing theory to draw conclusions about the data. Chapters 4-8 discuss the researchers’ findings in terms of research questions. Chapter 9 concludes this research by explaining how this research fits into previous literature on this subject, what the research adds to current theoretical understanding on this topic, practical implications, study limitations and areas for future research.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Research on how newspapers portray a certain subject inherently falls within the field of framing theory. In the journalism field, framing research focuses on the way journalists package news stories: what they highlight, what they downplay, and how they organize and present the news, as well as the effects that these frames have on media audiences (Entman, 1993; Grusin & Utt, 2010; Haigh, 2012; Melkote, 2009; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Framing theory is based on the assumption that how journalists convey the news influences the way audience members understand the news (Borah, 2011; Entman, 1993; Haigh, 2012; Grusin & Utt, 2010; Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007).

Linking research to framing theory

Framing theory provides an ideal framework for this research because it focuses on how journalists shape news narratives and why. According to Entman (1993), frames have four indicators: they “define problems” in society or culture, “diagnose causes” of those problems, “make moral judgments” about the causes and effects of those problems and finally “suggest remedies” to the problems (p. 52). This research uses these indicators to locate and identify frames used in military-oriented newspapers. Frames also have four “locations” in the communication process where these indicators may be present: “the communicator, the text, the receiver and the culture” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). This research focuses mainly on the text and the communicators (journalists and editors working for military-oriented newspapers). Frames are also shaped by cultural influences.
and the communicators’ personal values, experiences and beliefs, as explored in the interview portion of this research (Entman, 1993; Ryan, 2004).

Within the communication field, framing research is important because the ways in which journalists present people and events have consequences for society (Davis & Kent, 2013). The purpose of the framing research perspective in journalism is to better understand how journalists “try to shape public discourse about an issue by establishing predominant labels” (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 13). Entman (1993) writes that frames make certain pieces of information on a topic “more noticeable, meaningful or memorable,” or salient, to media audiences (p. 53). Media frames help members of society construct meaning from events (Davis & Kent, 2013; Entman, 1993; Kuypers & Cooper, 2005). By calling attention to certain points of a story more than others, frames can provoke audience members to different reactions (Entman, 1993; Kuypers & Cooper, 2005). Kuypers and Cooper (2005) assert that “when journalists frame, they construct a particular point of view that encourages the facts of a given situation to be interpreted in a specific way” (p. 2). Poor framing decisions can lead to misunderstanding and ignorance of the true state of affairs on a widespread scale (Davis & Kent, 2013). This research explores framing decisions that journalists and editors make within military-oriented publications and how those decisions shape the newspapers’ narratives about the U.S. military. It also explores some of the organizational, institutional and extra-media factors that influence these framing decisions through interviews with journalists and editors working for military-oriented newspapers.
Framing theory history/background

Framing theory in the communication field stems from sociology and psychology research (Borah, 2011; Davis & Kent, 2013; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). One of the first definitions of journalistic framing was conceptualized by Goffman in 1974 as “the schemata of interpretation” which lends meaning to reported information (as cited in Borah, 2011). In 1980, Gitlin defined frames as organizational tools for journalists and their audiences (Borah, 2011). Later, Entman (1993) wrote that framing involves deciding which aspects of a news story are more important than others and then highlighting those aspects, which influence the way audience members understand and evaluate the information.

Communications researchers first started using framing theory in political effects research in the 1980s (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). In journalism research, studies using the framing analysis mainly focus on two main areas: how journalists present the news and how these frames affect audience members’ opinions on news topics (Borah, 2011; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) calls these areas the “macrolevel” and “microlevel” of framing, respectively (p. 12). This research focuses on the macrolevel of framing: how journalists frame domestic military news at military-oriented publications, as well as what influences guide their framing choices. This leads to **RQ1: What frames emerge in military news coverage in military-oriented newspapers (Stars and Stripes, Military Times)?**

Research on the way journalists frame the news stems from the sociological tradition in framing research (Borah, 2011). Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) coined the term “frame building” to describe the creation of media messages. Journalists use frames
to align news stories with preexisting frameworks in audience members’ minds, sending them cues about the way they should think about a particular news topic (Ryan, 2004; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Individuals have unique frameworks in their minds that they use to make sense of the world around them, including their “prejudices, past experiences, religious feelings, values [and] educations” (Ryan, 2004, p. 364). Other influences on how journalists frame news include journalists’ background, values, beliefs and newsroom culture, including ethical procedures, style guides, management styles, ownership structure and equipment (Kuypers and Cooper; 2005; Shoemaker and Vos, 2009). This research takes a closer look at how the ownership structure of military-oriented newspapers impacts news frames. Larger cultural norms also influence news frames; for example, in the United States, media tend to “frame and shape news events according to how well they match U.S. practices and values,” a phenomenon known as “ethnocentrism” (Wasburn, 2002, as cited in Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p. 44). Further, journalists’ peers influence how they decide which pieces of information are more newsworthy than others (Clayman and Reisner, 1998, as cited in Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). This research also explores how journalists at military-oriented publications view their competitors, and how this perception may influence the way they frame the news.

Davis and Kent (2013) note that media frames either reinforce the social order or challenge it. However, research indicates that journalists favor supporting the status quo in the way they frame events, especially in times of controversy or crisis (Aday, 2006; Davis & Kent, 2013). According to Davis and Kent (2013), framing research reveals that journalists tend to focus on why the public should be concerned about particular issues rather than what they can do about those concerns. Further, journalistic frames that echo
commonly-held beliefs and reinforce the status quo have been found to have particularly powerful effects, especially on audience members with low levels of attention, knowledge and involvement concerning a news story (Aday, 2006; Ryan, 2004). In fact, Ryan (2004) asserts that narrative frames are “critical” in determining whether or not readers accept or reject them (p. 363). Ryan (2004) notes that during crisis situations, such as wartime, political and religious leaders, along with citizens and media, try to create “narratives, or stories, that explain and assign meaning to events or issues,” which are also known as frames (p. 363). Studies demonstrate that elite political and social figures or organizations often influence journalists to frame news in certain ways, known as elite source framing (Aday, 2006; Davis & Kent, 2013; Entman, 1993; Ryan, 2004; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). This lends itself to the question: How does writing for a military audience and interviewing military and government officials for news influence how journalists frame news for military-oriented publications? Further, are there differences in how these publications report the news based on whether or not they are owned by the U.S. government? This leads to RQ2: How are the Stars and Stripes and Military Times similar and different in the way they frame stories on the same topic/event?

Analyzing media frames

Researchers analyze media frames in different ways. Perspectives include the “causal/treatment of responsibility perspective,” which labels frames according to whether they outline the cause of a problem or how to allay it; and “episodic/thematic perspective,” in which episodic frames put responsibility for news events on individuals and thematic frames attribute responsibility to society as a whole (Iyengar, 1991; Iyengar
Aday (2006) categorized news frames as either advocacy frames, which are “one-sided” and focus on solving an issue, or objectivist frames, which report on both sides of a story from a neutral standpoint (p. 769). Aday (2006) asserts that advocacy frames are more commonly used for reporting on war, foreign policy, social movements, minority groups and journalism campaigns, and highlight values audience members are presupposed to share, such as “patriotism.” Conversely, objectivist frames are more commonly used to report on specific events (Aday, 2006, p.769).

Journalists use frames to make certain pieces of information more salient than others through the use of placement, repetition, and associating them with well-known cultural symbols (Entman, 1993). Entman (1993) notes that researchers can find the frames present in a text by analyzing “the presence or absence of certain key words, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments” (p. 52). Borah (2011) notes that word choice and presentation style are frame indicators. Similarly, Melkote (2009) asserts that the more inferences (assumptions) and judgments journalists make in a news story, the less objective the coverage. Framing techniques journalists use to promote reader engagement with news content include narrative journalism, using anecdotes, word pictures and the use of personal voice (Brooks, Kennedy, Moen & Ranly, 1996; Cappon, 2000; Sumner & Miller, 2005; Zinsser, 2001; as cited in Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). This research explores how and why journalists at military-oriented newspapers use certain framing techniques for different types of articles.
In journalism research, studies on media framing are often undertaken in combination with agenda-setting or priming research, but these theories are not synonymous (Aday, 2006; Borah, 2011; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). McCombs (2004) actually calls framing “second-level agenda-setting” because it focuses on how media highlight certain issues more than others in an attempt to influence the way audience members think about those issues (as cited in Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 15). However, framing does not focus on the news process of selecting which stories to publicize, a process that is part of both agenda-setting and priming theories; rather, framing focuses solely on how the news stories are presented (McCombs and Ghanem, 2001, as cited in Aday, 2006; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Kuypers and Cooper (2005) write that framing is a part of “agenda-extension” theory, which asserts that beyond telling the public what to think about (agenda-setting), news media “suggest how one should think” (p. 2). McCombs and Ghanem (2001) write that frames give the audience a “master narrative” by which they can understand the information in the news story (as cited in Aday, 2006, p. 768).

**Refining the research problem**

This research focuses on how journalists working for the military-oriented newspapers *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times* frame domestic military news. Both of these newspapers report on military issues for a military audience, including government civilians, contractors and retired service members, and both claim editorial independence from the government (Military Times, 2016; Stars and Stripes, 2016). However, the *Stars and Stripes* is “unique among daily American newspapers” since it is published overseas, employs both government civilians and service members to staff the newspaper, and is
logistically dependent on the Department of Defense, as part of the Defense Media Activity, with subsidized funding coming from the U.S. Congress (Elmore, 2010, p. 301; Stars and Stripes, 2016). This research explores the different influences that guide framing decisions within both a government-owned, and privately-owned, military-oriented newspaper.

**Literature on military news coverage**

Nearly all of the research conducted to date on military news concerns wartime journalism, with a particular focus on embedded reporters during the Iraq War. Very few research articles concern military-oriented publications specifically, with the notable exception of Elmore’s (2010) historical study on the *Stars and Stripes* and its struggle against military interference and control. Little recent analysis has been conducted on framing in military-oriented newspapers. A 1990 study by Moultrie found that the *Stars and Stripes* reported more favorably on the military than competitive news sources, echoing the results of a U.S. General Accounting Office study in the 1980s (as cited in Elmore, 2010). This research fills several gaps in the current research by providing a current framing analysis of military-oriented newspapers and by exploring framing from the standpoint of domestic military news, rather than wartime coverage. Further, this research provides a point of comparison between a government-owned military-oriented newspaper and a private one, something heretofore unexplored in framing literature.

The U.S. military and American media have a conflicted past, full of partnerships and fallings out, most of which center on military campaigns overseas. During World War I and World War II, the media and military had a friendly relationship, in spite of the military’s many attempts to control how journalists framed military news, since the press
provided largely positive accounts of U.S. military operations (Elmore, 2010). Elmore (2010) attributes this to widespread support of the Allied efforts as well as censorship that impacted all newspapers at that time.

The military-media relationship fell apart during the Vietnam War when reporters, including those working for the Stars and Stripes, provided uncensored accounts of the battles, often showing the U.S. military in a negative light, which were credited with harming the war effort (Elmore, 2010; Brandenburg, 2007; Buchanan, 2011; Haigh et al., 2006). After the Vietnam War, military officials and veterans began to see journalists and especially television news anchors as opponents seeking to undercut civilian support for military operations (Braestrup, 1985, as cited in Soderlund & Wagenberg, 1994; Brandenburg, 2007, Buchanan, 2011). In retaliation, military and government officials attempted to manage news coverage by distributing false information, trying to censor negative accounts of military actions and denying journalists access to warzones, which resulted in “mutual distrust” (Brandenburg, 2007, p. 951, Buchanan, 2011; Elmore, 2010; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Since the Kennedy administration, many reporters covering the military must go through military press officers, often be accompanied by these officers, and vet content and photos through the military before they can be published (Kennedy, 1993, as cited in Elmore, 2010). (These requirements changed for embedded reporters in the Iraq War, which is discussed later in this review). Press freedom is especially restricted during wartime. United States Supreme Court rulings have made it constitutional to limit press freedom while the United States is at war “when words constitute a clear and present danger that will bring about substantive evils that legislatures and executives have a right to prevent” (Lathan,
1950, as cited in Brandenburg, 2007, p. 950). Further, military officials have expressed concern that published information could put service members at risk and compromise the success of military missions (Brandenburg, 2007). This leads to: **RQ3: How are more politically-charged military news articles (in this case, sexual assault) framed compared to less politically-charged stories (the effects of deployment on military families) in military-oriented newspapers?**

While military officials do not want media outlets to publish negative or classified information on military actions, they have recognized the need to publish information to gain public support for military efforts. In fact, research notes the important role media play in contributing to the success of military operations (Brandenburg, 2007; Ryan, 2004; Soderlund and Wagenberg, 1994). During the first Gulf War, military leaders learned the value of proactive media when Marine Corps officers partnered with the media and generated more coverage than the Army, in spite of having only a fraction of the number of men in combat (Miracle, 2003, as cited in Brandenburg, 2007). In 1990, Colin Powell, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, encouraged military commanders to include media coverage plans in operations planning, telling commanders that operations needed media to be completely successful, and thus beginning a new public affairs mentality for the military (Brandenburg, 2007; Haigh et al., 2006). In 1992, government officials agreed that independent reporting should be used in combat reporting, which led military officials to introduce “security at the source,” a concept that charges service members with the responsibility not to disclose classified information to reporters (Cornbelles-Siegel, 1996, as cited in Brandenburg, 2007, p. 952). After implementing a prototype of the embed program during the conflicts in Bosnia and
Kosovo, the Department of Defense recognized the benefits that embedded reporters could have on increasing public understanding and trust of the U.S. military (Paul and Kim, 2004; Whitman, 2003; as cited in Haigh, 2006). A few years later, the U.S. government introduced the embedding program in partnership with the media.

Embedding reporters, or placing them with a military unit for a span of time, began in 1996, but it was not until the Iraq War began in 2003 that reporters were embedded over the length of a conflict (Brandenburg, 2007; Haigh et al., 2006). According to the Department of Defense (2003), the written objective of the embed program was “to tell the factual story—good or bad—before others seed the media with disinformation and distortions” (as cited in Brandenburg, 2007, p. 954). In reality, however, the embed program was a way for the military to gain positive press (Brandenburg, 2007; Buchanan, 2011; Fahmy & Johnson, 2012). Mainstream media are “predisposed” to supporting U.S. forces in combat, and embedding furthered this relationship by promoting camaraderie between journalists and the troops they lived with (Brandenburg, 2007; Buchanan, 2011; Melkote, 2009). Melkote (2009) found that reporting during war puts added pressure on journalists who must balance the desire to provide fair and objective coverage with their own patriotic feelings.

Unlike their non-embedded counterparts, embedded journalists in the Iraq War enjoyed less censorship and more access to soldiers, but living so closely with a military unit made it difficult for embedded reporters to maintain an objective perspective and limited the scope of their coverage to a single unit (Brandenburg, 2007; Buchanan, 2011; Fahmy & Johnson, 2012; Haigh et al., 2006; Pfau et al., 2004). Pfau et al. (2004) found that stories written by embedded reporters during the first days of Operation Iraqi
Freedom portrayed the U.S. military more favorably than stories written by non-embedded reporters. Further, embedded reporters’ news stories contained more episodic frames than those written by non-embedded reporters (Brandenburg, 2007; Pfau et al., 2004). Haigh et al. (2006) compared embedded news coverage of the Iraq War with non-embedded news coverage, examining differences in the tone of articles and frames used and specifically examining whether a reporter’s status (embedded versus non-embedded) influenced the perceived credibility of the news articles. Similar to Pfau et al.’s (2004) findings, Haigh et al. (2006) found that embedded news reporters framed military news more positively, and included more episodic frames, than their non-embedded counterparts. Haigh et al. (2006) propose that the reason for this is that embedded news reporters must rely on the military unit they live with to protect and provide for them, and thus their trust of military personnel carries over into their reports. Further, Haigh et al. (2006) found that readers perceived news reports written by embedded reporters as more credible (or “authoritative”) than those written by non-embedded reporters (p. 149).

While much of the research in this area finds that embedded reporters became less objective during the Iraq War because of their closeness to military units (Brandenburg, 2007; Buchanan, 2011; Fahmy & Johnson, 2012; Haigh et al., 2006; Pfau et al., 2004), one research article found the opposite to be true. Kuypers and Cooper (2005) found that while stories written by embedded reporters generally described the Iraqi resistance as weak and the relationship between service members and Iraqi locals as positive, non-embedded reporters focused more on Allied losses and the potential dangers of the Iraqi forces, as well as civilian distrust of American forces. Kuypers and Cooper (2005) assert that these differences may have also been due to the fact that non-embedded journalists
were more susceptible to voicing their newsroom’s “editorial positions,” the embedded reporters could see first-hand whether their preexisting beliefs about the war were true or not and adjust accordingly (p. 7).

However, as public support for the war waned and embedded reporters were given more leeway to report on commanders and others outside of their unit, the coverage became more critical (Buchanan, 2011; Fahmy & Johnson, 2012). When embedded reporters moved from reporting on tactical units to reporting on strategy meetings to keep public interest in 2008, they began to take a more critical view of the military, making embedded journalism “the Trojan Horse of U.S. military campaigns” (Buchanan, 2011, p. 112). Michael Hastings’ famous *Rolling Stone* article in 2010 portraying General Stanley McChrystal and his staff criticizing the president effectively shattered the military’s press strategy and triggered a domino effect in which other embedded reporters gave critical reports on the way the administration handled the war in Afghanistan (Buchanan, 2011).

At the start of the Iraq War, the desires of corporate media companies and the U.S. military “overlapped” in the embed program, providing access and security to reporters in exchange for coverage that by nature would be mainly positive (Buchanan, 2011, p. 114). However, those interests “diverged” as public interest declined, making it necessary for reporters to criticize the war effort or else be perceived as pushing the U.S. military’s agenda (Buchanan, 2011, p. 114). The mass media’s corporate interests demand that they serve the public, which means giving audience members what they want to read (Brandenburg, 2007).

Research on journalists working for military-oriented publications like the *Stars and Stripes* may have many similarities to research on embedded reporters because of the
unique position *Stars and Stripes* reporters hold in relation to the U.S. military. Embedded reporters rely on military units for safety and basic needs in exchange for access, which lends itself to sympathetic coverage rather than critical reporting (Buchanan, 2011; Elmore, 2010). *Stars and Stripes* offices are located on military installations overseas, and reporters receive military ID cards and military privileges, including the ability to shop at tax-free exchange stores making (Elmore, 2010). These similarities to embedded reporters make *Stars and Stripes* reporters, in Elmore’s (2010) terms, “the ultimate embeds” (p. 314).

*Stars and Stripes* reporters regularly travel with or live near deployed and training service members (Elmore, 2010). However, according to U.S. Department of Defense Directive 5122.11, the newspaper is “editorially independent of interference from outside its editorial chain-of-command” (Stars and Stripes, 2016). Further, the mission of the *Stars and Stripes* is to enhance military readiness by keeping military families informed (Stars and Stripes, 2016). In other words, the *Stars and Stripes* reporters have an obligation to their audience that may conflict with government and military officials’ desires, similar to the embedded reporters in the Iraq War who had to balance corporate and organizational goals with the desires of their embed units and at times their own feelings of loyalty to a unit.

Embedded reporters agree to terms that effectively prevent them from “the critical scrutiny of the potentially negative impact of the combat experience on innocents and ensure that the journalistic narrative conforms to the military’s preferred interpretation,” according to Buchanan (2011, p. 103). Although the *Stars and Stripes* staff is mainly civilian today, it is still often pressured by the Pentagon to withhold certain stories.
(Elmore, 2010). According to Elmore, the *Stars and Stripes* walks a tightrope between obeying increasingly controlling government directives and fighting to maintain its editorial independence (2010). Everhart (2001) notes that DoD directive 5122.11 prevents *Stars and Stripes* reporters from “knowingly reporting classified information, or information that hinders national security, or jeopardizes the lives of military forces,” even though it may print stories from its competitors in violation of these rules (as cited in Elmore, 2010, p. 313). Further, other directives prohibit editorial or political statements from the staff, although again, the *Stars and Stripes* may print these from other newspapers (Elmore, 2010). Finally, *Stars and Stripes* journalists are prevented from using the Freedom of Information Act “to gain access to information being denied by government agencies” (Elmore, 2010, p. 313). This research asked editors and journalists how they balance these restrictions with editorial independence during interviews. This leads to **RQ4: How do the organizational structures of military-oriented newspapers influence military news coverage?**

Political and governmental influences guide all American newspapers, especially concerning military operations. As mentioned in the framing theory section of this paper, elite political and social figures regularly create their own news frames before imposing them on journalists, who often reuse these frames (Aday, 2006; Davis & Kent, 2013; Entman, 1993; Melkote, 2009; Ryan, 2004). Since journalists use officials and professionals as sources more than everyday people, these sources have more of an influence on journalistic frames (Ryan, 2004; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). In spite of a desire to remain objective, journalists often unwittingly allow “media manipulators” to guide media frames for them (Entman, 1993). In fact, Shoemaker and Vos (2009) point
out that since journalists seldom experience the events they cover themselves, they rely on sources to help them determine what is newsworthy. Even news services may influence which news is covered by providing only news they believe their clients (newspapers) want to receive (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). For example, during the Iraq War, although embedded reporters were not officially censored, their close contact with the military troops, especially at the start of the war, ensured that their reports largely echoed the broader U.S. military objectives and goals, leading to a “war narrative [that was] controlled, contrived, manipulated and sanitised [sic] in the interest of corporate and government elites” (Buchanan, 2011, p. 105).

National leaders often frame events in ways to help them accomplish their own political and ideological agendas (Melkote, 2009; Ryan, 2004). For example, Ryan (2004) notes that the Bush administration framed the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks as acts of war to garner public support for military strikes, and found that all of the editorials in the 10 largest newspapers in the U.S. at that time used the same frames to support the strikes. None of the editorials, for example, discussed the strikes in terms of the potential loss of civilian life in Afghanistan or suggested alternatives to the strikes (Ryan, 2004). Similarly, Melkote (2009) found that in the beginning of 2003, New York Times journalists negatively framed France, Germany and Russia during the time they dissented to the U.S. going to war with Saddam Hussein. This reflects Shoemaker and Vos’ (2009) findings that journalists are influenced by their peers and competitors, and that the media marketplace influences what type of coverage is published.
Framing as a part of gatekeeping theory

Gatekeeping theory explains some of the many influences that come to bear on journalists and editors as they shape media messages. According to Shoemaker and Vos (2009), gatekeeping, or turning pieces of information into news messages for the public, is the main job of modern media. Gatekeeping theory is based on the idea that “messages are created from information about events that has passed through a series of gates and has been changed in the process” (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p. 22). Information reaches journalists through a variety of channels, but some sources, including public officials, shape their messages to make sure the messages “pass through all gates,” which supports the idea of elite source framing (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p. 23). Gatekeeping theory asserts that since reporters “rarely use their own direct experience in covering an event,” they must create news stories based on information they are given from sources; therefore, gatekeeping and news framing begins with sources before information even reaches the journalist (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p. 19). Gatekeeping theory is important to this research because by selecting what information to provide to the public, and how to frame that information, newsmakers can impact on how members of the public see the world (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

Factors that influence whether or not information passes through media gates includes whether or not the information is deemed newsworthy, contains vivid imagery, concerns well-known people, is likely to be remembered and is of high quality (Nisbett and Ross, 1980; Hewes and Graham, 1989; as cited in Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). According to Shoemaker and Mayfield (1987) and Shoemaker and Reese (1996), there are five levels in the gatekeeping process which influence whether content is published
and how it is manipulated: individuals (i.e. journalists); communication routines (i.e. deadlines); organizational factors (i.e. ownership); social aspects (i.e. government influence) and the social system (i.e. cultural norms) (as cited in Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Communication routines in newsrooms, such as deadlines and writing in the inverted pyramid style, also guide journalists in how they report the news (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). As gatekeepers, journalists and editors bring their own “characteristics, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors” to bear on whether or not to investigate or publicize events and how to go about framing information (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p. 33).

Gatekeeping theory also asserts that gatekeepers actively “make educated guesses about things that they have not observed directly and form inferences about relationships,” meaning that they make assumptions and judgments about information in order to organize it for others (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p. 38).

Extra-media influences on journalists that influence how they shape the news include the government, military sources, broader culture and the social system (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Other influences on gatekeeping decisions include interest groups, competing media and audiences (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Media audiences influence what type of content is published because they are a commodity that the media use to sell advertising (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Since advertising agencies pay for newspapers ads that pertain to specific audiences, advertising agencies also influence the gatekeeping process to some extent (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). This leads to: **RQ5:** What are the extra-media influences that come to bear on reporters in military-oriented publications as they write military news?
Linking research to body of literature/Implications

This research falls within the sociological standpoint or “macrolevel” perspective of framing research: how journalists present the news (Borah, 2011; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 12). According to Borah (2011), framing research in this area focuses on the words and presentation styles journalists use to convey news stories, making the proposed research method of textual analysis an ideal fit. This research is confined to exploring how media messages are framed, not the effects of those messages, which places it firmly within the realm of “frame building” (Scheufele, 1999, as cited in Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

Since the purpose of framing research is to better understand how journalists seek to mold audience opinions on issues, framing theory is an ideal lens for this research (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). By exploring the “predominant labels” military-oriented newspapers give to domestic military news, the researcher aims to help others to better understand how journalists working for these newspapers perceive the U.S. military and the ways in which they seek to influence the way military audiences perceive the U.S. military (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 13). Further, this research explores the extent to which elite figures in government or the U.S. military may influence the way that independent, military-oriented newspapers frame the news, aligning it with other framing research that demonstrates the influence of elite political and social figures and organizations on news production (Aday, 2006; Davis & Kent, 2013; Brandenburg, 2007; Buchanan, 2011).

