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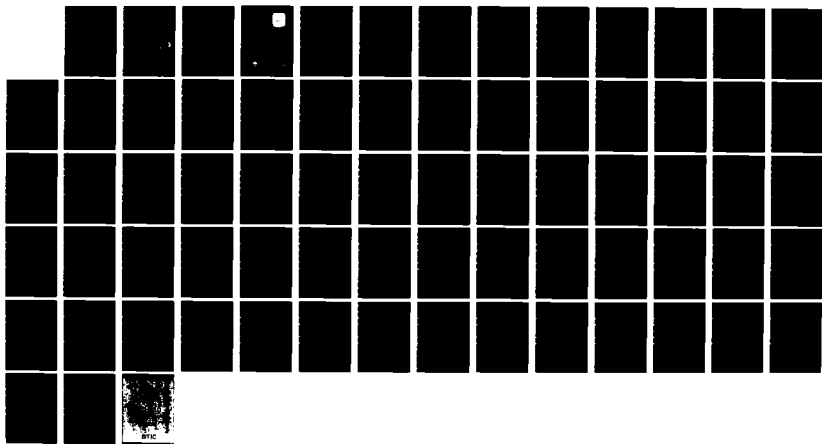
PUBLIC AFFAIRS TRAINING FOR THE ARMY'S OFFICER CORPS:
NEED OR NEGLECT?(U) ARMY WAR COLL CARLISLE BARRACKS PA
C A HENNIES 06 JUN 83

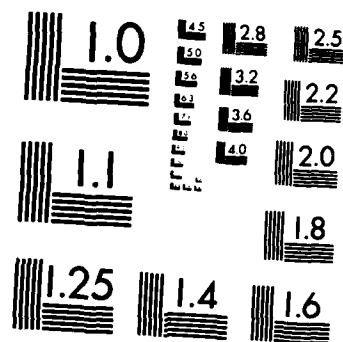
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Author William Rivers, in his book The Adversaries has written that in theory, government would carry on its actions while a free and independent press would report, comment on and investigate those actions. This he says, is quite laudable but in practice often difficult to live with. To the Army officer corps, it represents an off perceived suspicious, negative press reporting and commenting on only the bad news. This study was an effort to capture (cont'd)

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Army War College student officers' perceptions concerning the news media and what can be done to better our performance with them. The central hypothesis was that the Army's future leadership would perceive a problem and therefore a need for specialized media training for lieutenant colonels and colonels assigned to or occupying positions having high potential for media exposure. The total sample was tested by an attitude response survey (72 percent return). Two subsets were analyzed--those who professed to have media experience and those who stated they had none. The data was subjectively and objectively analyzed. The central hypothesis was supported. Opened ended comments revealed a need for media training and education for the Army's officer corps. Conclusions of this study are as follows:

- o There is a serious problem with self-confidence among many of our senior officers when dealing with the news media that many feel can be overcome with training.

- o Distrust of the news media is a way of life among senior officers and will probably never change.

- o There is unanimous opinion that the officer corps should receive training and education in press related subjects, and that it should be started early in an officer's career (captain level). It should be mandatory at least at the outset.

It is recommended a similar survey be conducted by War College students in a group effort using a much larger sample among the Army's officer corps and that a separate study be conducted among officers within US Army Recruiting Command.

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STUDY PROJECT

PUBLIC AFFAIRS TRAINING FOR THE ARMY'S OFFICER CORPS: NEED OR NEGLECT?

BY

CLYDE A. HENNIES
LIEUTENANT COLONEL(P), ARMOR

6 JUNE 1983



US ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS TRAINING FOR THE ARMY'S OFFICER CORPS: NEED OR NEGLECT?

ABSTRACT

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CORPS LEVEL ORGANIZATIONS
OFFICER PERSONNEL

FREE AND INDEPENDENT PRESS
USE PRESSING(FORMING)

OFFICER CORPS
USE CORPS LEVEL ORGANIZATIONS
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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM

PUBLIC AFFAIRS TRAINING FOR THE ARMY'S OFFICER CORPS:
NEED OR NEGLECT?

INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

Lieutenant Colonel(P) Clyde A. Hennies
Armor

US Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013
6 June 1983

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Clyde A. Hennies, LTC(P), AR

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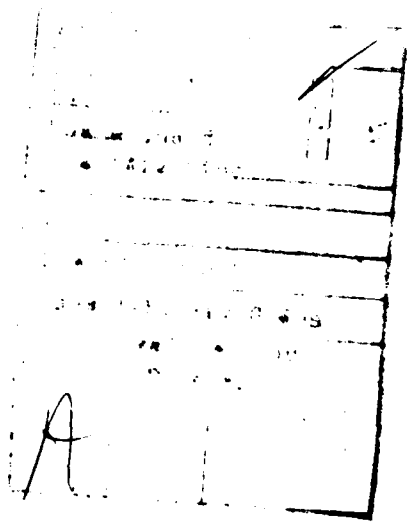
Author William Rivers, in his book The Adversaries has written that in theory, government would carry on its actions while a free and independent press would report, comment on and investigate those actions. This he says, is quite laudable but in practice often difficult to live with. To the Army officer corps, it represents an off perceived suspicious, negative press reporting and commenting on only the bad news. This study was an effort to capture Army War College student officers' perceptions concerning the news media and what can be done to better our performance with them. The central hypothesis was that the Army's future leadership would perceive a problem and therefore a need for specialized media training for lieutenant colonels and colonels assigned to or occupying positions having high potential for media exposure. The total sample was tested by an attitude response survey (72 percent return). Two subsets were analyzed--those who professed to have media experience and those who stated they had none. The data was subjectively and objectively analyzed. The central hypothesis was supported. Opened ended comments revealed a need for media training and education for the Army's officer corps. Conclusions of this study are as follows:

- o There is a serious problem with self-confidence among many of our senior officers when dealing with the news media that many feel can be overcome with training.
- o Distrust of the news media is a way of life among senior officers and will probably never change.
- o There is unanimous opinion that the officer corps should receive training and education in press related subjects, and that it should be started early in an officer's career (captain level). It should be mandatory at least at the outset.

It is recommended a similar survey be conducted by War College students in a group effort using a much larger sample among the Army's officer corps and that a separate study be conducted among officers within US Army Recruiting Command.

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PROLOGUE

The respondents of this study represent a segment of the Army's officer corps who are about to embark on the "major contribution phase" of their careers. They have reached and completed the pinnacle of the Army's military education system--the Army War College. They were the platoon leaders, company commanders and battalion staff officers who fought in and planned combat operations in Vietnam from 1963-1973. Their collective experience in a variety of areas both in and out of combat is impressive and they have strong opinions. They are a segment of the officer corps that by and large holds the news media in great disdain for what is considered a deliberate effort to undermine public support for the war effort in Vietnam. It is the purpose of this study to capture their perceptions concerning the news media and what we can do to better our performance with them.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

In his book, The Adversaries, William Rivers offers the following commentary on historical press-government relationships: ". . . in theory, America's leaders have wanted a free and independent press as a check upon government; in practice they want no such thing." This theory that "government would carry on its actions; a free and independent press would report, comment on and investigate those actions" is, according to Rivers quite laudable, but in practice often difficult to live with. He describes the historical relationship between government and press as "the most savage adversaries imaginable, and at other times . . . such sweethearts that much of the press has been incorporated into machinery of power."¹

Although River's comments apply to the greater government/press relationships, a strong case could be argued that they would apply as well to the present military/press relationship.

Most present day senior military officers would probably describe the existing relationship between the military and the press as emanating from what is generally regarded as poor press performance in covering the Vietnam War. This is especially applicable during and subsequent to the Tet 1968 campaign by North Vietnam.

Peter Braestrup, in the Big Story, gave convincing evidence of negative editorializing by television reporters and the networks during the North Vietnamese siege of Khe Sanh.²

He further offers that serious manpower shortages among the press corps and the wide distance between battlefields during the Tet 68 campaign

forced an overreliance by reporters upon official communiques. Reporters simply selected those communiques "most desirable for their purposes."³

As the war wound down and officers had time to reflect, many felt they were betrayed by the press. Some became vocal over what was perceived as deliberate distortion of facts and undermining of the war effort. In 1973, Naval War College students expressed disdain for the press.