The frames journalists choose demonstrate which parts of the story they see as most important (Entman, 1993). Further, frames reveal the meaning of the story that
journalists wish to impart to their audiences (McCombs & Ghanem, 2001, as cited in Aday, 2006, p. 768). Within the narratives of sexual assault in the military and the effects of the deployment on military families, this research aims to shed light on which parts to these stories are most important to journalists at military-oriented newspapers and how these journalists may seek to influence the ways readers interpret and assign meaning to these events.

There are some unresolved issues in the journalistic framing research field. In her study of framing research articles from the past 10 years, Borah (2011) found that framing researchers have been inconsistent with defining frames, failing to separate them from news story topics, attributes and themes. According to Borah (2011), frames are not the same as framing devices, which include “metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions and visual images” (p. 249). Another issue with framing literature that Borah (2011) found is that many studies create unique sets of frames, rather than building on previously defined frames, which lends confusion to this research area.

Prior research on how military news is framed focuses almost exclusively on war or other U.S. conflicts, instead of domestic military affairs. This study fills those gaps by exploring how journalists outside of the warzone (and apart from the embed program) frame military news. Further, no studies have been conducted on the Stars and Stripes or other military-oriented publications since 1990, with the exception of Elmore’s (2010) paper on the Stars and Stripes’ history of military interference, and no research has been conducted comparing military-oriented publications to each other. This study helps to fill all of these gaps.
Chapter 3: Methods

This chapter describes in detail how the researcher gathered and analyzed data from military-oriented newspapers and from journalists and editors working for these newspapers. Next, this chapter justifies the research methods used and outlines how the researcher triangulated the data to ensure maximum accuracy and validity. Finally, this chapter details how the researcher is connected to the topic of this study and notes the effects these connections may have on the researcher’s conclusions, as well as the steps that were taken to balance bias.

Research materials

The major research questions for this research include:

RQ1: What frames emerge in military news coverage in military-oriented newspapers (*Stars and Stripes, Military Times*)?

RQ2: How are the *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times* similar and different in the way they frame stories on the same topic/event?

RQ3: How are more politically-charged military news articles (sexual assault) framed compared to less politically-charged stories (effects of deployment on military families) in military-oriented newspapers?

RQ4: How do the organizational structures of military-oriented newspapers influence military news coverage?
RQ5: What are the extra-media influences that come to bear on reporters in military-oriented publications as they frame military news?

To answer these research questions, the researcher conducted a textual analysis of newspaper articles from the *Stars and Stripes* (U.S. Edition) and the *Military Times*. The *Stars and Stripes* is a Department of Defense-authorized newspaper subject to Congressional oversight with editorial independence, while the *Military Times* is published by a subsidiary of TEGNA, the largest U.S. newspaper publisher (Stars and Stripes, 2016; Military Times, 2016). Both newspapers serve a military audience of active duty service members, government civilians, contractors and their families, and focus on topics pertinent to service members (Stars and Stripes, 2016; Military Times, 2016). In addition to analyzing newspaper articles, the researcher conducted qualitative, semi-structured interviews with editors and journalists from the *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times* over the phone in the fall of 2016. Finally, the researcher combined analysis results from the texts and the interviews and incorporated those results to arrive at findings and conclusions, discussed later in this paper.

**Method 1: Textual analysis**

The main method of analysis in this research was to conduct a textual analysis of newspaper articles. Textual analysis is the qualitative study of media content with specific attention to cultural context (Fürsich, 2009). Researchers use textual analysis to identify “the underlying ideological and cultural assumptions of the text” (Fürsich, 2009, p. 240). Textual analysis is an important branch of qualitative research because it can help audiences better understand the role journalists and media institutions play in shaping culture and help journalists see how newsroom routines flow from, and shape,
history (Fürsich, 2009). For these reasons, textual analysis helped answer the proposed research questions, with the exception of RQ4 and RQ5, which were answered using interviews.

In recent years, media scholars have used textual analysis to explore media framing events in the Middle East and the portrayal of Muslim women in western media (Ibroscheva, 2013); characterizations of males in film (Pascoe, 2015); and the portrayal of female sports journalists on television (Painter & Ferrucci, 2012), among other examples. Textual analysis studies on newspaper frames demonstrate the power the newspaper frames can have. For example, Western media have been found to stigmatize cultural issues and conflicts in other countries (Chari, 2010; Ibroscheva, 2013). The influence of media ownership on news frames is another issue that has been explored using textual analysis, and has implications for this research. For example, Kiwanuka-Tondo, Albada and Payton (2012) found that a private Ugandan newspaper printed longer articles on HIV and discussed HIV victims and prevention more than a government-owned Ugandan newspaper. Similarly, this research compares coverage on the same topics between a government-owned and privately-owned newspaper.

For this research, the researcher collected 20 newspaper articles from the Stars and Stripes (U.S. Edition) and 20 from Military Times through their websites and online archives. In order to have a point of comparison between a more politically charged topic (sexual assault in the military) and a less politically-charged topic (the effects of deployment), the researcher gathered 10 articles per newspaper on sexual, and 10 per newspaper on the effects of deployment on military families. The articles were collected
between June and August 2016. The researcher selected the 10 most recent articles per newspaper on each topic, using each newspaper’s online archive.

Selected articles had to meet a criteria of being longer than a news brief to provide the researcher with enough text and context to draw conclusions. In addition, articles had to be written by journalists who work for the newspapers mentioned (i.e. they could not be articles from the newswire) in order to keep the research focused on work from only the newspapers studied. Further, the articles must have been published within the past 10 years to constitute a representative sample of recently published articles. (The sexual assault articles were all published during the past two years). Articles were obtained from the *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times* websites by searching the sites for articles on sexual assault and the effects of deployment on military families. Articles from the *Military Times* included articles from its family of newspapers, *Army Times*, *Air Force Times*, *Marine Corps Times* and *Navy Times*.

This chart explains the number and types of articles the researcher collected:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Articles on sexual assault</th>
<th>Articles on deployment effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Stars and Stripes</em></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Military Times</em></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After collecting the articles, the researcher conducted a textual analysis of the articles. The researcher read through each article a minimum of three times, including the first read to decide how to categorize the article, a second read for comprehension, and a third read while taking notes in an analysis worksheet. To help in analyzing the articles,
researcher created a textual analysis worksheet for each article, adapted from a worksheet in Altheide’s (1996) book, *Qualitative Media Analysis* (p. 51), and incorporating Entman’s (1993) four concepts of frames. To see the actual worksheet, see Appendices A and B (sample articles and analysis).

The worksheet included a section for the researcher to note which of Entman’s (1993) four frame indicators were used in each article, including the definition of a societal or cultural problem, the cause of the problem (directly stated or inferred), judgments on the cause(s) of the problem, and suggested solutions. These indicators helped the researcher to determine frames for each article. The worksheet also included sections to write down the types of sources the author used, presentation style, lead type, themes, and framing techniques, such as relying on anecdotes to tell the story or using word pictures, all of which helped the researcher to decipher frames in each article (Borah, 2011; Entman, 1993; Melkote, 2009; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

Next, the researcher organized and refined the worksheet notes into a spreadsheet and separated the articles into groups based on major themes. For example, the articles on sexual assault in the military fell within two main themes: the military justice system and the battle in Congress over who should have power to refer military sexual assault cases to courts-martial. The researcher made a spreadsheet for each theme to better compare and contrast how the *Military Times* and *Stars and Stripes* writers framed articles on similar topics. Next, the researcher further broadened the analysis by condensing minor frames into major frames per theme, and then into major frames per topic.

**Method 2: Qualitative interviews**
After analyzing these news articles, the researcher interviewed reporters and editors from the *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Time* to learn about how they think about their audiences and other factors that influence news framing. These interviews took place during October and November 2016. The researcher used semi-structured interviews, which are interviews that use the same set of questions for all participants, but allow the researcher to ask the questions in any order and follow up at any point in the interview (Brennan, 2013). The researcher interviewed current editors and journalists who authored many of the articles analyzed for this research.

The researcher conducted six interviews total, with one editor and two reporters from both the *Military Times* and *Stars and Stripes*. Both editors were male, and reporters interviewed included one male and one female from both newspapers. Interviews generally lasted 30 minutes to an hour, with the longest interview (with *Stars and Stripes* editor Bob Reid) lasting more than two hours.

In terms of demographics, only the *Stars and Stripes* editor had prior military experience; however, the female *Military Times* reporter was a military spouse. Experience in reporting on the military ranged from three years (female *Stars and Stripes* reporter) to 47 years (*Stars and Stripes* editor) but averaged about 10 years. All three *Stars and Stripes* employees had experience reporting on the military in a deployed or international environment (two downrange reporters, one stationed in Japan previously) but none of the *Military Times* employees had reported on the military outside of the United States. The *Stars and Stripes* editor previously worked for the Associated Press (for 45 years) and both of the female reporters (one from *Military Times*, one from *Stars and Stripes*) formerly worked for civilian newspapers located near military installations.
Interview questions focused on the different aspects of the news organizations, such as mission, audience, and ownership, and management style. Questions also explored extra-media influences, such as reporters’ and editors’ personal experiences, perceptions of competition and relationships with government public affairs personnel. To see the interview questions used for editors and reporters, see Appendices C and D (respectively).

All interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder. The researcher transcribed the interviews verbatim for analysis. Then, the researcher read through the interviews and made notes on the responses from each participant that corresponded to different research questions, such as descriptions of their mission (organizational influences) or their perceptions of competing newspapers (extra-media influences). The researcher put all of the responses for each research question together and then condensed the data to reflect major findings.

The interviews allowed the researcher to further explore how reporters and editors frame news at the *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times* by probing the way reporters and editors think when they write and edit news stories on sexual assault and the effects of deployment on military families. Further, these interviews helped the researcher to validate findings in the textual analysis portion of this study by providing another source of data that confirmed certain conclusions from the textual analysis and added other elements of data previously unknown to the researcher, such as how the changing news industry in influencing how reporters frame the news. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative researchers can check their data for accuracy and ensure validity through the use of strategies such as triangulation, or using different sources of data to support
conclusions about the data. By conducting semi-structured interviews in addition to textual analysis, the researcher was able to triangulate the research findings. The interviews also helped the researcher to better understand researcher bias through discrepant information that did not support the researcher’s themes or previous conclusions, two more strategies Creswell (2014) recommends to ensure the study is valid. For two examples of how the researcher analyzed articles to find frames (one from the Military Times on sexual assault and another from the Stars and Stripes on deployment effects), see Appendices A and B.

**Justification**

Qualitative methods are ideal for this type of research because they allow the researcher to find frames as they emerge, rather than setting pre-determined categories, especially since this research is treading new territory (Altheide, 1996; Creswell, 2014). Creswell (2013), Hatch (2002) and Marshall and Rossman (2011) note that qualitative methods are characterized by natural (uncontrived) research settings; comparing and contrasting data to uncover themes, including the perspectives of participants; flexible design; “reflexivity,” or comments from the researcher about how their role and experiences shape the research; and a focus on how the research fits into a larger body of research (as cited in Creswell, 2014, pp. 185-186), and this research shares all of these characteristics. Further, Babbie (2005) notes that qualitative research is designed to help researchers uncover the “meanings and patterns” in relationships (as cited in Pascoe, 2015, p. 8). In this study, the researcher explored how journalists at military-oriented newspapers think about the military and how social and institutional pressures impact the way they report on military activities. The goal of this research is to explore the
meaning” that journalists in military-oriented newspapers “ascribe to a social or human problem” (namely, to the portrayal of the military), and qualitative research serves this goal (Creswell, 2014, p. 4).

Further, Creswell (2014) notes that qualitative research is a more flexible research method than quantitative research since questions evolve during the study from data collected, and the researcher analyzes data narrowly at first, then broadens findings to “general themes” (p. 4). In this study, the researcher began by analyzing the text of individual articles (narrow) and then made broader and broader connections between articles focusing on similar themes, then comparing articles between different newspapers. Rather than beginning with a hypothesis, the researcher allowed frames to emerge through the data analysis process, using framing theory and the research questions as a guide (Creswell, 2014).

By focusing analysis on two major topics (sexual assault in the military and the effects of deployment on military families), the researcher was better able to explore the different perspectives and angles given to each article through the use of frames. The reason for choosing the topics of sexual assault within the military and the effects of deployment on military families was to provide a comparison between a more politically-charged topic (sexual assault) and a less politically-charged topic (deployment effects). Choosing two article topics also narrowed the research to a manageable amount of articles to analyze.

Using qualitative analysis methods allowed the researcher to tailor research questions and goals as data was collected, and to reflexively and openly allow personal experiences to help shape conclusions about the data collected (Creswell, 2014). Using
textual analysis allowed the researcher to see beyond obvious meanings in the text and learn the underlying “patterns, assumptions and omissions” of the text, which in turn helped explain how journalists at military-oriented publications view, and therefore frame, the military (Fürsich, 2009, p. 241). Interviews provided journalists’ and editors’ perspectives on how and why they frame stories the way they do, helping to support or contradict findings from the textual analysis and therefore validate final conclusions.

Textual analysis is the logical choice for qualitative research exploring framing in newspapers. The point of textual analysis, Fürsich (2009) writes, is more than just proving bias from the journalists’ perspective: it is “to explain which cultural sensibilities prevail that allow for such a text at this specific point in time” (p. 247). According to Berger (1998), researchers who use textual analysis “assume that behavioral patterns, values and attitudes found in this material reflect and affect the behaviors, attitudes and values of the people who create the material” (p. 23, as cited in Painter and Ferrucci, 2012, p. 252). This also connects to framing theory, since framing theorists note that journalists choose frames based on their own background, values, beliefs and experiences, as well as institutional biases and newsroom norms (Entman, 1993; Ryan, 2004; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Textual analysis reveals how media texts were constructed, how the writer used symbols to convey meaning and how that text portrays opinions and beliefs about individuals or groups (ideologies) (Fürsich, 2009). This lines up with framing theory, which focuses on how media package stories to highlight and downplay different aspects of the news (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Grusin & Utt, 2010; Haigh, 2012; Melkote, 2009; Entman, 1993).
In addition to using textual analysis, this study used semi-structured interviews with journalists and editors at the military-oriented newspapers *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times* to explore participants’ feelings, beliefs and opinions (Berger, 1998; Creswell, 2014). Semi-structured interviews, according to Brennan (2013), allow the researcher to use “pre-established questions,” as in a structured interview, but give the researcher the option to change the order of questions, ask follow-up questions and clarify answers (p. 28). The interviews will serve three purposes in this study: to explain how stories came to be framed in certain ways, to check textual analysis conclusions against statements made in the interviews (adding validity to the study) and to add richness to the study by providing the perspectives of journalists and editors working for military-oriented newspapers (Creswell, 2014). Since this study aims to help journalists working for military-oriented newspapers to better understand the meanings journalists attribute to the U.S. military, the researcher approached interviews from a constructivist worldview (Creswell, 2014). This approach lends itself to open-ended questions, which the researcher used during the interviews, and to examining data in context, which the researcher did by interviewing subjects after analyzing articles written by interview participants prior to conducting interviews (Creswell, 2014).

**The researcher’s role**

The researcher is a military spouse and a former U.S. Army Public Affairs reporter and editor. The researcher formerly worked as a reporter and editor for three military public affairs newspapers: the U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart *Citizen*, the Fort Leonard Wood *GUIDON* and the Fort Belvoir *Eagle*. (She did not work for the *Stars and Stripes* or for any *Military Times* publication.) The researcher also conducted an
ethnography of the *Stars and Stripes* Headquarters in Washington, D.C., for a graduate class assignment in the fall of 2013, and is acquainted with some of the reporters and editors working there (although not well acquainted with any interviewed in this study). These connections to the U.S. military provide the researcher with in-depth knowledge on military culture and norms, and add richness and understanding to research on military news and military-oriented publications, as well as lend the researcher special sensitivity to military personnel and their families. However, the researcher’s personal experiences as a military spouse and as a former government employee writing for the military community bring biases to the study that likely influence the way the researcher looks at data on military news. With this in mind, the researcher employed several strategies to improve the validity of the research. These include triangulating data by using newspaper articles from different newspapers as well as interviewing journalists and editors from both newspapers; using detailed descriptors on findings and openly writing about potential biases (Creswell, 2014).
Chapter 4: Frames in military news coverage (RQ1)

This chapter discusses how textual analysis findings from *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times* newspaper articles helped the researcher answer **RQ1: What frames emerge in military news coverage in military-oriented newspapers?** The researcher organized articles into two topics (sexual assault and deployment effects) and within those topics, separated articles according to major themes to better compare and contrast articles covering similar issues. Themes and frames are different concepts, but locating themes can help researchers determine frames. According to Altheide (1996), themes are “the recurring typical theses that run through a lot of reports,” while frames “are the focus, a parameter or boundary, for discussing a particular event” (p. 31). Themes indicate what type of article a news story is, but the frames highlight parts of the message to make them more meaningful to readers (Altheide, 1996; Entman, 1993).

For example, articles on sexual assault in the military addressed three main areas of concern, or themes, which included problems in the military justice system, the battle in Congress over who should have power to refer cases to trial, and how sexual assault impacts military culture. Within these themes, journalists framed these topics in different ways to highlight different problems, interpret causes of these problems, morally evaluate causes and effects, and suggest certain solutions to these problems, in line with Entman’s (1993) four frame indicators. Journalists use different techniques to create frames, such as citing certain types of sources, using anecdotes, presentation style, or making inferences or judgments, to name a few examples (Borah, 2011; Entman, 1993; Melkote; 2009;
Therefore, the researcher treated themes as main focus areas within a topic and frames as a point of view for looking at the news (Altheide, 1996). Most frames cross over themes. For example, the theme of failures in the military justice system is prevalent in articles on the military justice system and articles on the Congressional battle to remove authority from military commanders to refer sexual assault cases to trial, as explained more fully later in this chapter.

Frames within the topic of sexual assault include:

Frame 1: Failures in the military justice system
Frame 2: Military’s “troubling command culture” (Tritten, 2016)
Frame 3: Military culture makes it hard for assault victims to speak out
Frame 4: Sexual assault problem in military getting worse

Frames within the topic of deployment effects include:

Frame 1: Not enough institutional/cultural support for military families with deployment-related issues
Frame 2: Military families should reconcile deployment-related issues
Frame 3: Military spouses shelve their emotional needs during/after deployment
Frame 4: Military mothers battle cultural stigma, guilt for deploying

Textual analysis of sexual assault articles

The researcher found that articles addressing sexual assault in the military fell into three main themes. These themes include problems in the military justice system; the Congressional battles to reform the military justice system; and the influence of military
culture on military sexual assault cases. However, frames were not confined to themes. Major frames were found in all the themes. These frames are described below.

**Frame 1: Failures in the military justice system.** Many articles using this frame demonstrated that the military justice system does not take sexual assault crimes “seriously” and is not held accountable (Montgomery, 2015c, para. 11). Articles using this frame point to lack of accountability and due diligence as the reason why the military justice system is failing sexual assault victims, in line with Entman’s “diagnose causes” frame indicator (1993, p. 52). Interestingly, some of the articles in this section note that the military prosecutes some cases too harshly or allows “weak” cases to go to trial, while others focus on the fact that many cases never make it to trial at all (Montgomery, 2016, para. 8).

In his article on former Maj. Gen. Ralph O. Baker responding to sexual assault allegations, *Army Times* writer Kevin Lilley (2014a) uses sources from one side of the issue and “reinforcing clusters of facts of judgments” in the form of Baker’s quotes to generate sympathy for Baker and cast doubt on the sexual assault allegations against him (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Lilley (2014a) cites sexual assault allegations using a *Washington Post* article, but directly quotes Baker and the Army refuting the *Post*’s inference that Baker was “relieved of his post” due to a sexual assault convictions (para. 2). Using presentation style as a framing technique (Borah, 2011), Lilley’s lead notes that the general was fired after the allegations but that he “denies the charges” of sexual assault (2014a, para. 1). Further, Lilley (2014a) concludes his article with a quote from Baker stating that in spite of “31 good years in the military, five combat tours,” these sexual assault allegations will harm his career and service record (para. 10).
In a similar vein, *Stars and Stripes* reporter Nancy Montgomery (2016) writes that a new definition for “too drunk to consent to sex” by U. S. Court of Appeal for Armed Forces has been lauded by defense lawyers as “corrective” of military policies and laws allowing “weak cases” to go to court and “innocent men’s lives being ruined” (para. 1, 8). This is an example of making “moral judgments” about the effects of a problem, another one of Entman’s (1993) four frame indicators; in this case, the effects of the military justice system taking weak cases include harming the careers and lives of good service members and undermines the system’s reputation as a whole (Montgomery, 2016).

Similarly, *Stars and Stripes* writer Erik Slavin’s (2016) article on the conviction of a Navy senior chief petty officer uses one-sided sources to focus on the military justice system’s use of general punishments that may be too harsh for the crime. Slavin (2016) notes that a “dishonorable discharge is now an automatic consequence of conviction under Article 120” (para. 13) and focuses on the convicted sailor’s defense team, which was “surprised by the verdict,” and planned to appeal (para. 9). The majority of Slavin’s (2016) article quotes the defense lawyer on the case, with the exception of one blanket quote by a Naval Forces Japan spokesman noting that the jury found the sailor guilty. This is an example of using sources of information as a framing technique to promote reader sympathy for the convicted sailor more than the victim (Entman, 1993).

In her article on the Defense Department Inspector General finding that Army criminal investigators dismissed a woman’s rape allegations without cause, Montgomery (2015c) highlights discord and lack of accountability within the DOD. Montgomery (2015c) frames her article by bookending it with statements that the Army’s Criminal Investigative Division was not investigating sexual assault cases correctly. Montgomery
(2015c) also illustrated the back-and-forth between the IG and the Army’s CID by using short statements summing up the conflict. For example, after noting that the IG recommended re-opening the case, Montgomery (2015c) writes “CID has declined” (para. 7) and after describing the CID’s argument (that there wasn’t enough proof), writes: “The IG rejected that argument” (para. 8). This is an example of using presentation style and “thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments” to guide readers into concluding that the Department of Defense and Army CID were not doing their jobs (Borah, 2011; Entman, 1993, p. 52). Montgomery (2015c) also concludes her article with a quote from Don Christensen, a former Air Force prosecutor, saying that the DOD has a “‘historic failure to take crimes seriously” (para. 11). He also said: “They have a revolving door of inexperienced investigators and prosecutors that is a recipe for failure. … Their inability to admit they are wrong and to take allegations seriously is another reason victims have no faith in the system’” (Montgomery, 2015c, para. 11-12). This is yet another example of pointing to the reasons behind a problem (in this case, the reason why the military justice system is unable to deal with sexual assault cases properly) (Entman, 1993).

The way *Stars and Stripes* reporter Steven Beardsley (2016) frames his article on the trial of a sailor found guilty of making sexual comments to younger sailors underscores the belief that the military justice system does not enact harsh enough punishments for those convicted of sex assault crimes. Beardsley (2016) notes that convicted sailor Petty Officer 2nd Class Aldane Aarons was originally sentenced to a bad-conduct discharge by the judge, but that the judge “was bound by a pretrial agreement ruling out that option” (para. 2). Beardsley (2016) uses anecdotes from victims
as a framing technique to engage readers in the victims’ stories (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Beardsley’s article details the testimonies of three female soldiers, noting that beyond making inappropriate comments, the sailor touched them inappropriately, and that “Prosecutors pushed for a stiff penalty, saying Aarons targeted younger sailors” (2016, para. 10). Further, Beardsley (2016) closes the article with comments from one defense attorney comment, stating that Aarons hadn’t pleaded guilty to any charges beyond making comments, juxtaposed with the report that during the trial Aarons “read a statement of apology, turning several times to the two women as he spoke” and that he “asked for leniency, saying he was ‘filled with shame and regret’” (para. 14). This juxtaposition begs the question of whether or not his sentence was too light.

In her report on the acquittal of Airman 1st Class Brandon Wright in his widely publicized sexual assault trial, Montgomery (2015b) quotes the plaintiff’s former Special Victims’ Counsel, Maribel Jarzabek, saying that “the Air Force finally took the case seriously,” underscoring the frame that this is a rare occurrence (para. 4). According to Montgomery (2015b), the case was first dismissed by Lt. Gen. Craig Franklin in 2013 but reopened after Jarzabek wrote a report “accusing the hearing officer of bias against her client” (para. 11). In spite of the fact that Airman Wright was cleared of all charges, Montgomery’s (2015b) article focuses mainly on Jarzabek and the perspective of wrongdoing within the military, including wrongful command influence in the case and the plaintiff’s disappointment with the trial results. This is an example of using sources of information to help frame an article (Entman, 1993).

Tilghman’s (2016) article on the number of military sexual assault reports and convictions demonstrates that the military justice system makes it hard to punish
perpetrators using “reinforcing clusters of facts” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Tilghman (2016) focuses on statistics (in the Pentagon’s annual report on sexual assaults) to convey problems with prosecuting sexual assault cases in the military. His lead notes that “only a small fraction” of sexual assault reports in the military lead to a “court-martial and conviction for a related crime” (para. 1). Tilghman (2016) writes that Defense Department Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office Director Army Maj. Gen. Camille Nichols conveyed concern about the low conviction rate and said that “the services have not historically provided enough staff and resources to promptly examine all sex assault reports” (para. 5). Tilghman (2016) later notes that it is “widely believed sexual assaults in the military are vastly under-reported” (para. 10) and that the defense officials say “the low conviction rate in part reflects the nature of the criminal justice system” (para. 11). This further demonstrates Entman’s (1993) “diagnose causes” frame indicator by showing that the reason why sexual assault crimes are not prosecuted adequately in the military is the way the military justice system operates (p. 52).

Some of the articles within this frame use Entman’s (1993) frame indicator of suggesting a solution to the military justice system’s failings: namely, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand’s bill to remove authority to refer cases to trial from military commanders (Kime, 2015; Shane, 2015; Tritten, 2016). For example, Kime (2015) writes that changes to the way the military investigates sexual assault ensure that “commanders and investigative bodies take allegations of sexual assault seriously and properly handle criminal procedures” which implies that they were not doing so before the reforms (para. 2). Kime (2015) also noted that Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), with support from other senators, promised during the 2015 defense authorization law signing to reintroduce her
bill again because “victims continue to face retaliation and retribution after reporting alleged incidents and still are reluctant to come forward” (para. 12). This also demonstrates that the military fails to protect sexual assault whistleblowers from reprisal, which ties into Frame 3.

_Military Times_ reporter Leo Shane III (2015) uses presentation style to frame his article in a way that puts Gillibrand’s bill in a positive light. In his lead, Shane (2015) notes that the plan to reform military sexual assault problems continues to fail to pass in the Senate in spite of “more lawmakers backing the idea than opposing it,” showing that the bill is supported by most lawmakers (para. 1). Shane (2015) notes that while military leaders and some senators believe commanders should retain control of sexual assault allegations as incentive to prevent and punish these crimes, Gillibrand asserts that “the rate of assaults in the military has experience[d] virtually no change over the last four years” (para. 9), and there were “more than 19,000 sexual assaults last year” according to a Pentagon survey (para. 10). These statements are essentially rebutting the claims that the military leaders can prevent and punish sexual assault crimes adequately and showing a need for a new solution (in this case, Gillibrand’s bill).

Tritten (2016) focuses on Gillibrand’s report on the “troubling command culture” in the military, which supports her goal to take away commanders’ power to decide whether to prosecute sexual assault cases (para. 4). Tritten (2016) uses victim anecdotes and statistics from Gillibrand’s report to refute the Defense Department claim that commanders need authority to punish sexual assault perpetrators, and quotes Gillibrand stating that commanders actually “‘use their powers to dispose of these troubling cases outside of a courtroom’” (para. 7). Similarly, Shane (2015) quotes Gillibrand saying that
service members must “‘suffer the chain of command when they report these crimes … Retaliation happens so often that a majority of these assaults go unreported’” (para. 11). Tritten (2016) reports on pieces of evidence supporting Gillibrand’s proposal, including quotes from other senators who support the bill, facts from Gillibrand’s report accusing commanders of abusing power and stopping sexual assault cases from going to trial, as well as claims that the Pentagon “misled Congress with ‘bogus data’” (para. 11). Tritten (2016) concludes that “as political pressure mounts, it remains uncertain whether Gillibrand’s legislation has a real shot at passing,” inferring that the bill may not pass for political reasons.

Kime’s (2015) article focuses on the fact that several senators, led by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), do not think the reforms to the military justice system in the 2015 defense bill will be enough to correct the failing system; then the article focuses on Gillibrand’s new proposed bill, the Military Justice Improvement Act, which will remove commanders’ power to decide whether to send cases to court-martial. For example, Kime notes that “the new measures fall short of the step sought by some lawmakers and advocates” (2015, para. 3). Further, Kime writes that in spite of reforms designed to give victims of sexual assault more options, Gillibrand, along with the support of other senators, will put forward legislation taking control of these case out of the hands of commanders and into “independent military counselors” (2015, para. 10).

Within the theme of the Congressional debate, all three articles frame Gillibrand’s bill as a positive solution, in spite of failing to pass in Congress twice (Kime, 2015; Shane, 2015; Tritten, 2016). For example, the lead in Shane (2015) reads that Gillibrand’s bill failed to pass “despite more lawmakers backing the idea than opposing
it,” showing that most senators believe military commanders should be relieved of their duty to send cases on to court-martial (para. 1). Shane’s (2015) conclusion asserts that reforms to the system thus far have had little effect on the sexual assault problem in the military, inferring that Gillibrand’s changes are needed (para. 1). After describing the reforms made to the 2015 defense bill, Kime (2015) focuses on Gillibrand’s bill (inferring that it has reforms needed to truly help fix broken military justice system). Tritten (2016) demonstrates the need for continued reform in the military justice system by highlighting Gillibrand’s report, which claims military members accused of sexually assaulting someone “are rarely put on trial and that punishments can be light” (para. 6). Tritten also cited an example of this happening from Gillibrand’s report, noting that the victim was assaulted by a former commander but in spite of “probable cause that the officer committed sodomy and cruelty to his subordinate, the incident resulted in non-judicial punishment” (para. 8). In this way, all three articles are pinpointing a cause of sexual assault issues in the military (cases being stymied by commanders) and suggesting a solution (taking authority from commanders in this area), both of which are frame indicators (Entman, 1993).

**Frame 2: The military’s “troubling command culture” (Tritten, 2016).** This frame is an example of pointing to the cause of the problem, another of Entman’s (1993) frame indicators. In this frame, journalists focus their articles to show that corruption among military leaders—from failure to refer cases to trial to committing sexual assault themselves—causes a major miscarriage of justice for sexual assault victims in the military. One article (Cahn, 2016a) demonstrates that military leaders are not making enough of an effort to combat sexual assault. Problems with military commanders was
also a major theme for articles on the failures in the military justice system and the Congressional battle to determine authority to refer cases to trial.

In her lead, *Stars and Stripes* reporter Nancy Montgomery (2015a) details how military commanders can influence the military justice system for their own political reasons. Montgomery (2015a) notes that an “Air Force judge has ruled that the service’s top legal officer committed unlawful command influence in a sexual assault case, partly for political motives” (para. 1). According to the judge’s ruling, the former Air Force Judge Advocate General recommended transferring the case to another convening authority “for a do-over” after it was dismissed, so that it would not become fuel for Senator Kirsten Gillibrand’s (D-NY) congressional bill to take authority to refer cases to trial from military commanders (Montgomery, 2015a, para. 3). The implied solution to the problem is that Gillibrand’s bill could change the system of authority so that commanders no longer decide which cases go to court, in line with Entmans’ (1993) frame indicator of offering solutions to problems (Montgomery, 2015a). Further, Montgomery (2015b) notes that Lt. Gen. Craig Franklin, the case’s first convening authority, had “tossed out a jury’s guilty verdict” in a prior sexual assault case (para. 13), that Franklin was later fired as a result of his “unlawful command influence” discovered by a case trial judge (para. 17) and that his legal adviser was forced to retire early, which also demonstrates corruption among military leaders.

Tilghman’s (2016) article on the low number of convictions for sexual assault in the military demonstrates that commanders are a major part of the problem by using the framing technique of “reinforcing clusters of facts” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). In Tilghman’s (2016) “breakdown” of all of the sexual assault cases sent to military commanders for
evaluation in 2015, his first bullet point is that commanders dismissed 770 cases in 2015 for lack of evidence, and the first four points (out of seven total) concern how commanders deal with sexual assault cases (para. 18). Further, the breakdown reveals that because of either dismissing cases, or not substantiating sexual assault as an offense, military commanders’ decisions result in only 926 cases going to court (Tilghman, 2016). Of these 926 cases, only 254 resulted in actual sexual assault-related convictions (with 113 court-martials still pending) (Tilghman, 2016, para. 19). Both of Military Times reporter Michelle Tan’s articles, discussed in greater detail in Frame 5, also use this frame since they describe cases in which senior military leaders were convicted of sexual assault and related offenses (Tan, 2015; Tan, 2016).

Cahn’s (2016a) article shows that commanders do not care enough about the sexual assault issue to make changes in their units. This is an example of making a “moral judgment” on the effects of the sexual assault problem in the military (Entman, 1993, p. 52). In her article on an event near the Pentagon on sexual assault, Cahn (2016a) notes that in spite of event hosts inviting military commanders in the hope that they could enact “cultural change” in their units, “[n]ot one showed up” (para. 1-2). Cahn (2016a) frames her article to focus on what leaders could and should be doing by opening with “commanders [are] integral to leading a cultural change” (para. 1) and closing the article with a quote from retired Brig. Gen. Loree Sutton saying “‘We serve in an institution that is the world’s best in blocking change.’ … ‘But when required to change, there is no organization that is better on Earth in leading the way’” (para. 29). This infers that without military leaders on board, the military will resist changing its reporting and
justice systems for sexual assault crimes, but that if they were on board, the military could make a major difference for change in the world.

Frame 3: Hard for sexual assault victims to speak out. These articles are not critiquing the military justice system as much as they are pointing to military culture in general as a cause of the sexual assault epidemic in the military, one of Entman’s (1993) frame indicators. Cahn (2016a) quotes Government Accountability Office representative Brenda Farrell saying that “the inherent nature of certain types of commands or units could cultivate an environment with increased risk of sexual assault” (para. 16). Cahn (2016a) notes that “experts” (para. 5) in the field of sexual assault believe it is an ongoing problem in the military because it could be a part of hazing activities (leading to lower numbers of sexual assaults reported by men), or mobbing, in which sexual harassment is part of the group “dynamic” (para. 18). Kime (2016e) notes that the military’s hierarchical structure with its chain of command and close-knit units makes it harder for sexual assault victims to speak out or seek help. Kime (2016e) quotes Amy Street, a deputy director with the VA’s National Center for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, saying that victims of sexual assault in the military may suffer more than their civilian counterparts because they feel a sense of “betrayal by those believed to be a ‘comrade in arms’ or when the command system fails to protect” them (para. 10). Kime (2016e) juxtaposes the programs available for victims within the military system with the fact that many victims, especially men, do not seek care they need for sexual assault. Kime (2016e) underscores this problem by reporting that new research shows service members who are sexually assaulted are at a higher risk for homelessness, suicide, and PTSD.
Further, in her article on a sexual assault case against Airman 1st Class Brandon Wright, Montgomery (2015b) features civilian prosecuting attorney Maribel Jarzabek as her main source. Jarzabek notes that the jury members in the Wright trial (military members) “showed a regressive military ‘mind-set’ about sexual assault” (Montgomery, 2015b, para. 22). Jarzabek also states that jury members asked about the victim’s performance evaluations and whether she “had ever cheated on her fiancé,” labeling these requests were “‘totally irrelevant’” (para. 23). This is an example of using groups of statements and sources of information to support the frame that the military culture stereotypes sexual assault victims as culpable to some extent (Entman, 1993).

Two articles within this frame focus on the issue of reprisal against “whistleblowers,” or victims who tell authorities about the assault and initiate investigations (Losey and Tan, 2016; Cahn, 2016b). Losey and Tan (2016) highlight the Defense Department’s 2016 report that a brigadier general retaliated against a female lieutenant colonel (Teresa James) in the West Virginia Army National Guard after she reported a sexual assault, noting that this is “the first time the DoD IG has ever substantiated an allegation of reprisal for reporting a sexual assault” (para. 2). (This also ties into Frame 2). Losey and Tan (2016) also note that the “West Virginia National Guard declined comment” (para. 9) although when the Military Times wrote about this case in May 2015, the WV National Guard “issued a statement strongly denying James was retaliated against” (para. 14). Losey and Tan (2016) close the article with James voicing the hardship she went through to get justice and her wish to make the military justice system better: she notes that it has been “‘a very long, hard road’” over the years to get the Defense IG to substantiate her claim of reprisal (para. 29). In Losey and Tan
James voices her hope that her case encourages other service members who have experienced reprisal to “keep going” (para. 29) and James says “‘Our system can work’” (para. 30), further underscoring that it currently does not work the way it should, and that other victims don’t receive justice for reprisal. Similarly, Stars and Stripes reporter Dianna Cahn (2016b) framed her article on the IG report substantiating a commander’s reprisal against a whistleblower with words like “unprecedented” and “surprising” to show how whistleblowers in the military rarely, if ever, receive support (para. 3, 9). Cahn’s (2016b) article employs a narrative from Lt. Col. Teresa James, the whistleblower whose commanding officer retaliated against her, to support the frame that the military justice system makes it hard for sexual assault victims to speak out due to the risk of reprisal.

**Frame 4: Sexual assault problem in the military is getting worse.** This frame is an example of “defin[ing] problems” in the military culture (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Kime (2016a) notes that “despite a decadelong effort to counter the problem, harassment and sexual assault in the military continues” (para. 5). Kime (2016a) writes that reports of sexual assault at military academies suggest the problem is getting worse, in spite of Defense Department officials saying this shows more trust in the system. Kime (2016a) frames her article on sexual assault reporting at U.S. service academies to show that reports are on the rise, using a graph and her lead: “Reports of sexual assault at the three U.S. service academies jumped 55 percent” (para. 1), in spite of DOD officials stating that higher number of reports “represents a ‘growing trust in the system’” (para. 6). Further, while Kime (2016a) notes in her fourth paragraph that the Air Force Academy experienced the largest leap in reports since 2011, in her seventh paragraph she notes that
this “may have been an anomaly” according to the Defense Department report (para. 7). This is an example of using presentation style as a framing technique (Borah, 2011). Kime (2016a) also writes that sexual harassment reports have risen at service academies, and that officials believe the academies are not conducting enough training on sexual harassment. Interestingly, Kime (2016a) used the Pentagon review of sexual assault reporting at service academies and a Defense Department sexual assault prevention program advisor as sources, but did not cite service academy officials. Similarly, another Kime article (2016e) relies on statistics and research studies to convey the depth of the sexual assault problem in the military, rather than direct quotes.

Underscoring this problem is Stars and Stripes reporter Chiyomi Sumida’s (2016) article on a sailor in Okinawa accused of raping a Japanese local national. This article is an example of making “moral judgments” on the effects of a problem: in this case, inferring that sexual assault issues in the military are causing friction between the U.S. military overseas and host nations, another of Entman’s frame indicators (1993). Sumida (2016) bookends her article with two different cases of service members attacking local women, and reports on an anti-military protest in the center, framing her article using presentation style (Borah, 2011). Sumida also focuses on how the III Marine Expeditionary Force command responded to news of the attacks, changing off-base privileges for service members and apologizing to the Naha governor, who she notes is already anti-military (2016). This shows that the military command is attempting to stem the anti-military sentiments and regain positive relations with local government.

The next three articles highlight the heinousness of sexual assault crimes and/or prevalence of the problem through all ranks in the military (Lilley, 2014b; Tan, 2015;
Tan, 2016). Army Times reporter Kevin Lilley’s (2014b) report on a soldier charged with rape and sexual assault at Joint Base Lewis-McChord is essentially a summary of the police report focusing on quotes from the victim, who reported that the soldier “physically and sexually abused her for hours in her bedroom” (para. 1). This is an example of using anecdotes as a framing technique in order to promote reader engagement (as cited in Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). The victim describes waking up to the soldier breaking into her bedroom, then locking her in, taking her cell phone, laying on top of her, dragging her back inside when she tried to escape, that he “sexually assaulted her and ‘continued for the next several hours to rub her legs, hips and breasts’” (para. 5). The article reports on one side of the story (the victim’s), using only the police report and Army personnel records as sources (Lilley, 2014b).

Army Times reporter Michelle Tan’s (2015) article on the former 82nd Airborne Division chief of justice being convicted of rape and sexual assault demonstrates that leaders in the military justice system are susceptible to committing the crimes they are charged to prosecute and prevent, and underscores that sexual assault in the military reaches the highest ranks and levels of the military justice system. Tan (2015) notes that the officer, Maj. Erik Burris, pleaded not guilty to all charges, yet was found guilty of on seven different counts of sex crimes. Tan’s (2015) report also focuses on an attorney’s assertion that Burris’ personal issues unduly influenced cases in his care as chief of justice. Tan’s (2015) focus on Burris’ rank, position and the effects his crimes may have had on other cases demonstrates casting judgment on the effects of corruption in military leaders, one of Entman’s frame indicators (1993).
Similarly, Tan’s (2016) report on Military District of Washington Col. James Laughrey, sentenced to eight years imprisonment for sexually abusing a child and creating child pornography, focuses on his rank, the charges he faced, and the punishments he could have received. For example, Tan (2016) notes that Laughrey “faced up to 91 years confinement, total forfeiture of pay and allowances and dismissal,” underscoring the heinousness of his crimes. In Tan (2016), every count of sexual abuse of a child Laughrey pleaded guilty to is written out, possibly to shock readers to the depth of the crimes or demonstrate why his punishment was a fraction of what he could have received. Tan’s (2016) main focus is on the guilty soldier’s rank (colonel) and location (Military District of Washington). This is evidenced by the headline (“Colonel sentences to 8 years for sexual abuse of a minor, possessing child porn”) and lead of the article, an example of using presentation style as a framing technique (Tan, 2016). Tan’s articles also support corruption among military leaders (Frame 2).

**Textual analysis of deployment effects articles**

A textual analysis of articles on the effects of deployment on military families proved much broader than the articles on sexual assault. While the articles on sexual assault in the military were published within the last three years, with the oldest dated from Dec. 5, 2014, the articles on the effects of deployment on military families were published from Aug. 30, 2008 to June 25, 2016. The reason for this is because there were not as many articles published within the past few years on the effects of deployment on military families as there were published on sexual assault. The issue of sexual assault in the military has been a hot-button topic in the media in the past few years, while the effects of deployment on military families has been a topic discussed for decades in the
news and is more of an ongoing issue than a crisis demanding a fast resolution, as the sexual assault topic has been portrayed.

In locating articles on this topic, the researcher applied the search terms “effects of deployment on military families” broadly. Articles focus on such diverse topics as post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD; military marriages and intimacy issues; parenting; depression; support networks; and recreational therapy for veterans struggling to adjust to civilian life after a deployment. However, two main themes emerged: post-traumatic stress disorder among deployed service members and the effects of deployment on military spouses and military marriages. Many articles dealt with military marriages, parenting and PTSD simultaneously (Anderson, 2013; Barnes, 2012b; Lilley, 2015a; McCloskey 2011; Moore, 2016).

Eight of the 20 articles analyzed on the effects of deployment on military families focused mainly on post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, among deployed service members. Three of these articles were published by the Stars and Stripes and five were published in the Military Times. Six of these articles used anecdotes as major framing devices (Barnes, 2012b; Kime, 2016d; Kuz, 2014; Lilley, 2015a; Lilley, 2015b; Moore, 2016; Moore, 2015; Simoes, 2015), which is a way to promote reader engagement (as cited in Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Several articles also used word pictures and descriptive language to convey vivid imagery about the deployment experience.

Nine of the 20 articles on the effects of deployment on military families focused mainly on military spouses and marriages (in addition to others in which it is a minor theme). Six of these articles were published by the Stars and Stripes, and three were published by the Military Times. All nine use anecdotes as major framing techniques,
which is a way to promote reader engagement (as cited in Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Other techniques used include word pictures (four articles) and personal voice (two), more ways to connect readers emotionally to the topic (as cited in Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). One article, Anderson (2013), parallels troubled military marriages with a warzone using metaphors and similes, possibly to help readers connect the problem to a context and language military understand. Frames were not confined to certain themes and major frames were prevalent in all themes.

Frame 1: Not enough institutional/cultural support. Articles using this frame “define problems” in military culture (Entman, 1993, p. 52), or in the case of Barnes (2011), American culture. In a “Spouse Calls” column, Stars and Stripes columnist Teri Barnes (2011) makes the case that the civilian population in America does not appreciate or understand the sacrifices military families make in service to this country. Barnes (2011) writes that after a decade of deployment (at the time of her writing), news coverage in America shows that “[s]ome in the U.S. prefer to ignore the war altogether in favor of reality TV—whatever than means. America’s national memory is way too short if we can forget conflicts that are not over yet” (para. 2). She later asks, “Now, after a few years of flag-waving, yellow ribbons and bumper stickers, is civilian America tired of supporting the troops, of hearing war stories and seeing flag-draped coffins?” (Barnes, 2011, para. 11). This rhetorical question is a framing device designed to shame civilian America for not staying the course in support of families who continue to sacrifice for their country.

Kime (2016c) demonstrates in several areas of the article the need for more dialogue and support for troops with sexual problems as a result of combat injuries. For
example, she writes: “Sex and intimacy is a topic that is rarely discussed openly among injured troops” (Kime, 2016c, para. 12). Kime (2016c) also notes that “One of the biggest barriers to addressing the issues is a lack of enthusiasm for discussing it, advocates say” (para. 27). Kime (2016c) leads with the story of Aaron Causey, a soldier who suffered an improvised explosive device, or IED, explosion that rendered him infertile. Kime (2016c) then notes that Causey is just one of an “unprecedented” (para. 9) number of veterans suffering from sexual dysfunction or infertility as result of combat injuries who “face lifelong treatment and recovery” (para. 11), demonstrating the scope of the problem. Kime (2016c) also devotes two subheads to the fact that this issue is not discussed enough in public and military circles (“Rarely discussed” and “Opening the dialogue”). Kime (2016c) uses powerful sources as a framing technique to show that DOD-wide changes are needed: “doctors, social workers and policymakers…said actions can be taken in theater to facilitate long-term healing” (para. 19). Kime (2016c) also devoted one subhead to the fact that there is not enough financial coverage for these injuries (“Legislative hurdles”) and notes that Tricare (government-issued health care coverage for military families) does not cover assisted conception procedures despite diagnosing potential causes of infertility. Kime’s (2016c) article is full of anecdotes by not only military couples but mothers of soldiers diagnosed with fertility issues expressing concerns that there is not enough institutional support for these troops, both financial and emotional. For example, one military spouse attending the conference “argues that military couples shouldn’t have to pay out of pocket or turn to charities for help in starting a family” (Kime, 2016c, para. 35). Kime (2016c) also concludes her article with
the quote “This conversation has to start happening,” underscoring the need for Americans as a whole to start talking about this issue as well.

Similarly, Shane III (2012) documents the stories of three different military couples who struggle with infertility, a challenge made harder to bear by military separations and deployments. Shane III (2012) writes that although infertility is emotionally taxing for all couples, “For military couples, the demands of service add an extra level of complication” (para. 8). These include not finding out about the infertility problem right away because of separations, multiple moves that result in frequently changing doctors and clinics, interrupting or delaying treatments, and financial issues (Shane III, 2012). Using narrative style as a framing technique (as cited in Shoemaker & Vos, 2009), Shane III (2012) documents the problems the Bailey family faced in becoming pregnant because they were a military family. For example, he writes that “Doctor visits had to be scheduled around Army assignments. New treatments had to be scheduled around station moves” (Shane III, 2012, para. 35). Shane III (2012) also repeats phrases about waiting on the Bailey family’s fertility journey: “Each obstacle meant more delays, more waiting” (para. 10); “More delays, more waiting” (para. 29 and 41); “More lost time, more waiting” (para. 36); and the final sentence in the article is a quote from Marc Bailey saying “The feeling that time is against us eats at me” (para. 84). Shane III’s (2012) word choice and presentation style using the repetition of losing time to military moves, separations and deployments underscores the frame that being in the military makes it even harder for couples with fertility issues to conceive (Borah, 2011; Entman, 1993). Like his fellow Military Times reporter Kime (2016c), Shane III (2012) also demonstrates that there is not enough financial support for couples like the
Baileys by writing that the Defense Health Systems will not pay for in vitro fertilization, known as IVF, “or other complex pregnancy procedures” (para. 43), although they do cover diagnostic tests and some treatments. Further, he writes that while certain military bases do offer these treatments, military families struggle to get to them if they live far away (Shane III, 2012).