In his annual report, Naval War College President, Rear Admiral Stansfield Turner described the class attitude as:

a dubiety amounting to almost hostility toward the national press . . . that appeared to be reciprocated when a group of reporters spent some time at the war college last year. The officers felt that the national press had presented a heavily biased picture of the war in Southeast Asia, while the press claimed the candor and professionalism of World War II days were lacking in the military officers the reporters encountered in Vietnam.⁴

This attitude appeared to be shared by members of the US Army War College Class of 1974. Discussions which ensued after a formal presentation by a representative of a major broadcasting network were not only generally critical of the press and its representatives, but

indicated that many of these officers, destined for senior military positions were either hostile to the press or unappreciative of the constitutional role of the media.⁵

Drew Middleton, of the New York Times, describes in a 1982 article the present generation of senior leaders ranging in rank from lieutenant colonel to major general, as still bitter over the way the war was fought, reported, and directed.⁶ He further commented that

there is the abiding conviction among officers who served in Vietnam that the press tended to exaggerate every setback in the field, every instance of troops getting out of hand, and every alleged atrocity.

Members of the press are quick to defend their performance during the Vietnam War. Many sensed an unwillingness on the part of military officials to be forthright and credible on reporting the conduct and progress of the war. For example, early in the war, conflicts among military officials on the ability of the South Vietnamese Army to fight and win the war was reported by the press, and subsequently led to a rift between high-ranking military officials and overseas correspondents.

According to Braestrup, the daily Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) press conferences were laughingly labeled the "Five O'Clock Follies" by the press corps and described as "an Orwellian grope through the day's events as seen by the mission."⁸

One correspondent, David Halberstam charged that American authorities in Vietnam consistently misled reporters and investigated their news sources.⁹ This led to an unsuccessful government attempt to have him recalled by the New York Times.

General Westmoreland had his own credibility problems with the press. During the actual attack of the US Embassy in Saigon, conflicting reports confused and angered reporters. Upon hearing General Westmoreland's account of this particular action and comparing it with on-the-scene accounts, one prominent reporter commented that

considering the record over the years . . . we had little faith in what General Westmoreland stated . . . often in the field we had reason to be extremely careful in accepting the General's assessments of the course of a particular battle.¹⁰

No doubt the convincing arguments presented by both sides will be debated and assessed for years to come, but what is more important, as well as disturbing, is that there is an impasse developing between two leading institutions of our nation--an impasse founded on mutual distrust and a

somewhat unwillingness to embark on a new course predicated on mutual understanding of each other's social responsibilities.

Middleton describes the dilemma:

The military are doing less well in sorting out their feud with the press. The press, for its part, is doing no better in arriving at a better understanding of the military. A public relations officer can introduce a reporter to the commanding officer of a corps, division, brigade or battalion; he is unlikely to change the officer's attitude, especially if the man feels he was 'burned' by the press in Vietnam.¹¹

There is then, an undeniable logic in the military taking the initiative to improve their image and relationship with press. Defense programs depend on support of the public to provide the necessary resources to achieve military objectives. More important is the absolute necessity to sustain popular support of the people of our armed forces. Recognition of the role that the press plays in ultimate successes or failures is a must. The bridge between the public's "right to know" as insisted by the press and the public's "need to know" often substituted by the government is fragile and its frequent collapse is probably a primary cause for modern day military/press adversary relationships.

During the academic year 1982-83, several representatives of major media organizations visited and lectured at the US Army War College. During the question-and-answer period, it became rapidly apparent that there has been very little attitude change; the wounds remain unhealed on both sides. Although the dialogue between media representatives and members of the Class of 1983 was frank and open, it was quite clear that a general distrust between the military's future high-level leadership and the media is perhaps greater than ever. Even more profound were comments during seminar discussions which amplified distrustful attitudes of many of the officers toward the press. Of particular concern to officers was the

perceived "hatchet job" by CBS on General Westmoreland and that network's unwillingness to retract allegations in the story.¹² Some students expressed strong feelings that you don't stand a chance on television due to the editorial license of the networks and their ability to present the worst case possible. Ironically, some felt ill-prepared to deal with media.

A subsequent informal survey of officers at the US Army War College confirmed that many felt inadequately prepared to deal with the press. With this added to the overwhelming distrust expressed by all surveyed, one can recognize the anatomy of a communication failure.

It is from this background that the problem for this study is derived.

THE PROBLEM

Focusing on the perception of being "inadequately prepared," it was discovered that the Army presently has no official formalized media training program (except for Public Affairs Officer Specialty Code 46) for officers, lieutenant colonel and colonel, preparing to occupy positions of greater responsibility which have potential for frequent contact with and exposure to the media. The perceived need expressed by War College students for this type of training is on solid ground.

Barry Zorthian, former Director of Joint US Public Affairs Office, Saigon, in a lecture presented at the Naval War College, stated that the essential role of the free press in an open society is still misunderstood by many government officials--civilian and military; that recognition of this role is a first step to effective dialogue between the military and the press. He goes on to say that many able commanders at the general officer level in Vietnam were "absolute disasters in communicating with

press," while "the skillful ones were effective either by virtue of instinct or aptitude and not because they had been prepared for the task."

He prescribed the following:

The military must undertake training in this area if it is to accomplish its mission in the years ahead. Public information has become such a vital element in national military strategy that it is important for the commander to recognize and learn the customs and habits of the press and the media as a whole. Just as you expect the media to be knowledgeable about military affairs, even if they are not professionals, so you, in communicating, have to become knowledgeable¹³ about the media, even if you are not a professional.

In a 1974 individual research project at the Army War College, Lieutenant Colonel Donald Mahlberg cited several major problems he observed in his generation of officers. First, that their considerable display of vocal hostility toward the mass communications media pointed to a failure to properly perceive one of media's important roles in a democratic society; that of being an adversary to government. Secondly, they were unprepared to handle this important matter. "One of the most neglected areas in military education," he observed, "is the development in the professional officer of an understanding of the role of mass communications." He concluded that:

The officer who understands the press can best communicate with it. The better he can communicate, the more accurate will be the judgment and comment. . . . The current generation of military officer must change his surface rejection of media and search for an acceptable meeting ground. The next generation of officers should be trained at all levels of military education in the areas of press history, journalistic concepts and media operations so that he can effectively communicate with press. . . . Alienation from the press will be self-defeating in the end since it will tend to antagonize the press corps and imbue it with an unconscious anti-military frame of mind. . . .¹⁴

In a 1972 Army War College study, Army Tasks for the Seventies, Colonel Donald F. Bletz stated that "(military) societal relations must be

based on a solid understanding of the role of press and other media."¹⁵ Bletz further commented in a subsequent interview that as a result of his discussions with senior officers of all services, as well as academicians, throughout the country during data collection, he became convinced that the average military officer was lacking in understanding and appreciation for the media and that education was needed.¹⁶

In a 1982 Army War College study concerning trust and confidence and their relationship to censorship between commanders and the media in war-time, the authors observed that even with the imposition of censorship, the overall attitude of senior Army officers towards the media appeared to be extremely negative. The study predicted that the negative press experiences of Vietnam among those presently in the grade of lieutenant colonel and colonel have developed a hardening of attitudes towards the press that if allowed to continue will only be aggravated. The authors concluded that:

The top leadership of one of our society's basic institutions--the Army--is very distrustful of another basic institution--the media. The danger herein is that both institutions are charged with defending the society and if the Army and the media threaten each other, then it is the country that suffers. . . . A sense of mutual trust and confidence between the military and the media must be reformed less we relive the painful experiences of Vietnam.¹⁷

The background information shows abundant evidence that although an adversary relationship between the press and the military is a natural phenomena peculiar to a democratic society, the relationship is deteriorating to a point that it must be turned around or society suffers. Since this study is concerned mainly with military/press relationships and it is recognized that we have little direct control over the press side of this relationship, the focus is therefore on a pure military initiative to turn

things around for the better. The call for educating our officer corps is a start. Which leads to the following hypothesis.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Since students attending the Army War College are in fact the future high-level leadership of the Army, it is assumed that they would have definite opinions on this subject. It is therefore thought that Army students at the Army War College would perceive a need for specialized training for lieutenant colonels and colonels assigned to or occupying positions have high potential for media exposure. The objectives of this study were to survey the Army officers in the Army War College Class of 1983 to determine:

- o Their exposure to and experience with the media.
- o Their perceived level of confidence in the military's ability to deal with media.
- o Their perceived level of self-confidence with respect to the media.
- o Their perceived need for specialized training and education for senior officers O5 and O6 anticipating an assignment having high potential for media exposure, and/or for the officer corps.