On another subject within this frame, Stars and Stripes reporter Martin Kuz (2014) frames his article to show that the reason why service members return from deployments with behavioral health problems is a lack of military-provided health care downrange, an example of Entman’s “diagnose causes” frame indicator (1993, p. 52). Kuz (2014) notes that the Army started sending more behavioral health providers downrange as “evidence of the Army’s slow awakening to a mental health crisis within its ranks and the need to counsel soldiers before they return home” (para. 8). This is Kuz’s (2014) interpretation, based on an Army behavioral health report and reports from behavioral health providers. Kuz (2014) notes that the practice of providing counseling downrange started “too late to benefit those who served earlier … [but] portends a more informed approach to behavioral health for future generations of troops,” (para. 8), cueing the reader into the frame that many deployed service members in the past were not cared for, as well as the frame that the military needs to do more to ensure behavioral health needs are met downrange in the future. This is also an example of making a “moral judgment” about the effects of a problem (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

Stars and Stripes reporter Hendrick Simoes (2015) uses narrative journalism as a framing technique in his article on an Army officer who turned post-deployment depression into fuel to help others when he felt the Army’s post-deployment care was not
enough (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Simoes (2015) notes that Army Maj. Jeff Hall was “increasingly frustrated about the attention and level of care offered to servicemembers” following a deployment (para. 5). Simoes (2015) begins his article with an anecdote, describing the scene in which Hall contemplated killing himself in his yard. Simoes (2015) details Hall’s frustration with the military system, which inspired him to start his own organization. Simoes’ (2015) conclusion references back to the start of the article with Hall stating if he didn’t take recovery into his own hands, he would “‘go right back into that guy that was sitting in my backyard … with a pistol in my hand’” (Simoes, 2015, para. 25). This frame makes it appear that if service members rely on the military for behavioral health services, their needs will go unmet, an example of using inference as a framing technique (Melkote, 2009).

In an article on an Army PTSD survey, Army Times reporter Kevin Lilley (2015b) leads by stating that the researchers in the project want to discover “more ways the Army can address the issue—and not just for one type of family unit” (para. 1), which implies that the Army hasn’t fully addressed how PTSD affects soldiers’ lives back at home and that it hasn’t focused enough on nontraditional families. Lilley (2015b) uses demographics to show that since female married soldiers only represent about 12 percent of the Army’s forces, their spouses are not represented in military policy and support programs for families of soldiers with PTSD. Lilley (2015b) writes that according to Keith Renshaw, the main researcher for the GMU study, “many spouse surveys either lump the men in with the women or discard them entirely when making policy recommendations” (para.10). This is an example of using sources of information as a framing technique to pinpoint reasons for a problem (Entman, 1993); in this case, a cause
of male spouses being underrepresented in Army PTSD health care is that they are
overlooked by Army PTSD program officials.

Two articles within this frame focus on alternative therapies to PTSD, an example
of using Entman’s (1993) frame indicator of pointing to solutions to a problem. In
Simoes (2015), Army Maj. Jeff Hall notes that acupuncture and art therapy helped with
his depression and fits of anger, and that he “prefers this method to medication” (para.
19). Military Times reporter Patricia Kime (2016d) uses word choice and narrative style
to tell the story of Robin Krauth, a retired Army medic with PTSD who joined a Lego
building club, as an example of how recreational therapy can help service members with
PTSD (Borah, 2011; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Joining a group of people with the same
interests helped boost Krauth’s “mental state, boosted her concentration and provided a
gateway to the world of other adult Lego fans,” Kime wrote (2016d, para. 4). In both of
these articles, emphasis is placed on service members struggling with PTSD finding help
outside of traditional military medicine, which supports the frame that the military
institution itself does not offer adequate care options for struggling service members
(Kime, 2016d; Simoes, 2015).

Frame 2: Military families should reconcile deployment-related issues. This
frame is an example of Entman’s “suggest remedies” frame indicator, as well as his
“make moral judgments” on causes and effects indicator, since these articles are framed
in a way that suggests families should stay together despite PTSD-related hardships
(1993, p. 52). Further, many of the articles using this frame imply that couples who work
through deployment- and PTSD-related hardships are rewarded with stronger
relationships afterward (Anderson, 2013; Barnes, 2012b; Kime, 2013). Some articles
emphasize the importance of service members getting help for PTSD (Moore, 2015; Moore, 2016).

Within this frame, some articles also discussed the importance of deployed parents reconciling with their children after the strains of deployment negatively impact those relationships. Using narrative style, Army Times reporter Kevin Lilley (2015a) framed his article “Former soldier’s book explains PTSD to kids” to demonstrate how important it is for families dealing with this disorder to talk to their children. Lilley’s (2015a) lead notes that Seth Kastle, a former soldier, wrote a book because he “felt he had to tell his two young daughters, in a way they would understand, about the mental scars that remained more than a decade after his last deployment” (para 1-2). Further, Lilley quotes Kastle saying he hopes the book will “‘be good enough to start some conversations,’” which demonstrates that the goal of his efforts is to help others talk about PTSD with their children (2015a, para. 5).

In a “Kevlar for the Mind” column for the Military Times, Bret A. Moore (2016) notes that “PTSD affects the entire family” and especially children (para. 1). Moore (2016) writes that parents with PTSD need to talk to their children about the disorder, since “Children with a parent battling PTSD may experience sadness, anger, chronic worry and confusion,” sometimes acting out or internalizing those problems (para. 3). Moore (2016), who is a certified psychologist and military veteran, advises parents to monitor their children’s behavior, talk to them about PTSD and “[r]eassure them that it’s not their fault” (para. 8).

McCloskey’s (2011) article on the Rivera family demonstrates that recovery is possible for families dealing with PTSD and traumatic brain injury, or TBI, but that it can
be difficult and painful, requiring sacrifices and role changes on the spouse’s part. In McCloskey’s (2011) article, Sandra Rivera expresses her feeling that spouses should stay with their active duty spouse despite combat-inflicted injuries out of a sense of obligation. Rivera says “If you’re married to this [injured] person, this is your life” (McCloskey, 2011, para. 131). McCloskey (2011) notes that when a husband returns from war with PTSD and TBI, “A wife has to embrace a new role and create a new family identity. And, often, she must try to forge a new love for the man her husband has become” (para. 7). Rivera admits that she “didn’t love the man who came back from war” (McCloskey, 2011, para. 6).

Kime (2013) uses anecdotes in her lead and conclusion to support the frame that military spouses should not give up on their combat veteran spouse despite deployment-related problems. Kime (2013) documents the story of Brannan and Caleb Vines falling in love and deployments causing Caleb to change. She notes that Caleb’s “angry and resentful” behavior after a second deployment and diagnoses of PTSD and TBI helped create an “emotional—and physical—gulf between the couple” (Kime, 2013, para. 5-6). Spouse Brannan admits wanting to leave when her husband returned changed but says “You have to give it time” (para. 31) and states that working on marriage is rewarding. For example, she says that although they have less sex as a couple, “when we do, it’s good sex” (para. 31). This supports the frame that problematic marriages can heal, and even result in making these relationships stronger than they were pre-deployment.

Like most articles on the effects of deployment on military families, Military Times reporter Jon R. Anderson (2013) bookends his article on hurting military marriages with anecdotes, a framing technique (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Anderson (2013) also
compares troubled marriages with a warzone throughout the article, using similes and metaphors such as “first aid” (on being willing to try getting help) and or calling for a “medic” (such as a chaplain or therapist) (para. 14-15). The subheads in the article include “unseen wounds,” “We’ve been hit” and “Calling for dust-off” (which in military language means requesting a medevac) (Anderson, 2013). Anderson’s (2013) language and sources support the frame that military couples who want to heal their hurting marriages must commit to getting help and working at the relationship, just as soldiers are committed to “never leave a fallen comrade” (U.S. Army). For example, Anderson (2013) notes that divorce rates are high in the military compared to civilian marriages, but writes that “[c]ouples who are willing to fight are surviving, say those in the trenches” (para. 12). Another source, former Army psychiatrist Dr. Harry Croft, notes that ending a relationship won’t necessarily make life better for military couples, further supporting the frame encouraging reconciliation for military couples, rather than divorce (Anderson, 2013). Further, Anderson (2013) writes that even though many people have considered divorce, “Almost all of those who committed to the hard work of reviving their marriage found ways to breathe new life into the relationship that made it better than ever” (para. 25). This supports the frame that working to restore the relationship can make it stronger. Anderson’s (2013) main anecdote parallels Kime (2013) in that the military spouse in a troubled marriage following a deployment points out that she considered leaving but felt she “owed it” to herself and husband “to at least try” (para. 63). Like Brannan Vines, the spouse in Kime (2013), spouse Toni Aurilio notes that she was rewarded when she decided to work on saving her marriage (Anderson, 2013).
Stars and Stripes columnist Terri Barnes frequently encourages military spouses to reconcile with their husbands through adopting a more positive mindset (Barnes 2012a; 2012b; 2013). In her column “Spouse Calls,” Barnes (2012a) reflects that while her husband missed important family events because of deployments, she and he choose to make the moments they do have together more special, rather than dwelling on missed opportunities Barnes (2012a) writes her husband deals with his loneliness and missing events during a deployment by “rather than brooding about the special days he’s missed, to fully enjoy the ones he spends at home” (para. 17). This shows that Barnes (2012a) believes even though military spouses may be tempted to view their lot as unfair, they should change their perspective to see the positive and rewarding aspects of military life. She also notes that the hardship of being a military spouse “comes with many rewards as well,” further underscoring the theme that reconciling a marriage damaged by the effects of deployment pays off (Barnes, 2012a, para. 14).

Barnes frequently uses anecdotes and personal voice in her column “Spouse Calls” to show how she (a military spouse) and other spouses have a lot in common, which may be to promote a feeling a solidarity among military spouses (2012a; 2012b; 2013). By describing her circumstance as similar, Barnes invites her readers to join her in adopting a more positive mindset toward their husbands to better deal with deployment-related problems (2012a; 2012b; 2013). In another of her columns, Barnes (2013) replies to a reader complaining that her husband returned home critical and negative by describing her own experience. She writes: “This is the letter I never wrote but could have” and encourages other spouses to adopt more patience, seek help, and not view their husbands as “the enemy” (Barnes, 2013, para. 8, 12). “I didn’t think about how a combat
zone would change my husband,” Barnes writes, inviting the reader to step into her husband’s shoes (2013, para. 8). When her husband “nitpicked” at her, he really “needed patience without having to ask for it,” Barnes writes (2013, para. 9). In her final paragraph, Barnes (2013) expresses regret that she wasn’t more kind, patient and aware of her husband’s needs: “I wish I had accepted my husband’s silence when that was all he could give” (para. 13).

In another of Barnes’ (2012b) Spouse Calls columns, Andrea Carlile notes that her husband’s PTSD “destroyed their marriage” and they were headed for divorce (with her contemplating suicide) but that “faith, therapy, compassion and understanding” helped them heal (para. 4-5). Later, Carlile notes that “Anything worth having is worth fighting for” (para. 13) and Anne Freund, a psychologist for the VA, says “As long as there is some degree of healthiness in the family to work with, there is definitely healing to be had” (para. 18). This further underscores the frame that working through deployment-related marital issues yields rewards.

Included in this frame are articles encouraging service members to seek professional help for PTSD, which is an example of Entman’s (1993) “suggest remedies” frame indicator (p. 52). In his “Kevlar for the Mind” column for the Military Times, Bret A. Moore (2015) uses an anecdotal lead in the form of a question from a military spouse wondering why her husband was more irritable following a deployment. Moore (2015) notes that irritability is common in people who have PTSD, and “if left unchecked, it can wreak havoc in one’s life” (para 4). In fact, Moore (2015) writes that military spouses report it as “being the most destructive to the relationship” (para. 6). Moore (2015) writes that whatever the reason for irritability, “evaluation by a health care provider is needed”
(para. 13). In another of his columns, Moore (2016) writes that “If you are a parent or the spouse or partner of someone struggling with PTSD, it’s important to seek help” (para. 4). He adds that medication and talking about it can help people overcome PTSD (Moore, 2016). Similarly, in Lilley (2015a), Seth Kastle, a former soldier who had PTSD and the author of “Why is Dad So Mad?” notes that his angry outbursts made it so he “had to get some help, or [he] was not going to be married anymore” (para. 8).

**Frame 3: Military spouses shelve emotional needs during/after deployment.**

Articles with this frame use Entman’s (1993) “moral judgment” on the effects of problems frame indicator by inferring that military families should not feel guilty for needing behavioral health support for deployment-related family issues (p. 52). These articles also demonstrate that military spouses and service members face a culturally-imposed stigma in which they are expected to handle family issues and reintegration problems themselves, which makes it harder for families to get help they need (Anderson, 2013; Barnes, 2013; Barnes, 2015; McCluskey, 2011; Robbins, 2008), an example of Entman’s “diagnose causes” frame indicator (1993, p. 52).

*Stars and Stripes* reporter Seth Robbins (2008) notes that Kristen Tsetsi confronts military spouses’ belief that they cannot express their feelings during deployment in her novel “Homefront.” The main character in the book, Mia, writes to her deployed boyfriend: “I can’t be mad, can I? […] You’re a war after all. Anything I feel is inconsequential” (Robbins, 2008, para. 7). Later on, Tsetsi says that staying behind during a significant other’s deployment is “an isolating, heavy feeling that you can’t get rid of” but that many spouses or girlfriends must navigate the journey on their own or with little support, especially if they are unmarried (Robbins, 2008, para. 18).
In *Stars and Stripes* reporter Megan McCloskey’s (2011) article, military spouse Sandra Rivera says that when her husband returned from a third deployment acting angry and violent because of PTSD and TBI, she “just vanished” (para. 27). According to McCloskey (2011), Rivera gave up a six-figure job, working on a college degree and helping at her son’s school to become her husband’s “caregiver, house cleaner and cook” (para. 34), although they lived as “roommates” with no emotional or physical intimacy.

In another of Barnes’ Spouse Calls columns, a military spouse and public figure, Corie Weathers, notes that “‘Spouses carry a huge burden of feeling they need to be the strongest one in the home and to hold down the fort’” (Barnes, 2015, para. 13). Barnes (2015) emphasizes Weathers’ statement later in the article, noting that “Corie said spouses sometimes defer their own needs for fear of taking attention away from their servicemember, who might also have mental or physical wounds” (para. 18). Weathers notes that the stigma for military spouses to be the “‘strongest one in the home and to hold down the fort’” prevents spouse from getting the emotional support they need (Barnes, 2015). Similarly, Barnes (2013) notes that spouses share the feeling that they must take care of everything at home during a deployment with little thanks in return.

Barnes (2013) writes that when she and her husband heard from a doctor that being in a war zone was giving her husband a heart condition, “‘Those simple words were a turning point … It was permission to take the process seriously, to ask for help, for time. Permission not to be the man and woman of steel’” (para. 10). This demonstrates that as a couple, the Barnes’ felt they needed a reason to get help (Barnes, 2013). McCloskey (2011) recounts the story of military spouse Sandra Rivera who felt she had to handle things herself when her husband returned from a third deployment with severe
PTSD. McCloskey’s (2011) lead shows how hard it is for military spouses to seek help when their active duty spouse returns home from a deployment with problems:

“Desperate, she did what is unfathomable for a Marine wife: She called her husband’s commander” (para. 2). Later, McCloskey notes that Sandra “pushed past her guilt about breaking the unwritten code for military spouses and talked to Felix’s command” (2011, para. 12). This demonstrates the cultural pressure for spouses not to involve their husband’s unit or commander with problems at home. Rivera also tried to deal with her husband’s depression, anger and distance alone but “After about six months of trying to cope by herself—of thinking she was supposed to be able to do it on her own—she went to her base’s monthly support group …” (McCloskey, 2011, para. 47).

One of the major topics discussed within this frame includes military couples who face sexual dysfunction as a result of deployment injuries, but until recently felt they could not speak out about it or seek help. Kime (2013) notes that many military couples struggling with intimacy issues after deployment “suffer in silence, a situation that experts find heartbreaking,” (para. 25), demonstrating that couples need to get help. Kime (2013) notes that sex therapist Michael Shelton believes “it’s a tremendous emotional and physical challenge for many young military couples to try and face the problems alone” (para. 26). This demonstrates that sexual dysfunction following deployment is more common than some believe and too much for couples to deal with by themselves. Kime’s (2013) article uses a breakout box with links on “help for couples” with intimacy issues, along with anecdotes, expert quotes, and colorful subheads (including “the elephant in the bedroom” and “suffering in silence”) to underscore the point that military couples need to
reach out, to speak out about problems, and get help instead of trying to deal with these issues alone.

**Frame 4: Military mothers battle cultural stigma, guilt for deploying.** Kime’s (2016b) report on a study of deploying mothers uses Entman’s (1993) frame indicator of making “moral judgments” on the effects of problem: namely, that women should not feel guilty about deploying due to cultural pressure (p. 52). Kime (2016b) reports on an Australian study which shows that military deployments do not have more negative effects on mothers than on other women who deploy, contrary to “conventional wisdom” and prior research stating that “stress, worry and concern for kids increases warrior moms’ susceptibility to mental and physical strains” (para. 1). Kime’s (2016b) use of word choice as a framing technique (Borah, 2011) reveals that cultural mores pressure mothers to stay at home and that those who join the military and deploy, leaving their families behind, may be viewed in a more negative light than their male counterparts. Kime’s (2016b) article focuses on the benefits of deployment for mothers, noting that mothers feel validated by deployments and consider the military a rewarding career. For example, she writes that “the deployment itself was positive for most women, with veterans seeing it as ‘an important means of validation’” (Kime, 2016b, para. 5). Further, the article highlights what makes mothers and their families more successful in enduring deployments and reintegration, such as communicating and having a supportive family, and notes that “resilient women navigate the challenges of deployment successfully” (para 2). Kime (2016b) also uses source information and “reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments” as framing techniques to discredit the alternative argument that deployments are harder on mothers and their families than on other female soldiers (Entman, 1993, p.
53). Kime (2016b) does not interview any children or spouses, but focuses on research showing that military moms are not more affected by deployment than their non-mother counterparts and uses the main researcher as her primary source. Further, when directly asked about the impact that a mother deploying has on her children, the researcher Kime interviewed (Ellie Lawrence-Wood) instead talked about the importance of mothers mitigating these challenges through communication and understanding “‘the narratives—and guilt—around motherhood,’” further underscoring the point that mothers should not feel guilty for deploying (2016b, para. 18).

In her article on what makes military mothers unique, Military Times reporter Karen Jowers (2014) sheds light on the unique challenges that military mothers face through the responses she received to the Facebook query: “You know you’re a military mom if…” (para. 2). This is another example of an article framed to show that military mothers and spouses need to be resilient to make it through the trials military life throws at them. Comments showing this resilience include: “leaving on deployment brings you both exhilarating joy that you’re about to make a difference in the world while in combat and simultaneously brings you to the depths of despair to leave your children behind” from Dana Fischl (Jowers, 2015, para. 15). This comment also ties into Kime’s (2016b) article above in that it shows that deploying mothers experience guilt for leaving children behind.

In sum, articles were grouped by theme and the researcher analyzed framing techniques to find frames. Major frames within sexual assault articles include: failures in the military justice system; the military’s “troubling command culture” (Tritten, 2016); military culture makes it hard for sexual assault victims to speak out; and the sexual
assault problem in the military is getting worse. The major frames found in deployment effects articles include that there is not enough institutional/cultural support for military families with deployment-related issues; military families should reconcile deployment-related issues; military spouses shelve their emotional needs during/after deployment; and military mothers battle cultural stigma, guilt for deploying.
Chapter 5: Comparing frames in military-oriented newspapers (RQ2)

In order to answer *RQ2: How are the Stars and Stripes and Military Times similar and different in the way they frame stories on the same topic/event?*, the researcher compared articles on the same topic from both newspapers. The researcher also conducted semi-structured interviews with an editor and two reporters from each newspaper to explore internal and external factors that may influence reporters and editors to frame similar events in different ways. Since this research explores news framing on two topics—sexual assault in the military and the effects of deployment on military families—within two military-oriented newspapers, it is a natural extension of this research to compare the way each newspaper frames these topics in general. Since both newspapers claim to have editorial independence, and both write for an audience of mainly service members and their families, the true question here is what type of influence ownership may have on news framing for these newspapers (Stars and Stripes, 2016; Military Times, 2016). While it is true that the newspapers have other differences in makeup, such as a focus on deployed service members (*Stars and Stripes*) or focus on representing lower enlisted service members (*Military Times*), the major difference between the two is that the *Stars and Stripes* is owned and partially funded by the Defense Media Activity, and operates on overseas bureaus on military installations, while the *Military Times* is privately owned and operating outside of military installations (B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016; A. DeGrandpre, personal communication,
Oct. 4, 2016; Stars and Stripes, 2016; Military Times, 2016). Essentially, this section of research explores whether and to what extent differences in ownership may influence news framing in military oriented newspapers. Prior to conducting this research, the researcher supposed that the *Stars and Stripes* might frame stories in a closer alignment with military and government narratives than the *Military Times* because the *Stars and Stripes* is owned by the Department of Defense and since its reporters often live and work near with service members overseas, while the *Military Times* is privately owned and reporters do not live overseas or on military installations (Elmore, 2010; Stars and Stripes, 2016; Military Times, 2016).

**Sexual assault**

Most of the sexual assault articles analyzed focused problems in the military justice system, with the majority (seven out of 11) published in the *Stars and Stripes*. Within the second theme, the Congressional battle over whether military commanders should have the right to refer sexual assault cases to trial, two out of three articles were written by *Military Times* reporters (Kime, 2015; Shane, 2015). Concerning the third theme, how military culture effects sexual assault in the military, *Military Times* writers contributed four of five of these articles. It is interesting to note that the *Military Times* articles used frames to show corruption among military leaders and to demonstrate that the sexual assault problem in the military is getting worse more than the *Stars and Stripes*. This could be because holding military leaders accountable and representing enlisted service members is a major part of the *Military Times* employees’ philosophy, as demonstrated later in this research (DeGrandpre, 2016; Kime, 2016; Lilley, 2016). The *Stars and Stripes* writers may have focused more on the military justice system since...
their philosophy focuses on providing military news with more depth than their competitors (Cahn, 2016; Tritten, 2016).

The *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times* differ greatly in the use of frames. For example, seven *Stars and Stripes* articles focused frames on Frame 1, pointing to failures in the military justice system (Beardsley, 2016; Cahn, 2016b; Montgomery, 2015b; Montgomery, 2015c; Montgomery, 2016; Slavin, 2016; Tritten, 2016), while only four *Military Times* articles used this frame (Lilley 2014a; Losey & Tan, 2016; Shane, 2015; Tilghman, 2016). *Military Times* articles focused on corruption among military leaders (Frame 2) slightly more than *Stars and Stripes* articles, with three *Military Times* articles (Tan, 2015; Tan, 2016; Tilghman, 2016) and two *Stars and Stripes* (Cahn, 2016a; Montgomery, 2015a). Two *Stars and Stripes* articles (Cahn 2016a; Montgomery, 2015b) and one *Military Times* article used the frame that military culture makes it hard for sexual assault victims to speak out (Frame 3). The fifth frame, which focused on demonstrating that sexual assault problems in the military are worsening, was used mainly by five *Military Times* articles total (Kime 2016a; Kime 2016e; Lilley 2014b; Tan, 2015; Tan, 2016) and one *Stars and Stripes* article (Sumida, 2016). Major findings in this area are that the *Stars and Stripes* articles outnumbered *Military Times* articles in using Frame 1: Failures in the military justice system, while five *Military Times* articles used Frame 5: Sexual assault problems in the military are getting worse, with only one *Stars and Stripes* articles using this frame. It is important to note that some articles used multiple frames.

The choice of sources is an important framing technique (Entman, 1993). While both newspapers cite trial testimonies, court documents, Pentagon officials and military
and civilian lawyers in the cases, only the *Military Times* cited other news sources (citing a *Washington Post* article in one article and a Fox News affiliate report in another). This supports the idea that the *Stars and Stripes* relies more closely on government or military narratives of stories. Further, the *Military Times* seems to have more trouble accessing government documents and interviews than the *Stars and Stripes*. Lilley (2014a) must rely on the *Washington Post*’s version of Baker’s official investigation report, since he writes the Army did not provide him with a copy by press time (para. 2). In another *Military Times* article, Stephen Losey notes that the West Virginia National Guard, which denied any military reprisal against a sexual assault whistleblower a year prior, refused to comment when an Army IG report confirmed the reprisal (Losey and Tan, 2016). This seems to support a closer relationship between the *Stars and Stripes* and government or military public affairs personnel than that between military/government public affairs personnel and the *Military Times*.

The articles dealing with the Congressional battle over how to handle sexual assault allegations in the military diverge on the point of whether Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand’s (D-NY) bill to remove authority from military commanders is a viable solution. Interestingly, while the two *Military Times* articles on this topic (Kime, 2015; Shane, 2015) appear to show both sides of the argument (citing proponents of the bill and military officials, who instead believe commanders should retain their authority in sexual assault cases), the *Stars and Stripes* article (Tritten, 2016) appears to be more one-sided in spite of the fact that Gillibrand’s bill already failed to pass twice. Using sources of information and anecdotes as framing techniques (Entman, 1993; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009), Tritten (2016) refutes the DOD claim that commanders need their authority to
punish and prevent sexual assaults. This refutes the assumption that *Stars and Stripes* articles as a rule align more closely with government narratives than *Military Times* articles, instead demonstrating frames that put the government in a negative light. Further, in this case the *Military Times* displays more of a reliance on government sources than the *Stars and Stripes*, which contradicts the idea that the *Stars and Stripes* shares a closer relationship with government and military sources than the *Military Times*. However, it is difficult to extrapolate trends from such a small number of articles.

**Interviews: Framing sexual assault.** Both editors reported a desire to hold leaders accountable for sexual assault issues in the military (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016; B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016). Reid said sexual assault coverage at the *Stars and Stripes* is very broad, ranging from individual assault charges to Congressional hearings, but that the newspaper pays particular attention to sexual assault charges involving higher-ranked officers (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). He said:

> If it involves a full colonel, we will probably give it more display that we probably would if it’s two very low ranking people because obviously the higher the rank, the more people know who the person is and the military expects a higher standard of behavior as you move up in ranks (B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

This attitude is similar to that of *Military Times* editor Andrew DeGrandpre, who described the *Military Times*’ mission as that of an investigator uncovering wrongdoing among military leaders in order to protect and defend lower-ranking service members (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).
**Articles on deployment effects**

Major themes for articles on the effects of deployment on military families included marital issues (nine of the 20 articles, not including those that mention it as a minor theme) and PTSD (eight). The *Stars and Stripes* covered military marriages more thoroughly, with six articles on this topic (Barnes, 2012a; Barnes 2012b; Barnes, 2013; Barnes, 2015; McCloskey, 2011; Robbins, 2008), compared to three from the *Military Times* (Anderson, 2013; Kime, 2013; Lilley, 2015a). All of these articles use anecdotes as major framing techniques, which is a way to promote reader engagement (as cited in Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

Eight of the 20 articles analyzed on the effects of deployment on military families focused mainly on post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, among deployed service members (Barnes, 2012b; Kime, 2016d; Kuz, 2014; Lilley, 2015a; Lilley, 2015b; Moore, 2016; Moore, 2015; Simoes, 2015). Three of these articles were published by the *Stars and Stripes* and five were published in the *Military Times*. These articles also used anecdotes as major framing devices, presumably to promote reader engagement (as cited in Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). In sum, within the topic of effects of deployment on military families, the *Stars and Stripes* focused more on military marriage and spouse-related issues, while the *Military Times* focused more on PTSD and service member-related issues. Several articles dealt with military marriage issues and PTSD simultaneously, including two *Stars and Stripes* and three *Military Times* articles (Anderson, 2013; Barnes, 2012b; Lilley, 2015a; McCloskey, 2011; Moore, 2016).

In terms of framing, four *Stars and Stripes* articles used Frame 1: Not enough institutional/cultural support for military families struggling with deployment-related
health issues (Barnes, 2011; Kuz, 2014; Shane II, 2012; Simoes, 2015), while three Military Times articles used this frame (Kime, 2016c; Kime 2016d; Lilley, 2015b). Four Stars and Stripes articles (Barnes, 2012a; Barnes, 2012b; Barnes, 2013; McCloskey, 2011) and five Military Times articles (Anderson, 2013; Kime, 2013; Lilley, 2015a; Moore, 2015; Moore, 2016) focused on Frame 2: Importance of military families working to reconcile and heal wounds inflicted by PTSD/deployment. Four Stars and Stripes articles (Barnes, 2013; Barnes, 2015; McCloskey, 2011; Robbins, 2008) and only one Military Times article (Kime, 2013) used Frame 3: Military spouses shelve their own emotional needs for their spouse during/after deployment. Finally, two Military Times articles (Jowers, 2014; Kime, 2016b) exclusively used Frame 4: Mothers in the military battle cultural stigma, feelings of guilt when they deploy.

Articles on the effects of deployment on military families from both the Military Times and Stars and Stripes addressed many of the same issues, including post-traumatic stress disorder and marital conflict. However, reporters from the different newspapers often chose different perspectives or sources of information with which to frame these articles (Entman, 1993). For example, both newspapers discussed the problem of veterans returning home from deployments with PTSD, but only the Military Times addressed this problem from the perspective of parenting in several articles (Jowers, 2014; Kime, 2016b; Lilley, 2015a; Moore, 2016). The Military Times also addressed the effects of deployment on children as well as on spouses (Kime, 2016b), while the Stars and Stripes focused more on the effects of deployments and PTSD on military marriages (Barnes, 2012a; Barnes, 2012b; Barnes, 2013; Barnes, 2015; McCloskey, 2011; Robbins, 2008; Shane III, 2012). Similar to the comparison on sexual assault articles, this shows that the
*Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times* focus on different sources of information as a framing technique (Entman, 1993). They also use different framing indicators, with the *Stars and Stripes* focusing more on “moral judgments” on the causes of problems, and the *Military Times* focusing more on demonstrating the scope of a problem and pinpointing the causes for problems (Entman, 1993).

In articles discussing infertility problems among military couples, the *Stars and Stripes* article (Shane III, 2012) focuses mainly on the story of one military couple, while the *Military Times* articles on this topic, while also using anecdotes, focus more on expert testimony from doctors and psychologists (Kime, 2013; Kime, 2016c). This is another example of the *Stars and Stripes* using more anecdotal sources of information and the *Military Times* uses more official and government sources of information as framing techniques, like the articles showing the scope of the sexual assault issue in the military discussed above (Entman, 1993). As Shoemaker and Vos (2009) discussed, anecdotes allow journalists to promote reader engagement in stories, so the *Stars and Stripes* may be seeking to connect with its audience more (Entman, 1993). This goes hand in hand with efforts to make “moral judgments” on causes or effects of problems, since the anecdotes could help readers to make the same judgments, while the using hard data and official sources could help the *Military Times* demonstrate the scope of a problem or show the cause of a problem (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

Further, while both newspapers talked about the mental health needs of veterans and military spouses following a deployment, the *Stars and Stripes* paid special focus to the emotional toll deployments and their aftereffects have on military spouses, while the *Military Times* articles focused more on research being conducted on the problem and
alternative solutions such as recreational therapy (Kime, 2016b; Kime, 2016d; Lilley, 2015b). This may be due to the newspapers’ different views of their audiences, as discussed in Chapter 8; Military Times staffs reported taking a more service member-specific view and looking to provide consumer health and career-related information, while Stars and Stripes staffs reported a desire to be most knowledgeable on service member concerns (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016; B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016; P. Kime, personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). This is another example of the Stars and Stripes using anecdotes as primary sources, presumably to connect readers to the problem and possible make “moral judgments” on the effects of problems, while the Military Times uses official sources as a framing technique, possibly to underscore the depth and breadth of this problem in military culture or its causes, which are different frame indicators, according to Entman (1993, p. 52).

Further, the Stars and Stripes ran a regular column (no longer published) called “Spouse Calls” by Terri Barnes designed specifically to address military spouse concerns, many of them concerning the aftereffects of deployment on spouses. Meanwhile, the Military Times ran a column in which Bret A. Moore addressed the effects of PTSD and deployment on service members from a medical perspective, called “Kevlar for the Mind.” This difference in the choice of regular column topics and columnists (another example of differences in sources of information) indicate that the Stars and Stripes may have been more focused on the effects of deployment on military spouses than the Military Times, which was more focused on the effects of deployment on service members themselves, especially concerning their mental health (Entman, 1993). This is
another example of how different views of audiences impact the way military-oriented newspapers frame the news.

**Interviews: Framing deployment effects**

In reporting on the effects of deployment on military families, *Stars and Stripes* editor Bob Reid noted that the *Stars and Stripes* pays attention to programs (personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016) and *Military Times* editor Andrew DeGrandpre expressed that his newspaper focuses more on morale trends (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). Reid said the *Stars and Stripes* has been focusing on new programs that deal with the effects of deployment on military families (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). For example, there is a new program to combat the effects of PTSD on service members following a deployment which includes some citywide efforts to change how police confront veterans in volatile situations, he said (B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

For instance, they found that in some cases a veteran who loses his temper with his spouse or significant other and somebody calls the police and if cops come out with pistols drawn, they flash back to the war and they do irrational things, and there are better ways to approach them (B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2106).

Other relatively new issues concerning the effects of deployment on military families include the issue of veteran homelessness, “helping married couples adjust,” and military programs for spouses and children during the deployment, Reid said (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

At the *Military Times*, DeGrandpre said the staff especially focused on major trends in military family morale over the past 10 years, in terms of covering the effects of deployment on military families (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). For example, in
2014 the *Military Times* conducted a reader survey of active duty service members and used the results to identify troop sentiments toward the U.S. President at the time, the rate of the deployments at the time and military policies (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). The final result was a series of stories created by more than 20 *Military Times* staff members on the decline in military family morale, tied to budget cuts in military program and equipment, titled “America’s military: A force adrift” (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

**Covering the same event.** Interestingly, both *Stars and Stripes* editor Bob Reid and *Military Times* editor Andrew DeGrandpre spoke on covering the same event, but from different angles. The event, the death of a soldier in Afghanistan on Oct. 4, was rated as very important to both newspapers, but for different reasons (B. Reid and A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct 4, 2016). For example, Reid said:

> As far as the initial break is concerned, there’s only been three Americans killed in combat in Afghanistan this year. That’s not very many. […] For us, this is different. We will put that kind of story on the front page […] because we know that whoever got killed could well have read our paper yesterday and he will have friends (B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

Meanwhile, DeGrandpre noted that the *Military Times* took a broader angle on covering the fatality:

> We have an American combat fatality in Afghanistan so we’re obviously trying to get that story out and we’re trying to understand where exactly it occurred and what the lay of the land is there, who the enemy is, what the last several months have held for that part of the country (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

Since the researcher conducted both interviews with these editors on Oct. 4, 2016 (the day this news event was reported), it is interesting to note that the *Stars and Stripes* seemed more concerned with who the soldier was while the *Military Times* seemed more
concerned with his death’s significance for the greater war effort. This may be due to the
different perceptions of audience held by each newspaper, described in Chapter 8: The
*Stars and Stripes* employees reported focusing more on military families and specifically
deployed service members, while the *Military Times* employees reported a desire to
broaden their audience and use a more “aggressive” reporting style (A. DeGrandpre,
personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

In sum, within articles on sexual assault, the *Military Times* used frames to show
corruption among military leaders and to demonstrate that the sexual assault problem in
the military is getting worse more than the *Stars and Stripes*, which focused on showing
failures in the military justice system. However, both newspapers highlighted corruption
among military leaders, a focus reflected in the interviews with both editors.

Within the topic of effects of deployment on military families, the *Stars and Stripes*
focused more on military marriage and spouse-related issues, while the *Military Times*
focused more on PTSD and service member-related issues. Further, the *Stars and Stripes*
focusing more on “moral judgments” on the causes of problems, and the *Military Times*
focusing more on demonstrating the scope of a problem and pinpointing the causes for
problems (Entman, 1993). The *Military Times* also addressed a broader audience than the
*Stars and Stripes*, such as children of service members and active duty military mothers.

In interviews, *Stars and Stripes* editor Bob Reid noted that the *Stars and Stripes* pays
attention to programs (personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016) and *Military Times* editor
Andrew DeGrandpre expressed that his newspaper focuses more on morale trends
(personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). This is supported in the way each editor
describes covering the death of a soldier, since the *Stars and Stripes* seemed more
concerned with who the soldier was, while the *Military Times* seemed more concerned with his death’s significance for the greater war effort. This may be due to the different perceptions of audience held by each newspaper, described in Chapter 8.
Chapter 6: Comparing frames in politically-charged versus less politically-charged military news (RQ3)

In order to answer RQ3: How are more politically-charged military news articles (sexual assault) framed compared to less politically charged stories (effects of deployment on military families) in military-oriented newspapers?, the researcher analyzed articles on sexual assault and on the effects of deployment on military families from the Stars and Stripes and Military Times. The researcher also conducted semi-structured interviews with one editor and two reporters from each newspaper, including questions about how reporters go about framing articles on these topics.

In Chapter 4 of this research paper, the researcher located the major frames for each topic. The sexual assault frames included: failures in the military justice system;, the military’s “troubling command culture” (Tritten, 2016); military culture makes it hard for assault victims to speak out; and sexual assault problem in the military is getting worse. The deployment effects frames included: there is not enough institutional/cultural support for military families with deployment-related issues; the importance of military families reconciling deployment-related issues; military spouses shelve their emotional needs during/after deployment, and military mothers battle cultural stigma, guilt when they deploy.
A comparison of the frames used for each topic shows that the *Military Times* and *Stars and Stripes* tend to use the frame indicators “define problems” and “diagnose causes” of problems for articles on sexual assault in the military (Entman, 1993, p. 52). In contrast, these newspapers tended to use the frame indicators “make moral judgments” on causes and effects of problems and “suggest remedies” to problems for articles on the effects of deployment on military families (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Why did reporters frame articles on these topics in certain ways? Reporters and editors from both newspapers shed light on this question during their interviews, as discussed below.

**Covering sexual assault**

In discussions with editors and reporters from both the *Military Times* and *Stars and Stripes* on how they approach reporting on sexual assault, three major factors surfaced. These include a desire to only report major trends on this topic since it has been so thoroughly covered; a desire to vet sources as much as possible; and a desire to avoid the appearance of bias through no-frills reporting and balancing sources.

**Seeking major trends.** DeGrandpre and Reid both noted that sexual assault has permeated the news so much in recent years that newspaper staffers must be sure they have new information on the problem before they print another story on sexual assault (personal communication, Oct 4, 2016). For example, the *Military Times* reporter who covers sexual assault stories will scrutinize the annual DOD report on sexual assault and report any trends to their editors, but unless there are major patterns or problems in the data, the *Military Times* may not have the reporter write a story on it (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). Reid said that sexual assault has already been
covered so completely that *Stars and Stripes* editors look critically at any new story on this topic to see what is different about it (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

Similarly, *Stars and Stripes* reporter Dianna Cahn noted that since sexual assault stories within the military have already been canvassed so thoroughly, she doesn’t usually take on new stories on this topic unless they are “really egregious” or concern larger groups of people (personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016). Cahn said she looks for sexual assault stories that show “any kind of trend or pattern or […] injustice that should be addressed” (personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016). Further, this shows that Cahn believes part of her mission and the mission of the *Stars and Stripes* is to draw attention to negative trends in the military and therefore put pressure on those in power to change those trends.

Lilley said that determining whether to cover a sexual assault story largely depends on whether the reporter feels it would interest the *Army Times*’ audience, and whether the information is “new” (personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). Further, Lilley said *Army Times* reporters decide which news stories to cover depending on whether a specific story “forwards the larger picture” (personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). For example:

If a unit has a program that has reduced, they say, assaults markedly in their unit, and they tell us about it, we may want to explore that: why it’s working, what other units could do, what the big Army thinks of it, so sometimes it’s very useful (K. Lilley, personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016).

**Vetting sources.** A common theme among journalists was vetting sources as much as possible and then relying on personal instincts. In most cases, the *Army Times* will publish stories on sexual assaults that have official documents attached, such as police reports or other “filed” documents, Lilley said (personal communication, Oct. 6,
However, this topic becomes “more complicated” without documents, as in the case of a person telling the Army Times about an alleged assault without a police report (K. Lilley, personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). In this instance, reporters must consider why the police are not involved and the source’s “believability concerns,” Lilley said (personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). To determine when sources in these situations are trustworthy, Lilley said “the easiest thing to do and the best thing to do is to try to speak first to them about things that can be verified outside of what they’re telling you” (personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). For example, Lilley said that if a source claims a soldier has been a problem in a unit for months, Lilley will ask them to provide emails and documents supporting their claim (personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016).

Stars and Stripes Capitol Hill reporter Tritten said when covering sexual assault, he leans on experience and personal instincts to determine whether sources are trustworthy or not (personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016). Tritten said that when he runs into a new source, he researches the source’s background and anything they’ve said in the past on the topic (personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016).

Cahn also spoke about the difficulty that inherently comes with vetting sources for sexual assault stories (personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016). Similar to remarks from Lilley (personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016) and Tritten (personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016), Cahn said that after vetting sources as much as possible, reporters must use their own instincts (personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016). She noted that she will first try to compare what sources say to military records and check other sources, but “at some point you have a make a call” (D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016). Cahn said that when sources alleging sexual misconduct have been vetted
to the farthest extent possible and still their stories can’t be fully corroborated, reporters must then be “very careful” with what they write, and “go with [their] own educated understanding” (personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016).

**Avoiding appearance of bias.** Journalists from both newspapers reported that when they frame stories on sexual assault, they use framing techniques to help them avoid the appearance of bias on this sensitive issue (D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016; P. Kime, personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016; K. Lilley, personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016; T. Tritten, personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016). These techniques include choosing more neutral sources of information or balancing sources with differing opinions, and changing their writing style or word choice to become less colorful (Borah, 2011; Entman, 1993). Another reported framing technique includes working to remove opinion from the article in the form of inferences and judgments, whether from themselves or from outside sources (Melkote, 2009).

Tritten said that when he covers sensitive or controversial topics, such as sexual assault or political stories, he edits the story “with a fine-toothed comb … to ensure that it’s balanced” and not obviously biased in one direction or the other (personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016). Tritten said he wanted to “come across as being a nonpartisan source of news” to engender and maintain reader trust (personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016).

Cahn said that when she writes about sensitive issues such as sexual assault, her writing becomes “very clean and succinct” to prevent from swaying reader opinion in one way or the other (personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016). She noted that while she often
writes to appeal to reader emotions, she tries not to do that when writing about sensitive issues such as sexual assault:

I feel like a lot of times what I’m trying to do is write stories that resonate with other people, just [to] draw people out, you know, so they can understand what impact these kinds of actions have, what these kinds of struggles have on people. But when it’s very controversial, when it comes to allegations, when it comes to things that perhaps the military is disputing or something like that, that’s when you just write clean, factual copy that just lays out the case (D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016).

Lilley said he is particularly careful in reporting public affairs information concerning sexual assaults, since public affairs personnel try to put a positive “spin” on such a negative story for the military (personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). For example,

Sometimes, to be honest, they will send us things that maybe don’t make a lot of sense, especially with sexual assault, where it will say, you know, ‘Reports are up and that’s good because it shows that our report system is working.’ Like, OK, that’s also bad because reports are up and now we have to kind of figure out what that means and dig a little deeper … (K. Lilley, personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016).

Army Times reporter Kevin Lilley said reporters in the Military Times network try to balance out opinion on topics, including sexual assault, by seeking out sources with no personal stake in the article (personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). Reporters in the Military Times network who normally cover sexual assault stories are often in close contact with members of advocacy groups “outside the official military chain of command,” Lilley said, which helps them find other, more neutral, sources on topics like sexual assault (personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). Lilley said to avoid the “he said, she said” nature of some sexual assault stories, Military Times reporters “rely a lot on folks who are maybe in academia or maybe just in consulting roles and things like that” (personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016).
Similar to *Stars and Stripes* reporter Travis Tritten’s remarks, *Military Times* senior reporter Patricia Kime said she aims to “take a middle-of-the-road approach” when reporting sexual assault and other controversial or sensitive topics by listening “very carefully to both sides” (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). She noted that “there is a very vocal group of organizations and people who are pushing really hard on this issue, and rightfully, deservedly so,” which makes writing unbiased story more difficult as a reporter (P. Kime, personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). To balance opinion, Kime said she tries to incorporate statistics into these stories and incorporate “the Pentagon’s reaction or side of things” as well as the opinions of those in advocacy groups or other non-government sources to “really try to walk that balance beam” (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). In sum, reporters said that they tried to maintain a neutral standpoint when reporting on sexual assault. This is an example of using “objectivist” frames, as described by Aday (2006), by including sources from both sides of the issue rather than advocating for one side over another.

**Other factors.** *Army Times* reporter Kevin Lilley noted that when it comes to reporting on sexual assault in the military, reporters take into account many factors, including “issues with victims and victims’ rights and alleged victims and things like that” (personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). He added that when the Army provides reports or statistics on sexual harassment or sexual assault, he believes reporters should highlight any “bad news” in the reports, but also “get the Army’s take on what those numbers mean” (K. Lilley, personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016).

During her time as a reporter, *Military Times* reporter Patricia Kime covered sexual assault mainly from the perspective of a medical reporter, paying particular
attention to healthcare coverage and services for assault victims and how victims are treated in the military system in general (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). For example, Kime noted that she found some victims “end up with diagnoses or psychological issues that don’t exactly seem fair” because they are often discharged from military service for “a judgment disorder or some persona disorder when it’s related to a sexual assault that happened while they were on active duty” (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). This statement demonstrates Kime’s personal feelings about the way sexual assault victims are treated by the military system. However, Kime said: “I don’t really have an opinion either way on how it should be changed; I just think, you know, cover the issue and the powers that be will read it and decide what needs to be done” (P. Kime, personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016).

Covering effects of deployment

Only two factors came up in discussion about framing the effects of deployment on military families, which include looking for new ways to tell this story and struggling between a desire to advocate for military families in this area and a desire to remain objective.

New aspects to the story. Stars and Stripes managing editor Bob Reid called the topic of deployment effects a “thrice-told tale,” since deployments have been happening for decades, and 15 years elapsing since the start of the Afghan War (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). Further, he added that fewer and fewer military families are affected:

There are roughly 8,000 American troops in Afghanistan today. Five years ago, there were about 100,000-150,000 in Afghanistan. That’s quite a drop. There were 160,000 troops in Iraq at the height of the surge. Today the number is around 5- to 6,000. Many of them are special operations troops. The military
keeps a lot of what they do pretty much under wraps (B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

Reid also noted that it has become difficult to cover the effects of deployment on military families in a new light (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). “In many ways, the same issues come up over and over again,” he said (B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). (This echoes his remarks on sexual assault in the military).

Advocacy. Military Times reporter Patricia Kime wrote several stories analyzed in this paper on the effects of deployment on military families, especially focusing on intimacy issues among military couples due to deployment-related injuries (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). Kime said she framed her articles on intimacy issues by showcasing spotty health care coverage for veterans struggling with infertility issues stemming from combat-related injuries (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). She said:

It’s a tiny fraction of people that were injured in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan who have major problems with having families or even having sexual relations with their spouses and [...] I guess I’m going to sound like an advocate, but the basics of that is that the DOD pays for and covers fertility services while people are on active duty. The VA does not, and I felt like this was a story that needed to be told, that there was this discrepancy between VA coverage and DOD coverage (P. Kime, personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016).

Kime was careful to stress that she tried to separate her personal feelings about the issue from her reporting and allow the testimonies and facts to guide the final article (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). She noted: “Personally, I do feel like it’s an injustice, but you know, I just felt like reporting on it raised the issue so that other people can make decisions on what needed to be done in that regard” (P. Kime, personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). However, her remarks support this research’s findings that reporters used more advocacy frames in articles on deployment effects by focusing on one side of the
issue, such as the need for spouses to reconcile deployment issues (Aday, 2006). Further, feelings of support or empathy for military families may help explain why reporters used Entman’s frame indicators of making “moral judgments” or suggesting solutions more in deployment effects articles than on articles on sexual assault (1993, p. 52).

In sum, this research found that the military-oriented newspapers studied framed a more politically-charged topic (sexual assault) in ways to underscore the depth of the problem and locate causes, while the newspapers framed a less politically-charged topic (deployment effects) in ways that highlight “moral judgments” on the causes and effects of the problem and “suggest remedies” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Further, interviews with reporters from these newspapers reveal that reporters at these newspapers want to avoid the appearance of bias when reporting on more politically-charged stories like sexual assault, while some feel a need to advocate for families when covering the effects of deployment (D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016; P. Kime, personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016; K. Lilley, personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016; T. Tritten, personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016). This could explain why articles on sexual assault focus more on “defining” the problem and its causes, while articles on deployment effects focus more on what families can do to combat deployment effects (a solution) (Entman, 1993, p. 52).
Chapter 7: Influence of organizational structures on military news coverage

(RQ4)

In order to answer \textit{RQ4: How do the organizational structures of military-oriented newspapers influence military news coverage?}, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with editors and reporters from both the \textit{Stars and Stripes} and \textit{Military Times}. This is an important question to explore because while the \textit{Stars and Stripes} and \textit{Military Times} serve similar audiences and cover many of the same topics, the \textit{Stars and Stripes} is owned by the Department of Defense while the \textit{Military Times} is privately owned, and each newspaper has their own distinct mission and management style, all of which have been known to influence reporting to some degree in previous research (Elmore, 2010; Military Times, 2016; Stars and Stripes, 2016; Shoemaker & Mayfield, 1987; and Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, as cited in Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). A newspaper’s communication routines, including newsroom culture, also influence how reporters frame the news (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). This chapter discusses how reporters and editors described several distinct aspects of their newspaper’s organizational structure and its influences on their reporting and editing, including newspaper ownership, mission (which influences how reporters perceive their audience), editorial structure and management style.
Ownership

As discussed throughout this study, the *Stars and Stripes* is owned by the Department of Defense’s Defense Media Activity and partially funded by it, while the *Military Times* is privately owned (Military Times, 2016; Stars and Stripes, 2016). This presents an interesting research opportunity to explore how differences in ownership may influence the way reporters at these newspapers cover, and particularly frame, military news. As discussed in the literature review of this paper, the *Stars and Stripes* has been pressured by government officials in the past to withhold stories or write them in a certain way because of its connection to the Defense Department (Elmore, 2010). Further, because of its government ownership, the *Stars and Stripes* is subject to two government directives that limit coverage which *Military Times* reporters are not subject to: the inability to use the Freedom of Information Act to gain access to classified information and DoD directive 5122.11, a restriction against publishing classified information that puts service members at risk (Elmore, 2010; Everhart, 2001). In this chapter, *Stars and Stripes* employees address how these restrictions impact their ability to produce news.