METHODOLOGY

This study was considered a pilot study since a survey of the military literature revealed it was the first of its type to deal with media training and education for the Army officer corps--that is to question officers on the need. Only the Army officers (178 lieutenant colonels and colonels)

were tested. These officers were tested by written survey with a 72 percent response. An additional 7 percent of the surveys were received too late to be included in the automated tabulations. Respondents were also provided the opportunity to expand their views through written comments.

CHAPTER I

ENDNOTES

1. William Rivers, THE ADVERSARIES: Politics and Press (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), pp. 8-9.
2. Peter Braestrup, The Big Story (Vol. 1), (Boulder, Colo.: Water-view Press, 1977), pp. 337-43.
3. Ibid., p. 334.
4. "Report of the President Annual Report 1973," Naval War College Review, September-October, 1973, p. 10.
5. Lieutenant Colonel Donald S. Mahlberg, The Military and the Media: A Problem of Perception (Individual Research Report, US Army War College, 1974), p. 3.
6. Drew Middleton, "Vietnam and the Military Mind," The New York Times Magazine, January 10, 1982, p. 34.
7. Ibid., p. 37.
8. Braestrup, op. cit., p. 345.
9. Gerald Gross, The Responsibility of the Press, (New York: Fleet Publishing Corp., 1966), p. 223.
10. Braestrup, op. cit., p. 96. (Peter Arnett on General Westmoreland's account of the Viet Cong sapper attack on the US Embassy in Saigon on January 30, 1968.)
11. Middleton, op. cit., last page of article.
12. "CBS Reports Vietnam Deception," Facts on File, Vol. 42, No. 2150. January 29, 1982. p. 57.
13. Barry Zorthian, "The Role of the Communications Media in a Democratic Society," Naval War College Review, February, 1972, p. 4.
14. Mahlberg, op. cit., pp. 45-49.
15. United States Army War College Study, Army Tasks for the Seventies, June, 1972, p. 100.
16. Mahlberg, op. cit., p. 5.

17. Lieutenant Colonel Scott W. Engle and Lieutenant Colonel Thomas C. Taylor, Trust and Confidence in Wartime between Commanders and the Media: Are They Related to Field Press Censorship? (United States Army War College Study, 1982), pp. 19-20.

CHAPTER II

THE SURVEY

QUESTIONNAIRE

This chapter consists of the survey statements or questions and their tabulated responses. Each item consists of the actual survey statement of question and is underscored by the number () of respondents who selected a particular answer and the relative percentage of the sample population. Some items have a lesser number of respondents due to individual error such as failure to record an answer and double recording in a single response item. Comments are provided following many statements or questions to add emphasis or clarify points. It is recognized that neither the size of this survey nor the Army officers of the Army War College Class of 1983 are necessarily representative of the entire Army officer corps. However, the thrust of this study is towards the opinions of present senior and future high-level leaders of the Army and it is felt that the War College population represents an adequate sample size for a pilot study of this nature. For example, 94 percent of the respondents have completed battalion command. Over fifty percent have advanced degrees. Fifty-four percent are colonels or are on a promotion list to colonel. The remaining 44 percent will be in promotable status to colonel within 2-3 years. Fifty-eight percent have indicated firsthand experience with the news media in the civilian domain or in a military environment, both in and out of combat.

GENERAL SURVEY RESULTS AND COMMENTS

PART I

BACKGROUND DATA

QUESTIONS 1-9

1. What is your rank? (N=129)

LTC	LTC(P)	COL
(60) 46.5%	(31) 24.0%	(38) 29.5%

2. In what area is your career branch? (N=129)

Combat Arms	Combat Support	Combat Service Support
(81) 62.8%	(16) 12.4%	(32) 24.8%

3. How many years of formal education do you have? (N=129)

Less than 16	More than 16 but less than 18	More than 18
(3) 2.3%	(61) 47.3%	(65) 50.4%

4. Months of combat experience? (N=129)

Less than 6 months	6-12 months	13-24 months	25-36 months	More than 36 months
(9) 7.0%	(35) 27.1%	(69) 53.5%	(16) 12.4%	

Comment: Slightly more than half had two tours in Vietnam.

5. Have you commanded in combat? (N=128)

Yes	No
(66) 51.2%	(62) 48.8%

6. Months you have commanded a battalion or equivalent? (N=129)

18 months or less	19-24 months	25-30 months	31-36 months	I have not commanded a battalion or equivalent.
(32) 24.8%	(26) 20.2%	(26) 20.2%	(24) 18.6%	(21) 16.3%

7. Have you had any formal education in public relations, journalism or mass communications? (N=129)

No	Some Under-graduate	Undergraduate Degree	Some Graduate	Graduate Degree
(103) 79.8%	(18) 14.0%	(3) 2.3%	(2) 1.6%	(3) 2.3%

Comment: Almost 80 percent of respondents lack formal education in above subject areas.

8. Have you had any practical experience with the news media? (N=129)

Yes (please continue question 9)	No (go to Part II)
(75) 58.1%	(54) 41.9%

9. My experience with news media was in (mark those applicable): (N=75)

Civilian Domain	Military--Noncombat	Military--Combat
(25)	(50)	(34)

Comment: Percentages are not applicable in this question. Numbers in () indicate that some respondents have had experience in more than one of the listed areas.

PART II

TRUST, CONFIDENCE

	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
10. Generally speaking, the military receives good press. (N=129)	(13) 10.1%	(69) 53.5%	(14) 10.9%	(33) 25.6%	----

Comment: Approximately 63 percent of the respondents disagreed that the military receives good press.

11. News media coverages, good or bad, rests with the ability of our military leaders to explain our case. (N=129)	(7) 5.4%	(40) 31.0%	(21) 16.3%	(51) 39.5%	(10) 7.8%
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Comment: Although a relatively even distribution exists for this statement, respondents leaned more toward agreement.

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not</u> <u>Sure</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>
12. Generally speaking, the military makes a good account of itself to the news media. (N=128)	(10) 7.8%	(65) 50.4%	(25) 19.4%	(27) 20.9%	(1) .8%
13. Most officers I know trust the news media. (N=129)	(46) 35.7%	(71) 55.0%	(6) 4.7%	(5) 3.9%	(1) .8%

Comment: Over ninety percent of respondents indicated that most officers they know distrust the media.

14. Based upon my experience, I would advise junior officers that a <u>bad</u> encounter with the news media is a potential career risk. (N=129)	(4) 3.1%	(33) 25.6%	(29) 22.5%	(53) 41.1%	(10) 7.8%
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Comment: Almost half of the respondents agreed with this statement.

15. <u>All</u> officers O5 and higher should be able to capably and confidently interact with reports when required. (N=129)	-----	(5) 3.9%	(4) 3.1%	(76) 58.9%	(44) 34.1%
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Comment: Ninety-three percent of respondents agreed with the statement. This statement received one of the highest levels of agreement in the study.

	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
16. <u>At this stage</u> in my career, I would welcome the opportunity for training designed to improve my skills in working with news reporters. (N=129)	(2) 1.6%	(4) 3.1%	(7) 5.4%	(77) 59.7%	(39) 30.2%

Comment: Approximately 90 percent of respondents sensed a need to improve media skills.