*Stars and Stripes.* During their interviews, the *Stars and Stripes* editor and reporters addressed the conundrum of trying to maintain editorial independence while working for a government entity. *Stars and Stripes* senior editor Bob Reid noted that *Stars and Stripes* employees “are all federal employees, but there is a Congressionally-mandated firewall that exists between military commands and … the editorial resources of the paper” (personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016). He said that while the government handles logistics for *Stars and Stripes* reporters such as travel allowances, government
channels do not edit the newspaper’s content in any way (personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016).

Throughout his interview, Reid emphasized that the *Stars and Stripes’* relationship to government personnel was the same as it would be for civilian newspapers (personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016). In the past, this may have been different; for example, decades ago, *Stars and Stripes* may have been subject to more criticism from military commanders for reporting on sexual assault, but Reid said that era “probably ended sometime in the late ’80s” (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). He said:

… the government has no say in whether we do the assignment, what assignments we choose to do, no prior censorship, no editing of the material when it goes out. Any public affairs officer is free to complain, but then again, that’s the same situation as if you’re a […] civilian medium (B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016).

Throughout his interview, Reid emphasized that the *Stars and Stripes* functions much the same as any other civilian news organization, with minimal input from its government owners (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). Reid also said that while the *Stars and Stripes* publisher attends meetings in Fort Meade, his influence on the newspaper concerns logistics and finances, not the day-to-day editorial decisions newsrooms editors handle (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). However, the *Stars and Stripes* does use government photos “simply because we’re limited in our own,” Reid said (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). As another example of the *Stars and Stripes’* independence from government influence, Reid said that during his experience as managing editor, he has only received one phone call from a military or government official questioning the way the *Stars and Stripes* covered events (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). Reid said the story “had been very badly edited” and he
fully agreed with the caller that the story needed to be fixed to make more sense (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

However, Reid acknowledged that as part of the Defense Media Activity, the *Stars and Stripes* does have to abide by certain rules while other independent newspapers do not, such as the directive not to report classified information that could hinder national security and the rule that the newspaper staff cannot use the Freedom of Information act to access information denied to government agencies (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). However, Reid said there are ways around these rules (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). For example, the newspaper may not report classified information, but that only applies to the first publication, Reid said; this means the *Stars and Stripes* can run what another newspaper published already, such as the *Washington Post*, and then cover the story (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

Issues with the Freedom of Information Act restrictions come up more frequently for *Stars and Stripes* reporters, Reid said (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). The reason why *Stars and Stripes* cannot use FOIA to gain classified information is that “the government can’t FOIA itself,” Reid said (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). Reid added that the *Stars and Stripes* has attempted to use other means to get FOIA’d information, but with “mixed results” (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). However, he noted that the FOIA system presents a huge problem to the journalism community at large, not just the *Stars and Stripes*:

This isn’t ‘abracadabra’ and a box opens up. The AP’s got a staff that are forever suing the federal government over failure to live by the FOIA rules. Or, you get your FOIA and wait and wait and wait and then it comes and it’s so heavily redacted you can barely make anything out of it at all. […] So, I don’t think I’m being denied a […] door to wonderful and otherwise heretofore unpublishable information (B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).
Both *Stars and Stripes* reporters expressed frustration with the inability to use FOIA, but denied experiencing any government pressure to write stories a certain way (D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016; T. Tritten, personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016). *Stars and Stripes* reporter Travis Tritten said rules barring the *Stars and Stripes* from filing a FOIA against a government agency have been “an aggravation” to him in his work (personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016). To get around this problem, Tritten said that *Stars and Stripes* reporters “just basically ask for information without filing a FOIA request and hope that they get around to answering you in a timely manner” (personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016). Tritten added that he does not feel this bar to using the FOIA “hobbles” his reporting abilities at all (personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016). Tritten asserted the *Stars and Stripes*’ independence from government control, noting that “we’re editorially independent and that we function just like any other free press newspaper” (personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016).

*Stars and Stripes* national military reporter Dianna Cahn said she also finds “the inability to use the Freedom of Information Act frustrating” (personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016). However, practically speaking, Cahn said she has not felt very much government “pressure of any kind” to produce a certain type of news story at the *Stars and Stripes* (personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016). The one exception to this was when news of Wikileaks first broke in 2006, she said:

> Remember when Wikileaks first came out and the military and other government entities were forbidden from even opening up Wikileaks? There was a question on whether or not *Stars and Stripes* were held to that because we’re reporters, and the powers that be determined that *Stars and Stripes* reporters were government employees and were not allowed to open Wikileaks. I don’t think very many adhered to that (D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016).
However, both reporters said that public perception of the *Stars and Stripes* does not always reflect the paper’s editorial independence. Tritten noted that readers who are unfamiliar with the newspaper distrust the *Stars and Stripes* because they believe it is “an organ of the military” and “in on some government agenda” (personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016). Cahn noted that because the *Stars and Stripes* is part of the Defense Media Activity, it sometimes causes rifts between what military public affairs officers expect from the newspaper and what service members expect (personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016). For example, Cahn said:

> I’ve had public affairs officers in Afghanistan yell at me that my copy was critical, that I was showing morale breaks—service members in Afghanistan who were questioning the policies—and you know, I got yelled at, saying ‘You’re not the *New York Times*. You should be writing stories that are encouraging morale, not adding questions about morale’ (D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016).

These interviews demonstrate that while *Stars and Stripes* employees do not feel government-imposed restrictions hinder their ability to report the news, the fact that the *Stars and Stripes* is owned by the Department of Defense does influence the expectations that readers and government public affairs personnel have for how the *Stars and Stripes* should frame the news. However, ownership did not appear to make a difference in news framing on the issues covered in this study.

**Mission**

A newspaper’s mission statement encompasses the goals and focus of the newspaper management and staff. This section of this study explores how reporters and editors describe their mission at military-oriented newspapers and how they believe that mission shapes their perceptions about their audience, which influences news frames. According to Kuypers and Cooper (2005) and Shoemaker and Vos (2009), journalists’
newsroom culture influences how they frame the news, and a newspaper’s mission is a major part of the values and beliefs spread from publishers and editors to journalists as part of that newsroom culture. Interestingly, reporters or editors from both newspapers emphasized their paper’s role as a “community” newspaper (D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016; K. Lilley, personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016; T. Tritten, personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016). Further, reporters and editors from both newspapers talked about their paper’s role as a “watchdog” over military affairs for service members (T. Tritten, personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016; K. Lilley, personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016).

It is interesting to note that while the *Stars and Stripes*’ mission statement focuses on its right to freedom of speech outside of government control, the *Military Times*’ mission mentions specific focus areas of coverage (career and personal interest information) (Stars and Stripes, 2016; Military Times, 2016). Further, while the *Stars and Stripes* site describes its audience as a “military community” which includes “active-duty servicemembers, DoD civilians, contractors, and their families,” the *Military Times* site describes its audience as simply “service members and their families” (Stars and Stripes, 2016; Military Times, 2016). This is reflected in the way the *Military Times* and *Stars and Stripes* framed the effects of deployment on military families: the *Military Times* placed more focus on the effects of deployment on service members themselves and solutions for their recovery (Kime 2016b; Kime 2016d; Lilley, 2015a; Moore, 2015; Moore, 2016) while the *Stars and Stripes* focused more on military spouses and families (Barnes, 2011; Barnes, 2012a; Barnes, 2012b; Barnes, 2013; Barnes, 2015; McCloskey, 2011; Shane, 2012). However, the *Military Times* was more inclusive of minority groups
in the military community, such as women in the military, military mothers, children, and male military spouses (Kime, 2016b; Kime, 2016d; Lilley, 2015a; Lilley, 2015b; Jowers, 2014; Moore, 2015). This may be due to the newspaper’s broadening view of its audience and transition from print to online product, as discussed in Chapter 8.

**Stars and Stripes.** The *Stars and Stripes*’ mission, per its website, is to provide “independent news and information to the U.S. military community” and notes that the paper is “[u]nique among Department of Defense authorized news outlets” for having “guaranteed First Amendment privileges that are subject to Congressional oversight” (Stars and Stripes, 2016). *Stars and Stripes* managing editor Bob Reid said that the primary mission of the *Stars and Stripes* is to “provide general news for a military audience outside the United States” (personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016).

*Stars and Stripes* reporter Travis Tritten said the mission of the *Stars and Stripes* is “to be a watchdog for active duty service members and to provide them with a kind of community newspaper” and give them access to information “that they wouldn’t get necessarily through their command channels” (personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016). Tritten described the *Stars and Stripes* as “a free press source of information that can be critical of the military if need be or provide them with information that the military might think is too controversial for them to release” (personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016).

Cahn said she views her personal mission as a *Stars and Stripes* reporter as “somebody who is trying to get the truth out” and “willing to take the time to reveal what’s really going on,” (personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016). This attitude of revealing truths the military is keeping secret was also expressed by Tritten (personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016), as well as *Army Times* reporter Kevin Lilley (personal
What sets the *Stars and Stripes* apart in covering major military news is that *Stars and Stripes* reporters provide more in-depth and detailed coverage, Reid said (personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016). Further, Reid said that the *Stars and Stripes* specifically focuses on areas of military conflict, include “Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf” (personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016). The *Stars and Stripes* also focuses heavily on “social issues unique to the military” such as PTSD and service members with long-term health care needs, Reid said (personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016).

Similarly, *Stars and Stripes* reporter Dianna Cahn noted:

Our role has really become to be an educated reporter of military news, and I think that’s our mission, is to know our subject matter better than the regular newspapers would and know that we’re talking to people who know the subject matter (D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016).

This change in the *Stars and Stripes*’ mission has influenced the way Cahn frames the news, she said, because it requires her to take a focused, specific look at the news through the lens of what service members are interested in, rather than reporting mainstream news to service members (personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016). For example, Cahn said that when she was reporting on the Hurricane Matthew relief efforts in Haiti in October 2016, rather than reporting on the overall damage to the country and the relief effort as a whole (as she would have done when she worked for the Associated Press), she concentrated specifically on what U.S. service members were doing for the relief effort (personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016). Cahn noted that her story took her “far away from the actual damage” to report on service members loading and unloading supplies.
Military Times. The Military Times’ mission, per its website, is to provide “trusted, independent sources for news and information” to service members and their families on “the most important issues affecting their careers and personal lives” (Military Times, 2016). Military Times reporter Patricia Kime described the Military Times’ mission primarily as providing consumer information to service members, which echoes the mission statement on the Military Times’ website (Military Times, 2016).

I think basically we view ourselves as a service publication, you know, consumer service, news you need to use to, you know, consider when you’re planning your career or consider when you’re thinking about your benefits. [We] just really look to our audience to provide them information to help them in their daily—and really it’s their daily—military lives (P. Kime, personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016).

Andrew DeGrandpre, the senior editor for the Military Times network, said that his priority for his staff, made up of Pentagon and Capitol Hill reporters (like Reid’s staff) was to produce stories quickly and get them on the website as quickly as possible (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). DeGrandpre said that the Military Times network puts “a premium … on really trying to engage our audience seven days a week” through its presence online and by providing in-depth pieces throughout the week, including weekends (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). DeGrandpre called military families “the epicenter of our mission” (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). However, he said Military Times newspapers also have a larger mission of “informing the broader American public about what the military does on its behalf” (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). He later reiterated this point, saying that the Military Times “first and foremost … advocates for the men and women in the military, but secondly we have a tremendous opportunity to educate the American people about
what the one percent does on its behalf” (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

*Army Times* reporter Kevin Lilley echoed these sentiments when he described the *Army Times’* mission as that of both “megaphone” for Army messages and watchdog over Army activities (personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). He noted that the *Army Times* needs to “shine a light” on any “issues with some things that the Army’s doing” (K. Lilley, personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). Lilley said the mission for reporters with the *Military Times* is “to inform our audience not only of things that their service wants them to know but possibly of things their service doesn’t want them to know,” (personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). This correlates with DeGrandpre’s attitude that the *Military Times* exists at least partly to hold the military system accountable to service members. This demonstrates the *Military Times’* newsroom expectation that reporters should seek and expose wrongdoing in the military, especially in its upper echelons (personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016).

DeGrandpre preeminently described the *Military Times* as a kind of people’s newspaper for lower-ranked military personal, with a mission to shine a light on the problems they face from superior officers and the military establishment (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). DeGrandpre said that military members or family members will frequently call the *Military Times* to report wrongdoing among superior officers, such as fraud, waste or abuse, and that reporting on these cases has given the *Military Times* a reputation for probing deeper into issues with senior military personnel (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). DeGrandpre said *Military Times* staffers will often “play hardball” with military commanders to get to the bottom of issues and
accusations, and said that “it can become tense at times;” however, he said “that’s exactly what the role of the free press is, and it’s something that we take very seriously here” (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). In fact, DeGrandpre said the Military Times is a mouthpiece for service members who otherwise could not bring up concerns with their leadership effectively (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). He noted:

> While we’re very sympathetic to the day-to-day grind that rank and file military personnel are subjected to, we feel a sense of obligation to make sure that their chains of command are acting appropriately on their behalf (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

This illustrates an attitude prevalent at the Military Times, and not necessarily found at the Stars and Stripes in this research, that lower enlisted military personnel are often mistreated by the military establishment and need an outside advocate (such as Military Times newspapers) to give voice to their struggles. This is reflected in the textual analysis findings for articles on sexual assault in the military. The Military Times published more articles using the frame of “corruption among military leaders” (Frame 2) as well as more articles using “Frame 5: Sexual assault problem in the military is getting worse” than the Stars and Stripes. Both frames emphasized cultural and leadership issues that need to be addressed by military leaders on behalf of enlisted service members.

**Thinking about audience**

Interestingly, while Stars and Stripes reporters described their audience specifically as military-related, Military Times reporters (and an editor) described their audience more broadly, to include readers outside of the military circle. Specifically, remarks from Stars and Stripes reporters show a focus on relating to their military audience on a deeper level, causing them to frame stories more exclusively to service members and their families (D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016).
Meanwhile, *Military Times* staff members report either a personal or company desire to broaden their audience, which changes the way they frame news to become more inclusive. This is reflected in the textual analysis findings as well. For example, the *Military Times* was the only newspaper studied to use the Frame 5: Sexual assault problem in the military is getting worse (five stories) which seems to be directed at a more mainstream audience rather than at just those in the military community. Further, several *Military Times* articles on the effects of deployment on military families seemed designed to include more types of people and nontraditional members of the military community, such as Jowers’ (2014) article, “You know you’re a military mom if…,” Kime’s (2016b) report on a study concerning active duty mothers, Lilley’s (2015b) article on the need for male military spouses to have a voice and Lilley’s (2015a) article on a book to help parents talk to children about PTSD (focus on military children). In comparison, most *Stars and Stripes* articles on this topic primarily focus on traditional military members (Kuz, 2014; Shane, 2012; Simoes, 2015) and military spouses (Barnes 2012a; Barnes, 2012b; Barnes, 2013; Barnes, 2015; McCloskey, 2011; Robbins, 2008).

**Stars and Stripes.** Travis Tritten, Capitol Hill reporter for the *Stars and Stripes* (covering military and veterans’ issues in Congress), described his audience as a combination of active duty service members stationed or deployed overseas, and veterans (personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016). Tritten said thinking about this specific audience helps him to find the focus for his stories:

You try to think closely about your audience, about active duty service members and what’s going on in their lives, and you try to think about veterans and about why they would want to read our paper. What is it about their military service and their status now as a veteran that makes them interested in what we’re doing? (T. Tritten, personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016).
For example, he said that when he writes on the defense budget, he focuses on any differences to troop pay, such as benefits or raises (T. Tritten, personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016).

Tritten noted that because the *Stars and Stripes* has reporters living overseas “alongside the military,” it enjoys a “closer relationship with the military” than other military-oriented newspapers like the *Military Times* papers (personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016). He said this close relationship with service members is “a big advantage to doing really good journalism” (T. Tritten, personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016). However, Tritten asserted that this closeness does not impact *Stars and Stripes* reporters’ ability to report on the military objectively (personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016).

Dianna Cahn, national military reporter for the *Stars and Stripes* said that the *Stars and Stripes*’ audience is “a microcosm of the entire military community” (personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016). Cahn said that despite the myriad news options for service members available, the *Stars and Stripes* still has a devoted audience, and believes this is because the *Stars and Stripes* relates so well to military culture (personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016). She noted:

> I find it really interesting that with all the other options out there, we still have an audience that’s, you know, very dedicated. […] I think that means that the military language is still extremely unique—a very unique culture. I guess that culture transcends everything else (D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016).

These statements reveal that the *Stars and Stripes*’ newsroom culture focuses on better relating to service members and therefore in framing articles to be service member-specific.
Military Times. DeGrandpre said appealing to a broader audience online is a major concern for the Military Times (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). DeGrandpre added that the Military Times network also focuses on social media as a way to enlarge its audience (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). While active duty military and their families still constitute a large part of their audience, it is also made up of many veterans, retired military members, and even citizens of other countries, such as the Philippines, who are interested in what American service members are doing in their country, DeGrandpre said (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). He noted that “Increasingly, we’ve had to really think about how we converse with our audience” and that this has led to a less personalized approach in news writing, particularly on the web (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). He said:

We’re really trying to be more inclusive of greater groups of people, and so that means writing things less tailored specifically for an active duty audience and more applicable to the millions of people who, you know, might just come across what’s on Twitter or Facebook or wherever they could land (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

Long-time Army Times reporter Kevin Lilley, who was made a features editor around the time of his interview, echoed DeGrandpre’s assessment of the Military Times’ audience. While he described his audience as mainly active duty Soldiers, Lilley said the Army Times is written “for the wider Army community,” including Reservists, members of the National Guard, former military members, spouses, retirees and Defense Department civilians (personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). However, many people might come across the Army Times website “from Google searches,” he added (K. Lilley, personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016).
Patricia Kime, senior reporter for the *Military Times*, covered military and veterans’ health care and medicine for the newspaper (she was made news editor for the *Marine Corps Times* in October 2016, and has since left *Military Times* employ). Kime said that based on her beat, she often thought of readers as consumers looking for information about changes to healthcare and co-pays (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). This causes her to use frames that pointed to causes of problems and potential solutions to those problems (Entman, 1993). “I guess my approach to my audience is always ‘What’s the news and how does it affect them?’” Kime said (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). She said her main mission as a *Military Times* reporter is to provide readers with “the information they need to make informed decisions, or the information they need to learn something about themselves, their situation … [or] what may be coming in the future” (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). This explains why several of Kime’s articles use frames that suggest solutions to problems, such as getting involved in a community with shared interests to battle PTSD (Kime, 2016d), adopting a more positive mindset toward deployment (Kime, 2016b), working to heal hurt marital relationships (Kime, 2013), and being more open about sexual dysfunction because of deployment injuries (Kime, 2016c).

**Editorial structure**

The *Stars and Stripes* editor and reporters’ remarks reflect a greater focus on print product and on reporting for the specific audience of service members overseas, while the *Military Times* editor seemed to focus more on their online product.

**Stars and Stripes.** The *Stars and Stripes* has three main bureaus: one in Japan to cover the Pacific such as South Korea and Hawaii, one in Germany to cover Europe, the
UK, Italy and the Middle East, including Afghanistan, Bahrain and parts of Africa, and

The print newspaper is published in Washington, D.C. and is “a morning paper in
Europe, it’s an afternoon paper in Japan, and it’s a late morning paper in the Middle
East,” Reid said (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). The *Stars and Stripes* also
transmits a text-only version of the paper called *Stripes Light* for ships at sea to print off
and distribute (B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). A key difference
between the *Stars and Stripes*’ foreign bureaus and the headquarters in Washington, D.C.,
is that reporters at foreign bureaus have much more contact with military personnel than
they do at headquarters, Reid said (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). “Most of
them live on military bases and work on military bases,” he said (B. Reid, personal
communication, Oct. 4, 2016). This explains why the *Stars and Stripes* focuses on
providing a more general picture of global news for overseas service members (B. Reid,
personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). This may also explain, at least in part, why the
*Stars and Stripes* demonstrated more focus on the military justice system in general than
the *Military Times*, which focused more on specific cases of corruption among military
leaders within articles on sexual assault.

**Military Times.** The *Military Times*’ organizational structure includes an
executive editor, a network senior editor (DeGrandpre), service-specific newspaper
editors and editors for issues that affect multiple military branches, and reporters (A.
DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). *Military Times* newspapers are also
sold on military installations around the world, including combat zones; however, it is
now being physically printed less than once a week, with the majority of new stories
going on the website, according to DeGrandpre (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). The *Military Times*’ focus on broadening its online audience, contrasted with the *Stars and Stripes’* mission to relate more closely with its overseas military audience (B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016; D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016), help explain why the *Military Times* framed deployment effects articles to address a broader audience than the *Stars and Stripes*, including children of service members and military mothers, while the *Stars and Stripes* focused more exclusively on service members and their spouses, as discussed in Chapter 4.

**Management style**

All the editors and reporters interviewed expressed the belief that their newspaper allowed reporters great freedom in covering and reporting events. Both reporters and editors from the *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times* newspapers described their company’s management style as largely hands-off. *Military Times* employees described an “aggressive” reporting mentality at the *Military Times* to “leave no stone unturned” (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016; K. Lilley, personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016).

**Stars and Stripes.** Bob Reid, managing editor for the *Stars and Stripes*, said the *Stars and Stripes* editors determine whether the newspaper will cover stories, government-related or otherwise, depending on whether they are of interest to the *Stars and Stripes* audience and whether or not the newspaper has the resources to cover them (personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016). He said the since the staff is small and highly experienced, he does not need to micromanage (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). “All these people basically know what they’re doing; I don’t stand over their shoulders
every day,” he said (B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). Reid added that he wants reporters to feel empowered that they can do their jobs right without him (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

Similarly, *Stars and Stripes* reporters Travis Tritten and Dianna Cahn both described their roles as very independent, with little guidance in terms of both what to cover and how to frame their stories (personal communication, Oct. 12 and Nov. 7, 2016). Tritten said that *Stars and Stripes* reporters have “a lot of independence in choosing and writing about various things,” (personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016). Cahn said she has “a lot of leeway” to choose her own topics for stories (personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016).

It’s a pretty lean operation, so there isn’t a whole lot of heavy-handedness here. I’m a senior reporter, so I’ve been doing this a long time; I don’t need a lot of hand-holding, and I don’t think I’d get it if I wanted it, but I don’t think anybody here has the time or ability to do that. I think the management style is pretty trusting and expecting that reporters know what they’re doing (D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016).

Management style did not appear to make a difference in how *Stars and Stripes* reporters framed articles on the issues covered, as supported by these interviews.

*Military Times*. Military Times senior editor for the network Andrew DeGrandpre said when it comes to determining which stories to cover, he and the individual newspaper editors decide as a group (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). Similar to Reid’s remarks above (personal communication, Oct 3, 2016), DeGrandpre said determining factors on what to cover include how much of an effect certain stories have on the military force, the resources the *Military Times* could devote to the story and how the staff decide to tell the story (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). He described the *Military Times’* newsroom management style as “aggressive” (personal
communication, Oct. 4, 2016). He said that this no-holes-barred approach lends itself to creating reporters and editors who are “very direct” and “asking tough questions all the time” (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

This mindset toward reporting on military news also applies to calling families of combat victims as well as service members caught in acts of wrongdoing, which can make for some “uncomfortable” interviews, DeGrandpre said (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). For example,

We’ve written stories about Navy admirals who became so intoxicated they ended up completely naked outside their hotel rooms. As awkward as the conversation can be, we have an obligation to go to that individual and say ‘Hey, you know, we realize that you’re going through your own personal hell right now. We want to make sure that you have every opportunity to tell your side of the story.’ As long as we are doing that consistently across the board, I think that we’re accomplishing our mission, but I think that we’re also doing it in a way that is as fair as possible (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

This demonstrates that the Military Times’ focus on uncovering wrongdoing among military leaders is reinforced and encouraged by its editors. This is supported in the textual analysis of sexual assault articles, since Military Times used Frame 2: Corruption among military leaders three times (compared to essentially one from the Stars and Stripes, since the second Stars and Stripes article in this frame refers to commanders’ lack of effort to combat sexual assault, rather than taking part in it.

Army Times reporter Kevin Lilley said managers at the Army Times mainly let reporters make their own decisions on how to cover news stories (personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). He said reporters at the Army Times “know what they’re after and they go and get it regardless of what comes down from on high” (K. Lilley, personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). In fact, far from editors telling reporters what to report, he said “it’s usually the other way around” (K. Lilley, personal communication,
Oct. 6, 2016). Many of the Army Times editors are reporters as well, which makes the environment less top-down, Lilley said (personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). However, part of the reason for this is that the staffing has changed and there are less editors overall (K. Lilley, personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). (This idea is explored further in the “Changing news industry” section of Chapter 8).

In sum, while Stars and Stripes employees do not feel government-imposed restrictions hinder their ability to report the news, the fact that the Stars and Stripes is owned by the Department of Defense does influence the expectations that readers and government public affairs personnel have for how the Stars and Stripes should frame the news. The Stars and Stripes’ mission to become “an educated reporter of military news” and understand its subjects best has caused reporters to frame news more specifically as it relates to service members (D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016). In contrast, Military Times employees seek to be a mouthpiece for lower enlisted service members and to hold the military and its leaders accountable for mistreatment of them, which correlates to the higher number of Military Times sexual assault articles using frames that emphasized cultural and leadership issues (Frame 2 and Frame 5). Stars and Stripes reporters described their audience specifically as military-related, while Military Times employees described their audience more broadly. This may help explain why, within articles on sexual assault, the Stars and Stripes demonstrated more focus on the military justice system in general while the Military Times used frames to focus more on specific cases of corruption among military leaders.
Chapter 8: Extra-media influences on military news reporters (RQ5)

In order to answer **RQ5: What are the extra-media influences that come to bear on their reporters in military oriented publications as they write military news?**, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with editors and reporters from the *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times*. Extra-media influences on how reporters frame the news include the government, military, sources, culture and social systems, according to Shoemaker and Vos (2009). Competing media and interest groups also shape the way reporters write news stories to some extent, which were mentioned by reporters and editors during semi-structured interviews (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Another extra-media influence includes reporters’ personal backgrounds and belief systems, including their “characteristics, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors,” which inform the ways in which they report the news (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p. 38). This chapter discusses several different extra-media influences including the relationship between military-oriented newspaper reporters and government or military representatives; the changing news industry; thinking about competing media, and personal experience.

**Relationship with military/government contacts**

Both *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times* employees noted difficulties in balancing public affairs spin with the desire to provide unbiased news coverage. However, *Stars and Stripes* reporters focused more on removing spin and working with public affairs personnel to achieve goals, while *Military Times* reporters (and especially
DeGrandpre, the network editor) described a more negative relationship with government and military personnel due to reporting news stories against government wishes. This supports the idea that the *Stars and Stripes* has a better relationship with government and military personnel than the *Military Times*. However, this may be due more to reporting styles, mission and audience perception among reporters, rather than as a direct result of ownership.

**Stars and Stripes.** *Stars and Stripes* managing editor Bob Reid noted that government public affairs personnel have widely varying perceptions of what the *Stars and Stripes* should do as a Defense Media Activity newspaper (personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016). For example, he said that “some may, in the back of their minds, think that ‘you’re part of the defense establishment, you should be toeing the line more,’” (B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016). Some public affairs representatives believe the *Stars and Stripes* should work to build morale among service members, Reid said (personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016). However, Reid said that he sees the relationship between the *Stars and Stripes* and government public affairs officers as “just normal back-and-forth that you’re going to find in almost any journalism job over time” (personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016). He said:

> It’s a symbiotic relationship; each is attempting to use or exploit the other for their particular goals, and I have no problem with that as long as everybody understands and no one is under any illusions. We’ll fight our battles to maintain our independence and expect the PAOs to do what they can to sell their interpretation of the truth of events. It’s a normal give and take (B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016).

*Stars and Stripes* national military reporter Dianna Cahn said she views information coming from government and military public affairs sources “suspiciously” (personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016). Cahn said she accepts the information but “with
questions,” since she believes her mission as a reporter and the mission of government public affairs personnel don’t always align (personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016). She said although she often works together with public affairs personnel, “as often as they’re there to facilitate my access to information, I feel like they are equally as often there to safeguard against me getting certain information, and my job is to get as much information as possible” (D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016). Stars and Stripes Capitol Hill reporter Travis Tritten added that it can be “very difficult to verify or vet” some information he receives from military public affairs (personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016).

These views demonstrate that Stars and Stripes editors and reporters view themselves as outside of the government despite the newspaper being government-owned and -operated. This is demonstrated by the fact that the Stars and Stripes and Military Times used many of the same frames in writing about both sexual assault and deployment effects, including frames that cast the military or government in a negative light (all four frames used in sexual assault articles, for example). In fact, the Stars and Stripes had seven articles framed to focus on failures in the military justice system (compared to four from the Military Times).

Military Times. DeGrandpre said that military and government officials will sometimes ask the Military Times not to print certain information, but the newspaper’s response to these requests depends on the reason for holding onto the information (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). DeGrandpre said that if the Military Times has information that could endanger lives, such as information on troop movements overseas, they may agree not to print it until a certain date or time (personal communication, Oct.
4, 2016). However, he said instances of this situation are “few and far between” (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). “Much more likely is a scenario in which we may have information that would prove either embarrassing or, the phrase that the military likes to use is “‘pre-decisional,’” he said (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). According to DeGrandpre, “pre-decisional” refers to information that military officials are not yet ready to release because they are not ready to field questions on the decision (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). In these types of situations, military representatives often offer the Military Times exclusive interviews with military leaders in exchange for the newspaper holding the information until it is officially released, DeGrandpre said; however, the Military Times will typically decline (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). He said:

We certainly listen, always, but more often than not, if it’s not a situation where people are going to be put in harm’s way or physical safety is not a concern, we tend to err on the side that it’s in our readers’ interest to know what their leaders are doing that affects them (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

For example, DeGrandpre said the military’s tattoo policy is often “controversial” between enlisted personnel who want to display their tattoos and leaders who believe they are “unprofessional,” and the Military Times has printed information on changes to the policy before they were officially released (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

Instances like this have caused strain to the Military Times’ relationship with military public affairs in recent years, DeGrandpre said (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). “Over the last 10 years we have had, unfortunately, a number of unpleasant experiences, you know, and it comes down to, again, the difference of opinions about what information should be made public,” he said (A. DeGrandpre, personal
communication, Oct. 4, 2016). He added that he considers relationships with public affairs personnel to be “invaluable” and that many military public affairs officers do “understand the balancing act that often has to played” for military reporters, especially in the Washington, D.C. area (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

*Military Times* reporters also rely on public affairs information as a “tip sheet,” DeGrandpre said (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). In fact, *Military Times* reporters often sift through public affairs information to get scoops on other stories, as DeGrandpre described:

We have sort of made a bit of a cottage industry of looking at that information that the government supplies—whether it’s press releases, whether it’s photographs or it’s unedited b-roll—and we look for news in that, that public affairs may not necessarily realize is there (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

For example, if a military command publishes a story on training that mentions deploying to Romania in the future, a *Military Times* reporter will call to find out more about that deployment, even if its inclusion in the original story was simply “oversight” (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). This can lead to tension between the *Military Times* and the military unit, but more often it results in “more significant interviews” and “broader understanding of the subject at hand,” DeGrandpre said (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). This illustrates a desire to uncover news the military may not want to release, which is a prevalent attitude among both *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times* reporters, although only DeGrandpre noted that this attitude has strained the relationship between his newspaper and government/military officials.

*Military Times* reporter Patricia Kime said that she tries to include the government or military perspective in her stories, but that she also focuses on getting data to support
any arguments made by the Department of Defense (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). However, when she reports on issues that require multiple outside sources, such as her stories on intimacy issues in military couples because of deployment-related injuries, Kime said she preferred to go around official public affairs channels to speak with sources (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). She noted that in this case, “it really pays to attend conferences and curry sources that are not the official Pentagon spokesmen” and to speak to people without needing to go through official public affairs officers first (P. Kime, personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016).

Kime lamented that every question she poses to government officials “seems like it needs to go through like 10 million layers of lawyers and command” which she said makes her feel that every answer she receives is watered down and incomplete (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). Kime said, “I feel like we’re never getting the full picture. We’re never getting the honest answers. We’re getting the, you know, legally crafted responses, which is difficult and, you know, disappointing” (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). Kime added that sometimes the Defense Department will deny her an interview and demand that all questions are posed via email, which she said “automatically makes me suspicious” because that means “it’s been looked at by a million different people” (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016).

The strained relationship between Military Times employees and military public affairs personnel is demonstrated especially in articles on sexual assault. As demonstrated in Chapter 5, the Military Times seemed to have more trouble accessing government documents and interviews on this subject than the Stars and Stripes (Lilley, 2014a; Losey
and Tan, 2016). This affirms the idea that *Stars and Stripes* reporters have more positive relationship with military public affairs personnel than *Military Times* reporters.

**Changing news industry**

While both newspapers spoke on broadening their audiences, the *Stars and Stripes* editor referred to appealing to service members across the globe rather than in a specific geographic location, while the *Military Times* editor spoke about writing more inclusively for those outside military circles (personal communication, Oct. 3-4, 2016). Further, the *Stars and Stripes* editor described changing priorities for publishing print editions, while the *Military Times* editor and reporters noted their company’s shift from print products to online publication (personal communication, Oct. 3-4, 2016; Oct. 6, 2016; Oct. 19, 2016). Reporters from both newspapers noted that leaner budgets have forced them to do more on their own. However, only a *Military Times* reporter mentioned more pressure to produce stories faster for the web, as well as the newspaper packaging stories to entertain online (P. Kime, personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016).

**Stars and Stripes.** Reid said that *Stars and Stripes* editors, including himself, are thinking about their audience more broadly than they used to (personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016). To this end, the *Stars and Stripes* now published essentially one edition of its newspaper with few differences between the Middle East and Europe versions, as opposed to its previous practice of publishing a different edition for Europe, the Pacific, the U.S. and the Middle East (B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016).

*Stars and Stripes* national military reporter Dianna Cahn said that budget cuts to the newspaper industry have resulted in increased competition in the journalism field, especially between military reporters, “to get there first or to get the best angle” (personal
communication, Nov. 7, 2016). The leaner staffing has also led to reporters doing other tasks in addition to reporting, such as taking photos and self-editing (D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016). According to Cahn,

Everybody is working in a very lean manner. There’s no three-tier layering process or anything like that. I often take a camera with me because they don’t have enough people to take pictures. Sometimes we’re doing projects that a larger newspaper would do with three or four reporters, and it’s just me. […] Working in this editorial environment, you’ve got to be pretty independent, because the editors are pulled in 10 directions and they’re trying to make a good product. So it really falls on each reporter to go as far out on the line as they can before they hand off; give clean copy, take good pictures, get everything in order and in line (D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016).

This factor did not appear to make a difference in how Stars and Stripes reporters framed the issues covered in this research.

Military Times. The Military Times’ major focus is online publication, according to DeGrandpre (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). He said “…we want to maintain a steady, vigilant flow of news on our website everyday” (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). DeGrandpre said print publication is less than once a week, and will likely be once every other week soon, with focus on the websites (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). Further, the newspaper group only prints a newspaper because “the economics of the whole thing [newspaper operation] requires us to still have a newspaper” (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). DeGrandpre noted that this shift, facilitated by the changing news industry, has influenced many practices at the Military Times:

For the longest time as we really focused almost entirely on the newspaper operation, we put a premium on how we were marketing our print products on the newstand, and on a newstand, the buyer was a uniformed military personnel and their family members (A. DeGrandpre, Oct. 4, 2016).
DeGrandpre said this meant *Military Times* writers would actually use the pronoun “you” to speak to their audience in order to better connect with audience members (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). DeGrandpre said this “legacy mindset” has been changing as the newspaper shifts from a print to a web focus (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). He said:

> We still passionately believe that we serve this important role advocating or representing … military personnel, but obviously there are millions of people who look at *Military Times* journalism on the Internet, and when we’re using pronouns like ‘you,’ it may not necessarily be applicable, and in reality it’s probably less and less applicable (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

*Military Times* reporter Patricia Kime added that a greater focus on getting stories to the web audience first has changed how she writes stories purely because deadlines are so much tighter than they used to be (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). “A lot of times now, I mean, we’re writing a story in 45 minutes. In fact, adding more than a sole source can be challenging with these time constraints, Kime said (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). The deadlines can also prevent reporters from including government sources, at least in the article’s first publication, since they often don’t respond in time, Kime added (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). This could explain why the *Military Times* appeared to have a harder time accessing government sources and documents than the *Stars and Stripes*, as discussed in Chapter 5.

Further, Kime said that reporters change the focus of their stories depending on whether the audience is using the web-based or print product (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). She said:

> Our web audience tends to be military personnel and families that are young—18 to 34 or whatever, that age group—and we try to get them the news that’s active duty, news that affects them, that may be a little more web-oriented and snazzy. And then we’ve got the print product that […] it’s on the shelves in commissaries
and PX’s but also has a subscriber base that’s older, so we tend to put our deeper dive thought, larger think pieces in that publication and also news that’s informative to like retirees and older people that subscribe to us (P. Kime, personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016).

Interestingly, Kime said the “deeper” articles featuring more thought-out analysis were aimed at the older readers rather than the newspapers’ younger audience, who received the “snazzy” online versions of stories. This implies that reporters at the Military Times believe younger service members looking at their online versions don’t want to read deep analysis but rather seek news that entertains.

In support of this conclusion, Kime said that the newspapers’ online headlines are now more “clickbait” and not necessarily representative of their stories (P. Kime, personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). She added that while she believes her reporting style has remained the same over the past 17 years of writing for the Military Times, “I think our stuff is being packaged very differently” (P. Kime, personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). For example, Kime said that Military Times online content is more focused on eye-catching video and imagery than on the story text: “I mean, it’s almost entertainment,” she said (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016).

This factor did not appear to influence the frames in Military Times articles on the two topics covered by this research (sexual assault and deployment effects). However, these topics are by nature more serious than others addressed by military-oriented newspapers. This calls for future studies on framing in articles of less serious nature, such as stories on popular military culture.

Thinking about competing media

Clayman and Reisner (1998) noted that journalists’ peers influence how they decide which parts of news are more newsworthy than others (as cited in Shoemaker &
Therefore, the way journalists in military-oriented newspapers think about their direct competitors influences the way they frame the news. Interestingly, reporters and editors from both newspapers see the other newspaper as serving a different mission and therefore not a major competitor, aside from covering some of the same events (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016; P. Kime, personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016; B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016; T. Tritten, personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016). Further, *Military Times* reporters see the *Stars and Stripes* as “sterile” military news at times, and see themselves as providing on-the-ground coverage service members need (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016), while *Stars and Stripes* reporters note that they have the market cornered overseas and believe they have a “closer relationship with the military” (T. Tritten, personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016). Remarks in this section support previously mentioned assertions that the *Stars and Stripes* is more focused on overseas service members’ needs and in providing in-depth coverage for military families, while the *Military Times* takes a more “aggressive” approach to stateside military news in an effort to be a representative of enlisted military members (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

**Stars and Stripes.** *Stars and Stripes* managing editor Bob Reid said while the *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times’* family of newspapers do cover the same events, the two have an “essential difference in mission” (personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016). He noted that while *Military Times* newspapers must compete with other stateside news outlets to provide military news to a military audience, the *Stars and Stripes* mainly serves deployed and overseas military members and their families who are looking for a more general picture of military-related news (B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 3,
2016). Due to its different newspapers—the Army Times, Navy Times, Air Force Times and Marine Corps Times—Military Times newspapers also spend more effort pursuing branch-specific news, such as cutbacks to certain Navy programs, for example, while the Stars and Stripes prints news for a broader military audience, Reid said (personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016).

Despite covering some of the same stories, Stars and Stripes reporter Travis Tritten said he believes the Stars and Stripes has a “closer relationship with the military” than the Military Times newspapers (personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016). Tritten said that with many of its reporters overseas and living “alongside the military,” the Stars and Stripes has “a reputation as the hometown newspaper of the military,” while “the Military Times has more of a commercial news source feel about them” (personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016).

Military Times. DeGrandpre, however, believes Military Times reporters have “a freedom” to report on service members that Stars and Stripes reporters do not share (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). He called being completely independent of the government is one of the Military Times’ “biggest assets” (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). DeGrandpre said that the Military Times’ independence from government allows reporters to “hold people accountable” in military service and probe issues on a deeper level (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). He said:

While on the one hand we’re very sympathetic to the needs and the challenges that military personnel and their families go through, we’re in no way beholden to their chain of command in terms of what we report and how we report it (A. DeGrandpre, personnel communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

He noted that this approach comes with conflict: “What we do, historically, has had swagger to it, and it’s been bold, it’s been unabashed and frankly it’s created some
mixed feelings among the people that we do have to interact with within the military,”
DeGrandpre said (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). DeGrandpre said the Military Times has a “proud legacy of portraying military culture in way that … it’s just sort of unafraid” (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). This implies that he believes the Stars and Stripes caters to predominant belief systems within military culture, and supports the hypothesis that the Military Times has a higher level of conflict with government and military public affairs personnel than the Stars and Stripes. As a point of comparison, Stars and Stripes editor Reid spoke of a “give and take” relationship with public affairs personnel (personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016), and reporter Cahn mentioned a level of distrust but not conflict (personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016).

The Military Times has a smaller staff than the Stars and Stripes and does not have foreign bureaus as the Stars and Stripes does, limiting its overseas coverage, DeGrandpre said (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). However, he said the Military Times’ aggressive approach toward military reporting and its “attitude” set it apart from other military newspapers (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

I think we do possess the very unique ability to take a look at certain trends and present those in a way that no one else does. The coverage may have a little bit of attitude; it may upset some people. At the end of the day, what we’re primarily focused on here is being tough but fair, and obviously objective. When I look at other media organizations that cover the military, I don’t see the same approach to covering news (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

The Military Times and Stars and Stripes often cover the same events, but the way they package them is different, DeGrandpre said (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). “I actually look at what they do as being a little sterile,” DeGrandpre said of the Stars and Stripes, “and I like the fact that … we have a fearlessness when it comes to questioning authority” (personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). He added that while he
believes the *Stars and Stripes* does also question authority, “they have certain rules and regulations that they have to follow, that they have to adhere to, that don’t necessarily appeal to us” (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016). Ultimately, he said, while the *Stars and Stripes* can use its foreign bureaus to break important stories, the *Military Times* uses its “independence to do the same thing” (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

*Army Times* reporter Kevin Lilley echoed DeGrandpre’s sentiments that the *Military Times* and *Stars and Stripes* used to be more competitive when both newspapers were vying for the same newsstand buyers, but now that the papers are online, they cater to different readers (personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). He said that the *Military Times* focuses more on feature stories and popular military culture, while the *Stars and Stripes* focuses on hard news and relies more on wire services (K. Lilley, personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). Further, he said the *Stars and Stripes*, by nature of its overseas bureaus and staff, focuses more on overseas coverage than the *Military Times* (K. Lilley, personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). This is in line with *Stars and Stripes* editor Bob Reid’s remarks (personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016).

*Military Times* reporter Patricia Kime also believes the missions of the two newspapers are essentially different (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). This supports *Stars and Stripes* editor Bob Reid’s remarks that the missions of the two newspapers “diverge” (personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016). First of all, Kime noted that the *Stars and Stripes* now has a paywall online while the *Military Times* does not (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). Kime said “I can certainly see a purpose for *Stars and Stripes*” since it is distributed on forward operating bases to service members
who don’t have access to the Internet or the Military Times (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016). This implies that the paywall is in place because the Stars and Stripes’ real focus is on getting the newspaper to deployed service members (which is in line with comments from Stars and Stripes editor Bob Reid, personal communication, Oct. 3-4, 2016).

These remarks tie into the “Mission” and “Thinking about audience” sections of Chapter 7. The Military Times published more articles using the frame of “corruption among military leaders” and “Sexual assault problem in the military is getting worse” than the Stars and Stripes, which emphasize cultural and leadership issues that need to be addressed by military leaders on behalf of enlisted service members. However, although Military Times employees perceive themselves as advocates for military families and Stars and Stripes employees view themselves more as “educated” informers (D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016), these differences in perceptions do not appear to make a difference in how each newspaper frames the two topics of this study. Both newspapers advocate for military families to seek help for PTSD and hurting marriages because of deployments fairly equally, for example (four Stars and Stripes articles and five Military Times articles used Frame 2 in deployment effects). However, the Military Times does appear to put greater focus on service member issues, while the Stars and Stripes focuses more on military marriages and spouses, as discussed in Chapter 4.

**Personal experience**

**Stars and Stripes.** Stars and Stripes managing editor Bob Reid was the only person interviewed with prior military experience. He said that working for the Army for three and half years gives him a deeper connection to the Stars and Stripes’ military
audience (B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016). Reid noted that he read the
Stars and Stripes as a soldier and that this experience influences what believes deployed
or overseas service members want to read in their newspaper (personal communication,
Oct. 3, 2016). He also spent six years in Iraq and 15 months in Afghanistan as an
gives me and the others here who’ve had previous military experience some feel for what
it’s like to be in a deployed area, or an overseas area, and be a bit cut off from the United
States,” Reid said (personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016). Reid also noted that his prior
experience is especially helpful when editing stories about the countries where he
formerly reported for the AP, such as the Philippines, Middle East and Afghanistan (B.
Reid, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

Reid said that like himself, many of the editors and managers of the Stars and
Stripes were either active duty service members themselves or served as military
reporters overseas for the Stars and Stripes at some point (personal communication, Oct.
4, 2016). This influences staff meetings when managers and editors discuss what to
cover, he said:

They have a sense of the military that’s closer to uniformed personnel than it is to
the average civilian and we try to make the calls to pitch a story and what stories
are selected based on, one, our professional background, and our affinity one way
or another to the military (B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016).

This factor did not appear to influence the way Stars and Stripes reporters framed news
on the two topics covered in this study.

Military Times. Military Times senior reporter Patricia Kime, the only military
spouse interviewed, said she started working for the newspaper corporation while her
husband was still on active duty in the Marine Corps (he has since retired) (personal
communication, Oct. 19, 2016). She said her experience as a military spouse impacted the way she wrote stories for the newspaper because she would draw on her experiences of reading the newspaper as a spouse:

> I used to read the *Military Times* before I came to work for them, you know, and it used to sit on my husband’s desk when he was like an XO or CO and people would read it, and so I knew what I was looking for in a publication, and it does sort of frame my frame of reference of what I think, you know, folks need to have, need to know or are interested in learning about (P. Kime, personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016).

However, Kime said that while she and other reporters “do bring our personal experiences” to their stories, she believes they make an effort to separate them as much as possible from their job of writing a balanced story (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016):

> I think we all fight […] to make sure we’re fair and balanced and not judgmental or making any snap judgments before we get the story. I think you always have to sort of make sure that you’re sort of checking your personal experiences and opinions at the door when you’re digging into a story (P. Kime, personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016).

As discussed in Chapter 7, Kime frequently framed her articles to suggest solutions to problems, such as getting involved in a community with shared interests to battle PTSD (Kime, 2016d), adopting a more positive mindset toward deployment (Kime, 2016b), working to heal hurt marital relationships (Kime, 2013), and being more open about sexual dysfunction because of deployment injuries (Kime, 2016c). This may connect to her desire to advocate for military families as well as to her personal experience as a military spouse.

> In sum, the extra-media influences that most appear to impact reporters at military-oriented newspapers include relationships with government and military personnel and thinking about competition, insofar as it makes reporters think about their
own newspaper’s unique mission and audience (which are organizational influences discussed in Chapter 7). In terms of relationships with government or military public affairs personnel, *Stars and Stripes* journalists reported a greater interest in working with public affairs personnel to achieve goals, while *Military Times* reporters (and especially DeGrandpre, the network editor) described a more negative relationship with military personnel due reporting news stories against government wishes. The strained relationship between *Military Times* employees and military public affairs personnel is demonstrated especially in articles on sexual assault. As demonstrated in Chapter 5, the *Military Times* seemed to have more trouble accessing government documents and interviews on this subject than the *Stars and Stripes* (Lilley, 2014a; Losey and Tan, 2016). This supports the idea that the *Stars and Stripes* has a better relationship with government and military personnel than the *Military Times*. However, this may be due more to reporting styles, mission and audience perception among reporters, rather than as a direct result of ownership. While reporters did note the changing news industry influences their reporting, it did not appear to have a marked impact on the frames in this study. This may be because the news industry is not a factor particular to military-oriented newspapers but rather to the newspaper industry as a whole. Lastly, personal experience did not appear to impact Stars and Stripes frames, but may have had some impact on *Military Times* frames used by Patricia Kime, a military spouse. However, this finding may be because no *Stars and Stripes* reporters had personal experience in the military or as a spouse (only editor Bob Reid had experience as a soldier).
The research questions in this study fit together to explain not only how reporters at the *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times* frame sexual assault and deployment effects stories, but why they frame them in certain ways. This research demonstrates that the way journalists and editors perceive their newspaper’s mission influences the way they view their audience and therefore the way they frame news stories.

This research found that perceptions of mission and audience appeared to impact news framing more than ownership at the *Military Times* and *Stars and Stripes*. In this study, *Military Times* employees demonstrated that they saw their mission as an advocate for service members, especially those low in the hierarchy of the military, and therefore took a more “aggressive” stance toward reporting on military policies and holding military leaders accountable (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016; K. Lilley, personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016). Meanwhile, *Stars and Stripes* employees demonstrated that they saw their audience as mainly overseas service members and believed their newspaper’s physical proximity to those service members helped them to better understand military culture (D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016; B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016; T. Tritten, personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016). Further, while the *Stars and Stripes* focused on better relating to a specific audience of service members and their families the *Military Times* staff members focused on broadening their audience, especially online. In line with this, the *Military Times* framed articles to include a broader audience and focused on advocating for service
members’ health and career needs, while the *Stars and Stripes* focuses on a narrower military audience with emphasis on military family relationships.