17. Military officers should be offered public affairs training at some point(s) during their careers. (N=129)	----	(3) 2.3%	(10) 7.8%	(67) 51.9%	(49) 38.0%
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Comment: Another high agreement item, with 90 percent of respondents indicating support.

18. This training should be offered primarily to those officers (public affairs types excluded) whose assignments may put them in contact with the news media. (N=127)	(1) .8%	(28) 21.7%	(4) 3.1%	(73) 56.6%	(21) 16.3%
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Comment: Although the preponderance of respondents (72.9 percent) agreed with this statement, the percentage drop from similar statements 25-27 indicates that there might be a problem with the condition "primarily" in this statement.

19. This training should be mandatory for officers slated for command. (N=128)	(1) .8%	(21) 16.3%	(15) 11.6%	(56) 43.4%	(35) 27.1%
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Comment: This statement also had a condition attached--that of "command." Although most respondents (70.5 percent) indicated agreement, a percentage drop similar to that in statement 18 indicates a need for further examination.

	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
20. I would feel more comfortable in a high visibility position if I had some training relating to effective military/media communication. (N=129)	(1) .8%	(4) 3.1%	(12) 9.3%	(73) 56.6%	(39) 30.2%

Comment: This item also drew strong agreement of 86.8 percent.

21. Much of the Army's bad publicity can be attributed directly to someone's inability to adequately explain the situation to the news media. (N=128)	(10) 7.8%	(34) 26.4%	(31) 24.0%	(39) 30.2%	(14) 10.9%
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Comment: The response distribution for this item leans towards the agreement side.

22. If I had a choice, I would rather inform the press on a major issue through an official news release rather than grant an interview. (N=129)	(3) 2.3%	(21) 16.3%	(20) 15.5%	(75) 58.1%	(10) 7.8%
--	----------	------------	------------	------------	-----------

Comment: Almost 66 percent of the respondents indicated they would rather avoid an interview with a member of the press.

23. Prior to granting an interview, I would insist that the reporter agree to provide me an unedited copy of the complete interview. (N=129)	(5) 3.9%	(22) 17.1%	(33) 25.6%	(46) 35.7%	(23) 17.8%
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Comment: Over half of the respondents indicate they would demand a difficult condition on a member of the press before granting an interview.

PART III

PERCEPTIONS ON POSSIBLE TRAINING OPTIONS

24. If this course were offered to officers going into command, for what level should it be offered? (N=126)

Battalion	Brigade	Both
(7) 5.4%	(32) 24.8%	(87) 67.4%

Comment: A high percentage of respondents (67.4 percent) recommended that media training be provided to both battalion and brigade command selectees.

25. If this training were integrated into the existing military education system, at what level should it be introduced? (N=126)

CGSC or equivalent	Army War College
(96) 74.4%	(30) 23.3%

Comment: Respondents indicate that earlier is better.

26. If this training was determined to be necessary at the earliest stages of a military career and was integrated into the existing military education system, at what level should it be introduced? (N=127)

Pre-commis- sioning	Basic Officer Training	Advanced Course	CGSC	Army War College
(3) 2.3%	(18) 14.0%	(64) 49.6%	(40) 31.0%	(2) 1.6%

Comment: Responses to this statement confirm that "earlier is better."

27. Should training proposal in Question 26 be offered in a progressive fashion (segments at each level)? (N=127)

Yes	No
(93) 72.1%	(34) 26.4%

Comment: Progressive training throughout an officers career is apparently better.

28. Should training regardless of introductory level be mandatory, voluntary or a combination thereof? (N=128)

Mandatory at Introductory Level

Mandatory at Introductory Level and
Voluntary at Subsequent Levels

(10) 7.8%

(34) 26.4%

Mandatory Throughout

Voluntary Throughout

(71) 55.0%

(13) 10.1%

Comment: "Mandatory throughout" is the majority choice followed by "Mandatory at Introductory level and Voluntary at Subsequent levels." The key point is Mandatory first.

For Questions 29-33, rank order the following areas of media training you believe would best serve both--the Army's interests and your professional needs. Use (1), (2), (3), (4) and (5) in margin to prioritize choices and transcribe results to the answer sheet. Your first choice should be placed in 29, second in 30, third in 31, fourth in 32, and last in 33. (N=128)

Result in group order of preference.

1. Public Speaking Training
2. Live Interview Practical Exercises
3. News Media Situational Training
4. TV Press Conference Exercises
5. Familiarization with Public Affairs Officer Duties and Responsibilities

34. Is your next job likely to put you in touch with the news media? (N=127)

Yes

No

(53) 41.1%

(74) 57.4%

35. Did you take the television workshop offered by the Army War College Public Affairs Officer? (N=129)

Yes (go to Question 37)

No (go to Question 36)

(28) 21.7%

(101) 78.3%

Comment: Seventy-eight percent declined to take the Television workshop offered by the Army War College Public Affairs Officer.

36. Do you wish you had taken it? (N=101)

Yes

No

Not Sure

(38) 29.5%

(35) 27.1%

(28) 22.5%

Comment: Thirty percent of those who declined to take the above course indicated regret for not doing do.

37. Are you taking the course "Military Officer and the Media" offered during the advanced courses phase? (N=122)

Yes

No

(6) 4.7%

(123) 95.3%

Comment: Ninety-five percent of respondents chose not to enroll in this elective offered during the War College advanced course phase.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

GENERAL

Data extracted from optical scan sheets were processed by the Automated Data Processing Support Division at the US Army College. Initially, six subgroups of respondents were selected for examination from results of basic data in Part I of the survey questionnaire. Subgroups included:

1. Combat arms officers--(those in Infantry, Armor and Artillery branches.)
2. Combat Support officers--(Air Defense, Combat Engineers, etc.)
3. Combat Service Support officers--(Quartermaster, Ordnance, etc.)
4. Officers who regardless of branch or specialty commanded units in combat.
5. Officers claiming to have news media experience--(civilian or military.)
6. Officers claiming to have no news media experience.

Initial examination of the data revealed no significant differences between responses of subgroups 1-4. There were however significant differences between categories 5 and 6. These two variables--media experience and no media experience were therefore selected for examination. In addition, one of the objectives of this study was to determine officers exposure to and experience with the news media.

Commensurate with the objectives of this study and for purposes of evaluation, statements in Part II and questions in Part III of the questionnaire were rearranged in specific subject clusters and titled as follows:

PART II OF QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Perceptions of trust and confidence in the news media.
Statements 10, 13, 22, 23
2. Perceptions of confidence in self and military with respect to the news media.
Statements 12, 14, 20, 22
3. Perceptions on desire and need for training and education.
Statements 16, 17, 18, 19
4. Perceptions on office corps media responsibilities.
Statements 11, 15, 21

PART III OF QUESTIONNAIRE

5. Perceptions on possible training and education options.
Questions 24-33
6. Response to news media training offered at the Army War College.
Questions 34-37

The format for statements 10-23 covering the first four subject areas above is based on a Likert-type attitude scale providing a five-point range of answers for each question from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The remaining survey questions are aimed at extracting specific information concerning training and education options, and responsiveness on the part of Army officers to voluntary/elective courses offered at the Army War College through the Public Affairs Officer.

ANALYSIS

Section I

Perceptions of Trust and Confidence in the Ability of the News Media to Report Military Events.

The four statements for analysis in this area are:

- No. 10: Generally speaking, the military receives good press.
- No. 13: Most officers I know trust the media.
- No. 22: If I had the choice, I would rather inform the press on a major issue through an official news release rather than grant an interview.
- No. 23: Prior to granting an interview, I would insist that the reporter agree to provide me an unedited copy of the completed interview.

Analysis of the responses to these statements among both groups strongly suggest a general distrust for and lack of confidence in the ability of the news media to report military events. The degrees of agreement/disagreement between the two groups on each of the four statements were not considered significant, but the differences suggest that those with news media experience tend to have a more positive outlook of the news media with respect to trust and confidence than their non-experienced counterparts. This might be also a function of individual perceptions of self-confidence which will be discussed in the next section. The analysis of results by individual statement follows.