**Where this research fits in body of literature**

Most research on military news to date has focused on wartime journalism, as evidenced by the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, and few researchers have attempted to explore the influences that guide military reporters as they report domestic news, except for Elmore (2010). The last framing study on the *Stars and Stripes*, according to Elmore (2010), was conducted by Moultrie in 1990. This research fills this gap by providing a current framing analysis on military-oriented newspapers. Further, this research breaks ground in the area of comparing military-oriented newspaper coverage with the object of exploring how ownership might influence news framing (government vs. private). This topic has not yet been explored within framing theory research; therefore, this study fills several gaps in the current literature, including a need to analyze domestic military news apart from wartime reporting, and a need to better understand how journalists at military-oriented newspapers balance serving a military audience and governmental pressure with a desire to provide balanced coverage. It also provides a deeper understanding of the different extra-media influences that come to bear on reporters at military-oriented newspapers.

Previous research on embedded reporters living alongside military members showed that this situation made it difficult for embedded reporters to maintain objectivity (Brandenburg, 2007; Buchanan, 2011; Fahmy & Johnson, 2012; Haigh et al., 2006; Pfau et al., 2004). Studies found that embedded reporters’ news stories contained more episodic frames than those written by non-embedded reporters and framed news more
positively (Brandenburg, 2007; Haigh et al., 2006; Pfau et al., 2004). As the Iraq War wore on, Buchanan (2011) found that corporate media interests and U.S. military interests “diverged” as public interest declined, making it necessary for reporters to criticize the war effort or else be perceived as pushing the U.S. military’s agenda (p. 114). Similarly, Brandenburg (2007) wrote that the mass media’s corporate interests demand that they serve the public, which means giving audience members what they want to read.

However, the Stars and Stripes and Military Times do not write for the general public, but for a military audience, which means the interests of military-oriented newspapers would not necessarily be different from their corporate interests, at least as much as mainstream media outlets. The Stars and Stripes’ situation lends itself to similar corporate and military interests as a part of the Defense Media Activity. Unsurprisingly, Moultrie’s 1990 study found that the Stars and Stripes reported more favorably on the military than competitive news sources (as cited in Elmore, 2010).

This research explored whether Stars and Stripes reporters frame military news differently than their privately-owned counterpart, the Military Times. This research found some differences in the way the newspapers framed sexual assault, with the Military Times focusing more on corruption within military leaders and almost exclusively using the frame that sexual assault is getting worse in the military, which supports the idea that the Stars and Stripes does indeed report military news in a way that fits with government narratives and objectives more than the Military Times. Further, while editors at both newspapers reported a desire to distance themselves from government public affairs objectives, the Stars and Stripes editor phrased this in terms of
a “normal give and take” relationship, while the *Military Times* editor reflected that going against military/government wishes in recent years has caused a rift between the *Military Times* and government public affairs representatives (A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016; B. Reid, personal communication, Oct. 3, 2016). This supports the idea that the *Stars and Stripes* toes the line more with military and government wishes than the *Military Times*, although the reasons for this may have more to do with audience perception and mission than ownership, as discussed previously.

Within the topic of effects of deployment on military families, both newspapers used “episodic frames” in the form of anecdotes in nearly every article, similar to the way embedded reporters framed wartime news compared to non-embedded reporters (Brandenburg, 2007; Haigh et al., 2006; Pfau et al., 2004). Further, interviews reveal that reporters and editors at both the *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times* feel a need to advocate for military families in their news coverage (D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016; A. DeGrandpre, personal communication, Oct. 4, 2016; P. Kime, personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016; K. Lilley, personal communication, Oct. 6, 2016; T. Tritten, personal communication, Oct. 12, 2016). This support’s Aday’s (2006) assertion that reporters use more “one-sided,” or advocacy, frames to focus on solving an issue, such as war-related issues, and to highlight values audience members should share; in this case, military-oriented news reporters are highlighting values of keeping military families together in deployment effects articles (p. 769). These findings are also similar to studies on embedded wartime reporters that found the reporters found objectivity difficult when they worked so closely with service members (Brandenburg, 2007; Buchanan, 2011; Fahmy & Johnson, 2012; Haigh et al., 2006; Pfau et al., 2004). Further, Aday (2006)
asserts that reporters use objectivist frames to maintain a neutral standpoint while reporting on specific events: this holds true for military-oriented news reporters when covering the specific events of sexual assault.

However, frames used by the *Stars and Stripes* on deployment effects focused more on military marriage and spouse-related issues, while the *Military Times* focused more on PTSD and service member-related issues. Further, the *Stars and Stripes* focusing more on “moral judgments” on the causes of problems, and the *Military Times* focusing more on demonstrating the scope of a problem and pinpointing the causes for problems (Entman, 1993). This could be due to differences in the way reporters and editors at these different newspapers perceive their audiences and view their own mission. For example, the *Stars and Stripes*’ mission to become “an educated reporter of military news” and understand its subjects best has caused reporters to frame news more specifically as it relates to service members (D. Cahn, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2016). In contrast, *Military Times* employees’ mission to be a mouthpiece for lower enlisted service members and to hold the military and its leaders accountable for mistreatment of them correlates to the higher number of *Military Times* sexual assault articles using frames that emphasized cultural and leadership issues (Frames 2 and 5).

In terms of relationships with government or military public affairs personnel, *Stars and Stripes* journalists reported a greater interest in working with public affairs personnel to achieve goals, while *Military Times* reporters (and especially DeGrandpre, the network editor) described a more negative relationship with military personnel due to reporting news stories against government wishes. The strained relationship between *Military Times* employees and military public affairs personnel is demonstrated
especially in articles on sexual assault. This supports the idea that the *Stars and Stripes* has a better relationship with government and military personnel than the *Military Times*. However, this may be due more to reporting styles, mission and audience perception among reporters, rather than as a direct result of ownership. In fact, this research found that perceptions of mission and audience were the main factors that influence news framing at military-oriented newspapers.

**Contributing to theoretical understanding**

Research indicates that news frames tend to either reinforce the social order or challenge it, but that most journalists reinforce it in a time of controversy or crisis (Aday, 2006; Davis & Kent, 2013). This research found that when framing news on sexual assault in the military, which could be classified as a crisis for the military, journalists in military-oriented newspapers used frames to challenge the social order by critiquing the military justice system and demonstrating corruption among military leaders, as well as by calling for change. However, this research found that when framing news on the effects of deployment on military families, journalists at military-oriented newspapers use frames to both challenge the social order (by inferring that the military system needs to offer more support programs) and reinforce the social order (by encouraging military couples to work on staying together during deployment-related struggles). Entman (1993) also noted that framing reveals which parts of a story are more important to journalists. This research found that in terms of sexual assault in the military, both the *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times* focused on the need for change within the military justice system, military culture and among military leaders (with *Stars and Stripes* using the frame of failures in the military justice system slightly more than the *Military Times*).
However, the *Military Times* framed articles to demonstrate that the sexual assault problem in the military is getting worse, while the *Stars and Stripes* did not, which may be due to different perceptions in audience.

In terms of articles on deployment effects, this research found that the *Stars and Stripes* framed the majority of articles to support reconciliation among struggles military families and show support for military spouses facing post-deployment problems, while the *Military Times* focused on pinpointing issues among service members, such as infertility and PTSD, and used frames to focus on a broader audience, including military mothers and military children. The researcher believes this is also due to the way journalists and editors at these publications perceive their mission and audience: writing specifically for military couples struggling after a deployment is in line with the *Stars and Stripes*’ mission to cater to overseas or deployed service members and their families, while focusing on service members is in line with the *Military Times* staffers’ self-perceived mission as an advocate for enlisted service members and writing to a broader audience is in line with the *Military Times*’ changing philosophy toward its audience.

This research also explores elite source framing through the lens of military-oriented publications. Previous research has noted that elite sources such as government figures influence how newspapers present the news (Aday, 2006; Brandenburg, 2007; Buchanan, 2011; Davis & Kent, 2013; Elmore, 2010). This research demonstrates that while military and government figures do try to shape military news coverage at military-oriented publications, they are met with opposition from editors at editorially independent publications, and perhaps even more so when editors believe they are working as
advocates for service members and must hold the military system and its leaders accountable.

Previous framing research shows that journalists tend to focus on why the public should be concerned about issues rather than what they can do about them (Davis & Kent, 2013). This research demonstrates that while this is true of articles on sexual assault within military-oriented publications, it does not hold true for articles on the effects of deployment on military families. While sexual assault articles were largely framed to demonstrate problems in the military justice system, articles on the effects of deployment on military families were largely framed to encourage military members and family members to do something about the problems they faced, whether that meant seeking help for PTSD, having conversations about infertility issues, managing expectations in marriage or seeking alternative treatments. In fact, Frames 2 and 3, underscoring marital and family reconciliation from deployment-inflicted wounds, were the predominant frames used for this topic (14 out of 20 articles). This shows that military-oriented publications are not typical in only pinpointing problems rather than encouraging solutions. This may be because of the unique relationship these publications have with their specific audiences.

**Practical implications**

This study has several implications for journalists and researchers, including a better understanding of the influences that come to bear on journalists reporting on military news, as well as a better understanding of how newspaper mission and perceptions of audience influence news framing at military-oriented newspapers.
Journalists use frames to “try to shape public discourse about an issue by establishing predominant labels” (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 13). Ryan (2004) notes that media members try to frame stories in a way that lends meaning to events. By exploring the frames journalists at military-oriented newspapers give to certain topics, this research provides a better understanding of how journalists working for these publications perceive the military (their audience) and therefore how they might seek to influence the way members of the military community view themselves and others. This information is especially useful for journalists writing for a military audience because it might lead them to think more reflexively when they write, about the way they perceive their audience and about the meaning they are trying to convey in their stories. This research also explores how journalists working for military-oriented publications, and specifically for the government-owned *Stars and Stripes*, strive to maintain editorial independence. All *Stars and Stripes* employees interviewed reported pushing back against government or military “spin” on information through fact-checking, balancing sources and asserting independence from government control.

**Limitations**

The intent of this research is to focus on how journalists at military-oriented newspapers frame the military outside of the warzone as they conduct routine operations at home. Thus, this study is limited in scope to two domestic military news topics (sexual assault and the effects of deployment on military families), and does not include international news coverage of the military, news on the U.S. military’s current campaigns overseas or news on foreign military. This study does not examine the effects of news frames on an audience. It does not measure how members of the military
audience that read the *Stars and Stripes* and *Military Times* view the U.S. military. This study limits itself to considering questions on framing, not agenda-setting or priming. Further, this study does not examine the process of gatekeeping that involves choosing which information to publish from the variety of options (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

**Areas for further research**

This study provides a springboard for future research on the effects of news framing for a military audience. Future studies should also explore how particular news frames influence the way the American public perceives the U.S. military, especially as it operates domestically. Other studies may want to examine the framing of military news in other issues beyond sexual assault and the effects of deployment on military families. Finally, future studies should compare frames used in military-oriented newspapers with those used in government-owned and civilian newspapers that serve military audiences, such as newspapers in cities near military installations.

Further, as illustrated in Chapter 5, each newspaper’s choice of regular columnist (Terri Barnes’ “Spouse Calls” in the *Stars and Stripes* and Bret Moore’s “Kevlar for the Mind” in the *Military Times*) on the topic of deployment effects greatly impacted the type and number of frames counted in this research for each newspaper. While Barnes’ column focused on military marriages and spousal issues related to deployment, Moore’s column focused on health-related issues for service members (mainly PTSD) and how those influence military families (Barnes, 2011; Barnes, 2012a; Barnes, 2012b; Barnes, 2013; Barnes, 2015; Moore, 2015; Moore, 2016). Further, Barnes often used her column to personally relate to military spouses and call them to action, such as working toward a more positive attitude, which isn’t a tool used in traditional (non-editorial) news articles.
This lends itself to future research comparing the effects of columns versus traditional news articles in military-oriented newspapers on a military audience.

Finally, while this research discusses many of the extra-media influences on military-news reporters, including personal background, it does not explore how differences in gender influence how military news reporters frame the news, since this is a topic outside the parameters of this research. This research did find that military spouse and *Military Times* reporter Patricia Kime felt a need to advocate for service members and military marriages in her articles and that she framed her articles to reflect this desire (see page 133). However, this research did not explore whether gender, military spouse status or other factors contributed to this phenomenon. Future researchers and in particular those using gender theories should explore this topic further.

This research found that reporters and editors working for military-oriented newspapers consider many certain unique factors when framing news on sexual assault, such as a desire to only report on major trends or new information since the topic has been so thoroughly covered; a desire to vet sources as much as possible; and a desire to avoid the appearance of bias through no-frills reporting style and balancing sources of information. In terms of framing the effects of deployment on military families, reporters and editors noted that they wanted to find new aspects to this topic, and one reporter (Patricia Kime of the *Military Times*) noted a struggle between the desire to advocate for military families and a desire to remain objective on this topic (personal communication, Oct. 19, 2016).
Reflexivity

These findings are mainly in line with the researcher’s initial idea that the *Stars and Stripes* might frame news in closer alignment with military goals and objectives since it is government-owned. However, there are some exceptions. First, it is important to note that while the *Stars and Stripes* editor and reporters described their relationship with military public affairs personnel in more positive terms than those at the *Military Times*, this does not mean that the *Stars and Stripes* reported news in a way that military officials wished. The *Stars and Stripes* had more articles on deployment effects demonstrating that the military does not support struggling families (five articles) than the *Military Times* did (three articles). Further, the *Stars and Stripes* had more sexual assault articles on failures in the military justice system (five) than the *Military Times* (two). Secondly, interviews with editors and reporters at these newspapers demonstrated that ownership may not be the reason for differences in framing style (at least directly) as much as perceptions about mission and audience and other extra-media factors.

Final Conclusions

This study has broken new ground in military news framing research by exploring not only how reporters at military-oriented newspapers frame military news, but what factors influence their framing decisions. This research reveals that reporter and editor perceptions of mission and audience appear to impact news framing at the *Military Times* and *Stars and Stripes* more than ownership differences. Further, these newspapers frame the more politically-charged topic of sexual assault to focus on the problem and its causes (failures in the military justice system, command structure and military culture), while they framed the less politically-charged topic of deployment effects to focus on potential
solutions (marital reconciliation, seeking help for PTSD) (Entman, 1993). Supplemented by interview comments, these findings show a deep desire among reporters and editors at military-oriented newspapers to advocate for members of their audience by holding the military system accountable (as in sexual assault articles) and by advocating for their needs (as in deployment effects articles). The way these newspapers go about doing this depends largely on their perception of their audience and mission: while the Stars and Stripes focused largely on marital relationships and active duty military members and their families, the Military Times broadened its focus for a larger audience and focused more on service member health and career issues. The government-owned Stars and Stripes framed articles in closer alignment with government narratives than the privately-owned Military Times, but this research found the causes for this had more to do with reporting style and mission and audience perceptions than as a direct result of ownership. This research is important because it shows how dependent military news frames are on reporter perceptions of mission and audience, and how the unique relationships between military-oriented newspapers and their audiences shape the way these newspapers present military news.
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U.S. Const. amend. I
Appendix A: Sample article and analysis for sexual assault (Military Times)

Two-star accused of sexual assault retires as one-star

By Kevin Lilley, Staff report  3:54 p.m. EDT October 3, 2014

A general fired in March 2013 after allegations he sexually assaulted a female civilian adviser said that while he denies the charges, he "accepts the responsibility for becoming intoxicated that evening" and that "due process was followed."

Then-Maj. Gen. Ralph O. Baker was relieved of his post as head of Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa after the investigation, a copy of which was provided recently to The Washington Post via a request under the Freedom of Information Act and served as the basis of an Oct. 1 report. The Army did not respond by press time to a subsequent Army Times request for the investigation.

The Post, citing military documents, outlined the accuser's account of an alleged July 22, 2012, incident in the back of an SUV headed to Camp Lemmonier, Djibouti, after a private party. She said Baker, who'd been drinking, put his hand between her legs. She said she fought off the alleged advances and reported the incident to the Defense Department inspector general the following January, according to the Post, after feeling too embarrassed to notify any other passengers in the vehicle.

"I own and accept the responsibility for becoming intoxicated that evening," Baker said in an Oct. 2 interview with Army Times, "but to be found culpable with the other allegation without any collaborating evidence or witnesses is what I had a difficult time accepting."

Baker also denied he was a heavy drinker and that he sent out soldiers under his command to purchase alcohol for his personal use — allegations based on statements made to investigators, according to the Post's report. He claimed to have never violated a two-drink limit during his time in command except for the night in question, and that he sent staffers to purchase wine so he could bring it to social gatherings, often hosted by "the wives of my diplomatic colleagues."

He gave the staffers his own money for the alcohol, he said, because his lawyer advised him against using command funds for such purchases.

Baker retired last fall "on my own volition," he said, reverting to a one-star rank because he hadn't spent enough time in grade to retire as a major general.

"While retirement benefits are mandated by federal law, there is a requirement that an individual must have served satisfactorily in rank before receiving those benefits," the Army said in a statement regarding the retirement. "[Army Secretary John] McHugh determined that Baker did not serve satisfactorily in his post, and dropped him in rank prior to retirement."
Baker said he didn't believe he received any special treatment based on his rank, and that investigators "went through all the procedures they're required to. Evidence is presented to the commander and he makes his mind up. It's not a judge and jury."

"I had 31 good years in the military, five combat tours," he said. "I'm proud of my service. ... Although I was very disappointed that my career ended this way, I loved every minute of it."

Analysis Worksheet for Lilley(2014a)

Author: Kevin Lilley

Date of Article: Oct. 3, 2014

Location of Article: Army Times

Brief description: two-star general responds to report he was fired for sex assault allegations

Size of Article: 500 words

Source/Agency Cited: Washington Post article, former MG Ralph Baker, Army statement regarding Baker’s retirement

Key Words: major general, sexual assault, intoxicated, investigation, report

Repetition of facts or terms (if any):

Stereotyped Images (if any):

Presentation Style: expository

Framing techniques used (i.e. personal voice, word pictures, anecdotes, narrative style): quotes from Baker and Army appear to refute Washington Post article’s assertions

No alternative viewpoints besides Post report

Lead type: straight

Themes: responding to Washington Post report

Definition of the Problem: Post article states Baker lost a star and was fired over allegations

Cause of problem (directly stated or inferred): no proof assault occurred besides testimony; Army did not give Army Times investigation report
Judgments on causes/effects of problem (if any): Baker believes punishment for drinking too harsh after long and successful career

Proposed solution to problem (if any): Baker’s attempt to show alt. viewpoint, in which no assault occurred and his career viewed in a positive light despite it ending after allegations

Frames: Washington Post misinterpreted information; reliance on commanders to make calls on whether sexual assault allegations are true or false can result in ruining good military careers
Appendix B: Sample article and analysis on deployment effects

(Stars and Stripes)

Spouse Calls: Not made of steel

By Terri Barnes, Stars and Stripes. Published: September 27, 2013

Dear Spouse Calls,

I am Superwoman. At least, that’s who I was while my husband was deployed. While he was gone, I took care of everything at home for three kids and two pets: Every doctor, dentist, orthodontist and veterinary appointment, every emergency room trip for stitches, earaches and pneumonia.

I drove the carpool and got three kids to three separate schools five days a week. I did the nagging about homework and chores, read all the bedtime stories. I gave all the lectures, hugs and kisses, dried all the tears. I made dinner most nights. Sometimes we ate mac and cheese, but remarkably, no one starved.

I took the heat for saying “No” when our 15-year-old wanted to go to a rock concert. I ran interference when our 12-year-old was snubbed by mean girls at school. I made costumes for school plays and Halloween, planned birthday parties and baked cakes. I took kids to skate parks, to the mall, to the library, to Disneyland. I put up the Christmas tree, did all the shopping and mailed all the cards. I took down the Christmas tree.

I taught Bible study and hosted neighborhood coffees for moms and preschoolers. I cooked meals for families on base when they had babies, or surgery or worse. I survived a computer crash. And that’s the short list.

Now my husband is safe at home, and for that I am truly thankful. What little he says tells me this deployment was more dangerous than I imagined. So it’s hard to admit that living with him for the past few weeks has been more difficult than living without him for seven months.

I thought I was doing my part while he was gone, but I was wrong. Apparently, I did not pay enough attention to car maintenance, and the yard is a mess. The bathrooms need cleaning, and the shirt my husband really wanted to wear today has not been washed. What I planned for dinner is not what he wanted. Our children are disrespectful, because I’ve been letting them get away with murder. To top it all off, my driving is unsafe, and I can’t choose an appropriate parking place to save my life.

My husband speaks pleasantly to other people, and I wonder why he has nothing good to say when he is at home with us. He’s been deployed before, but it was not like this. What is happening to us?
Dear Spouse,

You are not superwoman. You are me. This is the letter I never wrote but could have.

This was my life when my husband returned from his third combat deployment. While exercising my super powers at home, I didn’t think about how a combat zone would change my husband.

When he came home he felt left out of the family loop, so he nitpicked. He wasn’t ready to talk about his experiences, but he wanted me to recognize his mental and emotional exhaustion. I thought he was ignoring me. He needed my patience without having to ask for it. Instead, I saw his behavior as a problem, not a need to be met or understood.

About six weeks after he came home, my husband saw a civilian specialist for a suspected heart condition. After telling him the tests were clear, the doctor asked, “Have you been in a war zone recently?” Of course, the answer was yes, and the doctor said, “There’s your answer.”

Those simple words were a turning point, an acknowledgment that the end of deployment was only the beginning of readjustment. It was permission to take the process seriously, to ask for help, for time.

Permission not to be the man and woman of steel.

We met the enemy, and it was not us. The enemy was the fallout of war. That knowledge empowered us. We could forgive and move forward, stronger and wiser.

I still wish I had been kinder, more aware. I wish I had accepted my husband’s silence when that was all he could give. I wish I had explained more to our children. After eight years and another deployment, I’m still learning. This is still a process, and I’m still not Superwoman.

Analysis Worksheet for Barnes (2013)

Author: Terri Barnes

Date of Article: Sept. 27, 2013

Location of Article: Stars and Stripes

Brief description: In Spouse Calls column, Barnes answers spouse letter complaining about husband who criticizes her after a deployment: answer is to be more understanding of deployed spouse

Size of Article: 700 words
Source/Agency Cited: letter from reader (military spouse)

Key Words: Superwoman, deployment, readjustment

Repetition of facts or terms (if any):

Stereotyped Images (if any):

Presentation Style: column, Q and A

Framing techniques used (i.e. personal voice, word pictures, anecdotes, narrative style): personal voice, anecdotes

Lead type: anecdotal (from reader)

Themes: spouse readjusting to husband’s return after deployment experiencing marital issues, expectation management

Definition of the Problem: spouse feels unappreciated, belittled by husband after holding home together during deployment

Cause of problem (directly stated or inferred): returning husband needs time to readjust with patience after being in warzone (stated by Barnes in response)

Judgments on causes/effects of problem (if any): spouse at home needs to exercise patience with service member returning home, allow for recovery and forgive wrongs

Proposed solution to problem (if any): spouse at home should focus on service member’s point of view, be patient and use kindness to address issues

Frames: spouses are not alone in dealing with critical husband (service member spouse) following deployment; spouses need to allow time to adjust to married life again following deployment; returning service members need time to recover from deployment; spouses at home should adjust expectations to offer more patience in dealing with these problems
Appendix C: Interview questions (*Stars and Stripes* editor)

How long have you been employed for this news organization? Do you have any prior military service? What is your job title? What do you spend most of your time doing day to day?

How do you think about your audience?

How do you strive to maintain editorial independence from the military/government?

How do you view public relations information from military/government sources? How often do you use this in articles?

How do you view other military-oriented publications?

How would you describe the *Stars and Stripes*’ organizational structure? How might this influence your editing?

How do you determine whether information about this event (sexual assault/ deployment effects) is newsworthy? What criteria do you use?

How do you feel your news organization relates to the military?

How would you describe the management style at your news organization? How do you think this might influence news production?

How does the ownership of the *Stars and Stripes* impact how news stories are framed?

Do you receive many government directives in general and what do they ask you to do?

How do certain rules imposed on the *Stars and Stripes* as part of the Defense Media Activity impact framing? (DOD directive 5122.11 –can’t report on classified info that hinders national security or jeopardizes military forces, but can print from a competitor)

How do you balance the inability to use the FOIA to access information denied to government agencies with this newspaper’s editorial independence?
Appendix D: Interview questions (Stars and Stripes reporter)

How long have you been employed by the Stars and Stripes? Do you have any prior military service? Job title? Beat?

How do you think about your audience? Specifically when you are writing stories on sexual assault in the military/effects of deployments on military families?

What is the mission of the Stars and Stripes? How does this impact your writing?

How do you view public relations information from military/government sources?

How do you think your sources view you?

How do you view other military-oriented publications?

How do you view civilian newspapers near military installations that report on the same events?

What is your editorial structure like? How does this influence your reporting?

How do you determine whether information about this event (sexual assault/deployment effects) is newsworthy? What criteria do you use?

How do you determine source trustworthiness? (what to use from a given source, such as government/military?)

How do you feel your news organization relates to the military?

When writing about sensitive or controversial issues including sexual assault, are there additional considerations that influence the way you write the story?

How would you describe the management style at your news organization? How do you think this influences news framing?