10. Generally speaking, the military receives good press.

		<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>
	<u>N</u>					
All officers	129	10.1%	53.5%	10.9%	25.6%	----
With media experience	75	6.7%	60.0%	6.7%	26.7%	----
No media experience	54	14.8%	44.0%	16.7%	24.1%	----

Those with media experience tended to voice stronger disagreement with this statement, which might suggest that their collective response is based more on personal experiences than of perception. The opposite would probably hold true for the non-experienced group.

13. Most officers I know trust the news media.

		<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
	<u>N</u>					
All officers	129	35.7%	55.0%	4.7%	3.9%	.8%
With media experience	75	33.3%	60.0%	5.3%	1.3%	----
No media experience	54	38.9%	48.1%	3.7%	7.4%	1.9%

It should be emphasized that this statement deals with trust--observed or heard among other officers--and not one's personal distrust. Again, the greatest percentages of disagreement came from those with media experience and while the difference between the two groups was not considered significant, this might suggest that those possessing experience with the media have a better basis from which to detect and recognize problems.

22. If I had the choice, I would rather inform the press on a major issue through an official news release rather than grant an interview.

		<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
	<u>N</u>					
All officers	129	2.3%	16.3%	15.5%	58.1%	7.8%
With media experience	75	1.3%	21.3%	17.3%	49.3%	10.7%
No media experience	54	3.7%	9.3%	13.0%	70.4%	3.7%

This question is also included in the next section since it addressed both confidence in the media and self-confidence. Results of analysis suggest that while confidence is more present among the experienced group, it could also be interpreted that those without media experience not only lack self-confidence and are distrustful of the media, but also are more

apt to overrely on the military public affairs officer and system. Conversely, it could be inferred that those with media experience better understand the limitations of the Public Affairs Officer to singularly influence members of the news media.

23. Prior to granting an interview, I would insist that the reporter agree to provide me an unedited copy of the completed interview.

		<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>
	<u>N</u>					
All officers	129	3.9%	17.1%	25.6%	35.7%	17.8%
With media						
experience	75	5.3%	22.7%	25.3%	32.0%	14.7%
No media						
experience	54	1.9%	9.3%	25.9%	40.7%	22.2%

The response to this statement would seemingly suggest that level of knowledge on the subject would dictate the answer. This appears to be the case as evidenced by the almost identical percentages of "not sures" and the relatively high percentage among both groups that agreed with the statement. Agreement connotes distrust and lack of confidence in the media. The distrust exhibited by the experienced group in this statement is consistent with their response to the previous statement (10).

Section II

Perceptions of Confidence in Self and the Military with Respect to the News Media.

The four statements relevant to examination in this subject area are:

- No. 12: Generally speaking, the military makes a good account of itself to the news media.
- No. 14: Based upon my experience, I would advise junior officers that a bad encounter with the news media is a potential career risk.
- No. 20: I would feel more comfortable in a high visibility position if I had some training relating to effective military/media communication.

No. 22: (Also used in Section I) If I had the choice, I would rather inform the press on a major issue through an official news release rather than grant an interview.

Analysis results from these statements strongly suggest a perceived lack of self-confidence and confidence in the military. While both groups appear to have general consensus on all four statements, they also have differences in levels of agreement on statements 20 and 23 which address both self-confidence and implications for training. Analysis of results on each statement follow:

12. Generally speaking, the military makes a good account of itself to the news media.

		<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
	<u>N</u>					
All officers	129	7.8%	50.4%	19.4%	20.9%	1.6%
With media						
experience	75	6.7%	54.7%	17.3%	20.0%	1.3%
No media						
experience	54	9.4%	45.3%	22.6%	22.6%	----

The majority in both groups disagreed with this statement, but with no significant disagreement differences between them. Although the frequency distribution is rather evenly spread, the relatively high percentage of "not sures" could suggest that some officers are not adequately tuned to make a judgement on the military/media relationship.

14. Based upon my experience, I would advise junior officers that a bad encounter with the news media is a potential career risk.

		<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
	<u>N</u>					
All officers	129	3.1%	25.6%	22.5%	41.1%	7.8%
With media						
experience	75	1.3%	29.3%	20.0%	44.0%	5.3%
No media						
experience	54	5.6%	20.4%	25.9%	37.0%	11.1%

This statement has many implications. Almost half of both groups agreed that the potential to ruin one's career through a bad media encounter is great enough to warrant a warning to junior officers. In light of

the similar frequency distributions, it might be inferred that an attitude such as this fostered by senior officers, could have the effect of breeding and sustaining distrust among junior officers. There is a career risk perceived in dealing with the media. The results from question 22, Section I, also suggest the existence of a risk factor.

20. I would feel more comfortable in a high visibility position if I had some training relating to effective military/media communication.

		<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>
	<u>N</u>					
All officers	129	.8%	3.1%	9.3%	56.6%	30.2%
With media						
experience	75	1.3%	1.3%	9.3%	54.7%	33.3%
No media						
experience	54	----	5.6%	9.3%	59.3%	25.9%

While it is not surprising that the inexperienced group would agree with this statement, it is surprising that unanimity exists between groups. The differences in agreement are significant enough to suggest that even those who profess to have experience with the media would feel more comfortable with additional training/education in military/media communication.

22. If I had the choice, I would rather inform the press on a major issue through an official news release rather than grant an interview.

		<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>
	<u>N</u>					
All officers	129	2.3%	16.3%	15.5%	58.1%	7.8%
With media						
experience	75	1.3%	21.3%	17.3%	49.3%	10.7%
No media						
experience	54	3.7%	9.3%	13.0%	70.4%	3.7%

The level of agreement on this statement suggests a lack of self-confidence among both groups but moreso with the inexperienced group. The surprisingly high percentage of agreement among the experienced officers with respect to their inexperienced counterparts might suggest that experience is not necessarily a factor within certain aspects of the military/

media relationship. Bad encounters with the media, either experienced or witnessed, might also account for this high percentage. One might also infer that there might be an overreliance on the Public Affairs Officer when things get tough.

Section III

Perceptions on Need/Desire for Training and Education.

The four statements selected for analysis on this subject area are:

- No. 16: At this stage in my career, I would welcome the opportunity for training designed to improve my skills in working with news reporters.
- No. 17: Military officers should be offered public affairs training at some point in their careers.
- No. 18: This training should be offered primarily to those officers (public affairs types excluded) whose assignments may put them in contact with the news media.
- No. 19: This training should be mandatory for officers slated for command.

Both groups indicated strong agreement on all of these statements. This is also consistent with a general lack of confidence inferred from their responses to statements in the previous sections. The perceived need/desire to receive training in public affairs subjects is dominant. There were some significant differences among these two groups in statements 17 and 19 which will be discussed.

16. At this stage in my career, I would welcome the opportunity for training designed to improve my skills in working with news reporters.

		<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>
	<u>N</u>					
All officers	129	1.6%	3.1%	5.4%	59.7%	30.2%
With media						
experience	75	2.7%	2.7%	2.7%	60.0%	32.0%
No media						
experience	54	----	3.7	9.3%	59.3%	27.8%

Both groups agree strongly with this statement. The higher percentage of agreement on this statement among those without media experience is probably related closely to their low level of self-confidence since their percentages compare favorably with those in statement 20, Section II (which dealt with the issue of self-confidence). It is the writers opinion that the more experienced group probably indicated a strong welcome for this training because experience has taught them the value of sharpening skills especially at this point in their careers.

17. Military officers should be offered public affairs training at some point(s) during their careers.

		<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
	<u>N</u>					
All officers	129	----	2.3%	7.8%	51.9%	38.0%
With media experience	75	----	1.3%	4.0%	52.0%	42.7%
No media experience	54	----	3.7%	13.0%	51.9%	31.5%

While there is unanimity between the groups on this statement, the difference of agreement is one of the most significant in the study. Those with experience indicated much greater support for providing public affairs training for the officer corps. It seems experience offers a greater awareness of problems and produces a greater sensitivity towards those problems. The key point is that the need is strongly recognized.

18. This training should be offered primarily to those officers (public affairs types excluded) whose assignments may put them in contact with the news media.

		<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
	<u>N</u>					
All officers	127	.8%	21.7%	3.1%	56.6%	16.3%
With media experience	73	----	23.3%	4.1%	53.4%	19.2%
No media experience	54	1.9%	20.4%	1.9%	63.0%	13.0%

Although both groups gave strong support for this statement, its wording drew attention to a specific segment of the officer corps--only those going into jobs with high media visibility potential. Since this segment represented less than the majority, the statement seemed to have a relative effect on both groups as evidenced by the lower percentage of agreement. This rationale reinforces the findings in the previous question which deals with perceived needs for the officer corps.

19. This training should be mandatory for officers slated for command.

		<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
	<u>N</u>					
All officers	128	.8%	16.3%	11.6%	43.4%	27.1%
With media experience	74	----	9.5%	14.9%	43.2%	32.4%
No media experience	54	1.9%	25.9%	7.4%	44.4%	20.4%

This is the first statement in the study that suggests this training be made mandatory for command designees. Both groups agree, but the significant percentage differences indicate that the experienced groups senses a stronger need. Since both groups are represented by former battalion commanders, the difference in opinion can probably be attributed to a greater media sensitivity among the experienced group.

Section IV

Perceptions on the Officer Corps Media Responsibilities

Three statements were used in this area to evaluate perceptions.

- No. 11: News media coverage, good or bad, rests with the ability of our military leaders to explain our case.
- No. 15: All officers O5 and higher should be able to capably and confidently interact with reporters when required.
- No. 21: Much of the Army's bad publicity can be attributed directly to someone's inability to adequately explain the situation to the media.

Perceptions on the above subject were mixed except for statement 15 in which both groups indicated strong agreement. There was however, a significant difference in this level of agreement which will be discussed in greater detail. Although there is consensus on statements 11 and 21, both groups appeared reluctant to focus any blame on the military leadership for bad press or publicity. In contrast, the inexperienced group percentage of disagreement with respect to the experience group was not only greater, but the difference was significant. One might infer that lack of knowledge of and sensitivity towards the media combined with empathy towards the Army's leaders influence the placement of blame on those outside the military.

11. News media coverage, good or bad, rests with the ability of our military leaders to explain our case.

	<u>N</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
All officers	129	5.4%	31.0%	16.3%	39.5%	7.8%
With media experience	75	4.0%	29.3%	18.7%	40.8%	8.0%
No media experience	54	7.4%	33.3%	13.0%	38.9%	7.4%

The distribution of this statement is remarkably even. Although there is a relative majority agreeing with the statement, there is not a clear consensus. It does suggest a reluctance to place responsibility and outcome, good or bad, on the Army's leadership and the begs the question, "who then is responsible?"

15. All officers O5 and higher should be able to capably and confidently interact with reporters when required.

	<u>N</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
All officers	129	----	3.9%	3.1%	58.9%	34.1%
With media experience	75	----	1.3%	2.7%	58.7%	37.3%
No media experience	54	----	7.4%	3.7%	59.3%	29.6%

The overwhelming agreement to the statement expressed by both groups is a strong indicator of the expectations placed upon the officer corps by the respondents. Once again the difference among the groups in level of agreement is significant. The experienced group's stronger feelings on the issue can probably be attributed to past dealings, good or bad, with the news media and the value their experience has placed on the importance of a positive Army and personal image.

21. Much of the Army's bad publicity can be attributed directly to someone's inability to adequately explain the situation to the news media.

		<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
	<u>N</u>					
All officers	128	7.8%	26.4%	24.0%	30.2%	10.9%
With media experience	74	5.4%	21.6%	25.7%	32.4%	14.9%
No media experience	54	11.1%	33.3%	22.2%	27.8%	5.6%

This statement also has a relatively even distribution and is a stronger indicator of the reluctance to place blame internally. It might also suggest that the respondents don't really have strong feelings on this statement. This is especially important if one takes into account the higher percentage of "not sures" in both statements 11 and 21. The response of both groups on question 12 in Section I might also suggest that shortcomings are perceived as more institutional.

Section V

Perceptions on Possible Training Options

Questions 24-33 are used for this section of the analysis. The findings suggest the following:

- o That public affairs training should be offered to officers going in to both battalion and brigade command.

- o That if integrated into the existing military system the training should be offered at the advanced course or command and General Staff college level.
- o That the training should be mandatory at the outset as well as progressive throughout.
- o That the training be oriented more on situational encounters.

24. If this course were offered to officers going into command, for what level should it be offered?

	<u>All Officers</u> N=126	<u>With Media Experience</u> N=72	<u>No Media Experience</u> N=54
Battalion	5.4%	8.3%	1.9%
Brigade	24.8%	13.9%	40.7%
Both	69.7%	77.8%	57.4%

The experienced group perceived a greater need for both battalion and brigade commanders to receive a public affairs course while the inexperience group leaned more towards starting at the brigade command level.

25. If this training were integrated into the existing military education system, at what level should it be introduced?

	<u>All Officers</u> N=126	<u>With Media Experience</u> N=73	<u>No Media Experience</u> N=53
CGSC or equivalent	74.4%	84.9%	64.2%
Army War College	25.6%	15.1%	35.8%

The preponderance of respondents in both groups selected Command and General Staff College as the starting point for public affairs training which suggests that earlier is better.

26. If this training was determined to be necessary at the earliest stages of a military career and was integrated into the existing military education system, at what level should it be introduced?

	<u>All Officers</u> N=127	<u>With Media Experience</u> N=73	<u>No Media Experience</u> N=54
Pre-commissioning	2.3%	2.7%	1.9%
Basic Officer Training	14.0%	16.4%	11.1%
Advanced Course	49.6%	54.8%	44.4%
CGSC	31.0%	24.7%	40.7%
Army War College	3.2%	1.4%	1.9%

When reviewing the entry levels in the existing military education system, the relative majority of both groups selected the advanced course level (Captain). In the writer's opinion, this not only confirms that "earlier is better," but also identifies the most popular entry level.

27. Should training proposal in Question 26 be offered in a progressive fashion (segments at each level)?

	<u>All Officers</u> N=127	<u>With Media Experience</u> N=73	<u>No Media Experience</u> N=54
Yes	72.1%	76.7%	68.5%
No	27.9%	23.3%	31.5%

The percentage of both groups tends to favor continuation of this training throughout an officer's career. The experienced group had higher percentages on these particular choices which is in consonance with their perceived higher need for public affairs training.

28. Should training regardless of introductory level be mandatory, voluntary, or a combination thereof?

	All Officers N=128	With Media Experience N=74	No Media Experience N=54
Mandatory at Introductory Level	7.8%	8.1%	7.4%
Mandatory at Introductory Level and Voluntary at Subsequent Levels	26.4%	23.0%	31.5%
Mandatory Throughout	55.0%	60.8%	48.1%
Voluntary Throughout	10.9%	8.1%	13.0%

Although both groups indicated strong support for mandatory training options, the experienced groups showed much higher support for the "mandatory throughout" option while the inexperienced groups favored initial mandatory with subsequent voluntary. The difference in choices might be attributed to a greater understanding of the the problem by the experienced group.

For Questions 29-33, rank order the following areas of media training you believe would best serve both--the Army's interests and your professional needs. Use (1), (2), (3), (4) and (5) in margin to prioritize choices and transcribe results to the answer sheet. Your first choice should be placed in 29, second in 30, third in 31, fourth in 32, and last in 33. (N=128)

1. Public Speaking Training
2. Live Interview Practical Exercises
3. News Media Situational Training
4. TV Press Conference Exercises
5. Familiarization with Public Affairs Officer Duties and Responsibilities

The rank ordering of possible choices in this series of choices clearly suggests that training oriented towards confidence building and sharpening communication skills is foremost in the minds of the majority of respondents.

34. Is your next job likely to put you in touch with the news media?

	<u>All Officers</u> N=127	<u>With Media Experience</u> N=75	<u>No Media Experience</u> N=52
Yes	41.1%	57.3%	19.2%
No	58.9%	42.7%	80.8%

35. Did you take the television workshop offered by the Army War College Public Affairs Officer?

	<u>All Officers</u> N=129	<u>With Media Experience</u> N=75	<u>No Media Experience</u> N=54
Yes (go to Question 37)	21.7%	29.3%	11.1%
No (go to Question 36)	78.3%	70.7%	88.9%

36. Do you now wish you had taken it? (N=101)

	<u>All Officers</u> N=101	<u>With Media*</u> <u>Experience</u> N=55	<u>No Media*</u> <u>Experience</u> N=46
Yes	29.5%	36.4%	38.3%
No	27.1%	36.4%	31.9%
Not Sure	22.5%	27.3%	29.8%

*21.7 took course

37. Are you taking the course "Military Officer and the Media" offered during the advanced courses phase?

	<u>All Officers</u> N=122	<u>With Media Experience</u> N=71	<u>No Media Experience</u> N=51
Yes	4.7%	8.5%	----
No	95.3%	91.5%	100.0%

CHAPTER IV

COMMENTS OF RESPONDENTS

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide written comments on any area they wished to address. Approximately 20 percent (26) of the 129 officers responding to the survey provided written comments. Many voiced strong opinions and in some detail. Most comments focused on general perceptions of media and the need for officer training. Some officers voiced strong feelings concerning negative motives of reporters. One officer stated:

The media and its reporters inevitably have editorial biases which cause it/them to slant representations, whether printed or broadcast. Objectivity is never particularly emphasized. Consequently distortions arise in event interpretation, regardless of the factual reality, the skill of those giving interviews, and the intent of the news releases or interviews.

Another commented on the difficulty of insuring a positive outcome:

If the news media has a need (such as public reaction) for negative reporting, it will make no difference how well an explanation is rendered.

One officer expressing a sense of futility, offered the following:

We have a press versus everyone else adversarial relationship that isn't going to change . . . the President handles himself well; witness his problems.

Another expressed frustration over the power of the editorial process:

Generally, the military makes a good account of itself. Most of our bad press comes from newspaper editorials over which we don't have much control. However, we don't write any editorials or rebuttals of our own which may not hurt from time to time.

Another voiced even stronger feelings:

It is my belief that even if you say it well, it won't get printed/reported accurately.

One officer stressed the importance of obtaining an advanced unedited copy (which isn't the common practice):

I learned early-on that editing often changes the nature if not the context of the subject presented. My dealings have been primarily with newspapers. I have been relatively successful in obtaining unedited copy and being allowed to make corrections. I also like to review the copy (at least by phone) that will go in print.

One of the respondents offered the following summary on media/military relationships:

The two biggest military/press problems are: military not honest with the press and military representatives not knowledgeable in the subject area being discussed. . . . The biggest press/military problems are: taking comments out of context and editorial license.

Commenting on the importance of rapport, one officer stated:

Media coverage, good/bad varies with locations and long-term cultivated relations between military organizations and the local media contacts.

A different perspective to the same issue was offered by another respondent:

National media are harder to deal with since, among other things, it's difficult to cultivate a working relationship that will give a fair shake to good (emphasis by respondent) statements and releases. Without exception, chances for objective coverage are far better with good standing working relationships plus professional dealings with the media when events and problems arise.

The issue of career risk associated with media encounters was aired by several respondents. One offered the following advice to younger officers:

. . . many of our young O-3s (captains) are assigned to recruiting, ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps at civilian universities and colleges) and Armed Forces examining stations in civilian communities. It is

important for them to be aware of the pitfalls of overloading one's mouth.

Another respondent offered a similar opinion:

Though I would rather grant an interview and see the results before release, the chances are too great that my message would be slanted just to make the story interesting. It's too risky.

One officer expressed the need to understand and cooperate with the media:

We need to deal in a better, more positive manner with the media. We should not view it as an adversary but try to understand it and work with it.

Another officer felt the power of the media was such that they should be manipulated to the military advantage:

Since officers of all grades and at every organizational level are subject to media contact and examination, they should be taught not only how to deal with it, but also how to use and exploit it to advantage.

The issue of respect drew several comments. One officer supported its importance:

This is an area vital to us all . . . we must gain respect of the press and can only do that with skilled personnel.

The area drawing the most commentary was that of training and education--both pro and con--and the impact on military media relations. One officer viewing it from an Army perspective, offered the following comment:

Professionalism from the entire (emphasis by respondent) officer corps is essential. This mandates training/exposure (to the media) at all levels.

Another respondent related lack of training versus risk.

Having just left command of a District Recruiting Command, I have already faced the gauntlet without training. It is a very risky OJT (on-the-job-training).

The following comments of respondents are strong indicators of the need for training and to start it early.

The Army would do well to devote a significant amount of time (maybe at the expense of the infamous decision briefing) at the career course (captain) level, to build a foundation of 'news media awareness.' This should be continued at every other opportunity such as Command and General Staff College, pre-command courses for battalion and brigade commanders, the war colleges and as required by position.

I believe such training should be mandatory for all officers eventually and we certainly can begin now by making the course mandatory for war college students.

The higher an officer's rank, the more likely he/she will encounter the news/press media. I think some attention should be placed on this area early.

I believe news media training should begin on a mandatory basis at the advanced (career/course/captain) level.

Some respondents saw a need for training but at a later stage in an officer's career. The following comments bear this out.

This training may be appropriate as a course in senior service school (military war colleges) and the pre-command courses for battalion and brigade command selectees, but Command and General Staff College (for majors) may be too early and too large an audience--not too many majors are involved with press or television.

The training is a must for battalion and brigade command selectees and selected Department of Defense, major commands, and Office of Joint Chiefs of Staff assignments. It never hurts to have an exposure to public affairs even if it may never be used.

This type of training is very important and should certainly be given to everyone at the War College level, if possible.

Great area; neglected over the years; needs emphasis and instruction should be mandatory (for the following): Command and General Staff College; battalion and brigade command courses; senior service college (war college) students; and key slots as designated by the Department of the Army and the MACOMs (major commanders).

Although the following comments could be construed as negative towards an officer corps training program in media related subjects, there are

situational indicators that might lead one to believe training is necessary at least for certain Army officers.

. . . it is advantageous to the military institution and bureaucracy to communicate successfully with and through the media and to learn to manipulate the media to and in national and military interest. For this purpose, it is well advised to have skilled articulate spokesmen and officers are appropriately spokesmen/representative at each echelon--or at least presumed by the media to be.

Attempting to train all O-5s (LTC) and higher officers to deal with skilled reporters is too difficult. Reporters are trained, experienced and skilled at taking apart any half-baked 'trained' interviewee. Only trained, schooled and skilled officers should deal with the press. The rest of us--'no comment'--based on my miserable experiences with reporters in South Vietnam.

Only trained and skilled officers should deal with the press. The rest of us--'no comment.'

I disagree strongly with investing time and resources of our already over-taxed education system in public affairs training. An introductory class should be presented at the career course (captain) level with brief updates at subsequent levels.

Some respondents offered comments on the roles, importance and limitations of the Public Affairs Officer:

In all of my encounters with the press, I have relied heavily on the advice of the local PAO (Public Affairs Officer). That's his job and we don't need to train everyone to perform as a PAO. Further, I don't believe that any amount of training would significantly improve our press image.

Many will not believe the Public Affairs Officer's duties are important.

A good PAO (Public Affairs Officer) is essential but can't do it all.

A few officers voiced concern over not having taken two voluntary media-oriented courses offered through the Public Affairs Office at the Army War College. Most expressed anguish over not having enough time to do

everything. With regard to the television workshop, one officer made this observation:

It is a matter of priorities. The schedule is so full now that this was one of the 'nice to haves.' The Army War College should look at the afternoon class schedule and some of the 'less than substantive' addresses by some guest speakers--you can't have it all. Bottom line: The media classes would be a suitable substitute for some of the other areas we have addressed on our numerous critique sheets.

Another officer offered the following rationale for dropping "The Military Officer and the Media" advanced course:

Initially I enrolled. However, a course conflict arose and I had to drop due to competing demands. Would have audited, but could not take two courses at the same time/day.

Citing a similar needs conflict, one officer identified a problem with the school "menu."

Had I not perceived a higher priority need and had I been able to schedule the media elective, without conflicting with the three electives I'm taking for credit plus Sports Day practice and our group military study, I would have done so. Just another case of too much to do at the same time. I personally believe some of the electives should be offered throughout the year instead of the last two months as is now done.

One respondent put the problem into a precise perspective with the following comment:

. . . I would have liked to. It conflicted with another course I put at a higher level of priority. I feel I'm missing an opportunity. I need the help!!

FINDINGS FROM RESPONDENTS COMMENTS

- o A distrust of the news media and that institution's ability to print the story as given, was detected in most comments.

- o The majority of officers voiced strong support for a media training and education program for the officer corps and that the earlier the better.
- o Some respondents indicated that talking to press without some experience was risky.
- o Some expressed bitterness over their personal experiences with the press in Vietnam.
- o Many felt that the training and education should be mandatory at the start and should continue during an officer's career.
- o Many wanted to take the courses offered through the War College Public Affairs Office but had higher priority on other courses offered during the elective period. Some suggested that the media courses be made mandatory in the core curriculum.

CONCLUSIONS

Distrust of the news media is a way of life among Army officers.

Training and education is definitely needed and the earlier in an officer's career, the better.

There is a lack of self-confidence and confidence in the military institution among these officers, with respect to interacting with the news media.

CHAPTER V

SURVEY CONCLUSIONS

- o Most officers are distrustful of the news media and are not confident in that institution's ability to report military events with balance and fairness.
- o Although recognizing individual and institutional shortcomings in the military, officers are more apt to blame the news media for any bad publicity encountered.
- o There is a general lack of self-confidence and confidence in the military institution among officers, with respect to interacting with the media.
- o While practical experience with the news media does not necessarily dampen an officer's distrust and confidence in that institution, it does increase self-confidence.
- o There is a clear and expressed opinion among officers that the officer corps should receive training and education in press-related subjects. This is manifested in the recognition that preferably all officers but at least those in the grades of O-5 and higher should be competent to deal with the news media.
- o The training and education should at least be mandatory at the outset, subsequently offered at various intervals commensurate with the military education system--preferably at the advanced course (captain) level.

CHAPTER VI

RECOMMENDATIONS

That consideration be given to conducting a similar survey possibly by War College students, but on a much larger scale to determine if the findings and conclusions of this study are valid.

That a separate study be conducted among officers assigned to the US Army Recruiting Command for comparison against this study and the above recommended study.

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- Drury, Allen. "On Press Responsibility and Return." Los Angeles Times. May 28, 1978. p. 40.
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- Smith, Liz. "On Gossip as Unsubstantiated Rumor in News and Reporting." The Dallas Times Herald. August 3, 1978. Sec. E, p. 10.
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- Westmoreland, William C. "On Wartime Censorship." The Washington Post, April 23, 1978. Sec. A, p. 28.

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- Zorthian, Barry. "The Role of the Communications Media in a Democratic Society." Naval War College Review, February, 1972.

PART I

1. What is your rank?
 - (a) LTC
 - (b) LTC(P)
 - (c) COL
2. In what area is your career branch?
 - (a) Combat Arms
 - (b) Combat Support
 - (c) Combat Service Support
3. How many years of formal education do you have?
 - (a) Less than 16
 - (b) More than 16 but less than 18
 - (c) More than 18
4. Months of combat experience?
 - (a) Less than 6 months
 - (b) 6-12 months
 - (c) 13-24 months
 - (d) 25-36 months
 - (e) More than 36 months
5. Have you commanded in combat?
 - (a) Yes
 - (b) No
6. Months you have commanded a battalion or equivalent?
 - (a) 18 months or less

- (b) 19-24 months
- (c) 25-30 months
- (d) 31-36 months
- (e) I have not commanded a battalion or equivalent.

7. Have you had any formal education in public relations, journalism or mass communications?

- (a) No
- (b) Some Undergraduate
- (c) Undergraduate Degree
- (d) Some Graduate
- (e) Graduate Degree

8. Have you had any practical experience with the news media?

- (a) Yes (please continue question 9)
- (b) No (go to Part II)

9. My experience with news media was in (mark those applicable):

- (a) Civilian Domain
- (b) Military - Noncombat
- (c) Military - Combat

PART II

Use the following scale for Questions 10-23:

A	B	C	D	E
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. Generally speaking, the military receives good press.
11. News media coverage, good or bad, rests with the ability of our military leaders to explain our case.
12. Generally speaking, the military makes a good account of itself to the news media.
13. Most Officers I know trust the news media.
14. Based upon my experience, I would advise Junior Officers that a bad encounter with the news media is a potential career risk.
15. All Officers O5 and higher should be able to capably and confidently interact with reporters when required.
16. At this stage in my career, I would welcome the opportunity for training designed to improve my skills in working with news reporters.
17. Military Officers should be offered public affairs training at some point(s) during their careers.
18. This training should be offered primarily to those Officers (public affairs types excluded) whose assignments may put them in contact with the news media.
19. This training should be mandatory for Officers slated for command.
20. I would feel more comfortable in a high visibility position if I had some training relating to effective military/media communication.
21. Much of the Army's bad publicity can be attributed directly to someone's inability to adequately explain the situation to the news media.

22. If I had the choice, I would rather inform the press on a major issue through an official news release rather than grant an interview.

23. Prior to granting an interview, I would insist that the reporter agree to provide me an unedited copy of the completed interview.

GO TO PART III

PART III

This part deals with your perceptions on possible training options.

24. If this course were offered to Officers going into command, for what level should it be offered?

- (a) Battalion
- (b) Brigade
- (c) Both

25. If this training were integrated into the existing military education system, at what level should it be introduced?

- (a) CGSC or equivalent
- (b) Army War College

26. If this training was determined to be necessary at the earliest stages of a military career and was integrated into the existing military education system, at what level should it be introduced?

- (a) Pre-commissioning
- (b) Basic Officer Training
- (c) Advanced Course
- (d) CGSC
- (e) Army War College

27. Should training proposal in Question 26 be offered in a progressive fashion (segments at each level)?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

28. Should training regardless of introductory level be mandatory, voluntary or a combination thereof?

- (a) Mandatory at Introductory Level

- (b) Mandatory at Introductory Level and Voluntary at Subsequent Levels
- (c) Mandatory Throughout
- (d) Voluntary Throughout

For Questions 29-33, rank order the following areas of media training you believe would best serve both--the Army's interests and your professional needs. Use (1), (2), (3), (4) and (5) in margin to prioritize choices and transcribe results to the answer sheet. Your first choice should be placed in 29, second in 30, third in 31, fourth in 32, and last in 33.

- () A. TV Press Conference Exercises
- () B. Live Interview Practical Exercises
- () C. Familiarization with Public Affairs Officer Duties and Responsibilities
- () D. Public Speaking Training
- () E. News Media Situational Training

34. Is your next job likely to put you in touch with the news media?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

35. Did you take the television workshop offered by the Army War College Public Affairs Officer?

- (a) Yes (go to Question 37)
- (b) No (go to Question 36)

36. Do you now wish you had taken it?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No
- (c) Not Sure

37. Are you taking the course "Military Officer and the Media" offered during the advanced courses phase?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

This completes the questionnaire portion of the survey. If you desire to add any comments or observations on this subject, please use the space below. All comments will be recorded and considered. Thank you very much for your time and consideration in this important subject. When completed, return the answer sheet and your written comments to Box 100, USAWC.

END

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