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Military-Media Relations and the Gulf War:
a compromise between Vietnam and Grenada?

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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by

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
1992

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

**MILITARY-MEDIA RELATIONS AND THE GULF WAR: A COMPROMISE
BETWEEN VIETNAM AND GRENADA?** by MAJ Colleen L. McGuire,
USA, 93 pages.

This study chronicles and evaluates the evolution of military-media relations to determine whether the Persian Gulf War public affairs policies were a compromise between Vietnam and Grenada policy experiences. It provides new insights into the military-media relationship and formulates a better understanding of the elements that comprise a successful and responsive public affairs program. Discussion includes how the military developed its strategy and how the media responded, and the resulting strategies in covering conflicts of a military nature. Military public affairs efforts in Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM are a culmination of lessons learned and their applications in managing the press.

The increasing demands placed on the military by the press for freer access, the increasing number of media representatives requesting this access, and the advancements in communications technology experienced in each conflict are all factors that military leaders must address in future military operations planning. How each of these issues were managed or not managed from Vietnam to the Persian Gulf are covered in this study as well as recommendations for the future.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

16 January 1991.

"At 4:50 p.m., the first F-15 Eagles were taking off for their targets...More and more of the air war was moving toward the brink. [Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney] saw that no one in the press was picking up on it. The news reporters were so bottled up by the rules, and there had been so much air activity over the previous months, that it all looked routine."¹

In 1991 the United States people and its military embarked on a media event unequalled since the Vietnam War. By the end of the Gulf War 3,500 journalists were accredited by Saudi Arabia. In Vietnam, there were roughly 300 media personnel at any given time. Six hundred media representatives were in Barbados within 48 hours' notice for URGENT FURY in Grenada, and during the first three weeks of

¹Bob Woodward, The Commanders, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 370.

Operation JUST CAUSE more than 1,000 journalists were registered. By the end of the ground war during Operation DESERT STORM there were 1,095 journalists in Dhahran, plus several hundred others in Riyadh.² Throughout DESERT SHIELD/STORM operations, the military was challenged with the mission of providing reasonable and timely access of media representatives to military operations while trying to satisfy military operational security requirements.

Because of the magnitude of media interest, military public affairs instituted operating procedures to accommodate the large and demanding requirements of media representatives. This included a means to accredit media representatives, monitor operational security, provide logistical support (electronic and transportation), and help them get their story. This balancing act performed by military public affairs to accommodate the media and ensure operational security has been both praised and condemned by media representatives.

Is there a happy medium between the initial exclusion of the media during Operation URGENT FURY in Grenada as it related to the exclusion of the press, and the absolute free access the media enjoyed in Vietnam? Was the Gulf War that happy medium?

²Public Affairs Monthly Update, Vol.1, no.2, August 1991, page 1,4-5. COL William L. Mulvey, "Observations from DESERT STORM."

Journalists and soldiers are inextricably polarized by the same document from which they both claim responsibility. Journalists and reporters orient to the First Amendment and competitively cling to the right of free press and speech. The military stands fast in its commitment to the protection of the Constitution and the need for operational security.

Not a new story, this ongoing historical struggle between the military and the media needs constant review and study. The two professions represent the checks and balance system incorporated by and for the American people. In order for both the military and media to effectively serve the American public, an eventual mutual trust and understanding must be achieved.

PURPOSE

This thesis focuses on those efforts by the military in its understanding of the needs or wants of the media and how it is attempting to come to a detente. Military public affairs efforts in Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM are a culmination of lessons learned and their applications in dealing with the press. Are current Army public affairs policies and activities satisfying both military operational security requirements and the media's desire for free access?

During Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, the media provided the American public a detailed, inside look at its military establishment. The media cast a seemingly positive and professional light on the soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen, and their efforts in the Gulf. The media went to great lengths to explain strategies and tactics, describe weapons systems, and cover the human dimension of soldiers going to war. Was this due to current public affairs policies and activities? Or was it because the Gulf War may have been considered a "just war"? Are Department of Defense media pools narrowing the gap between the journalists' right to free speech and military requirements for operational security? Or were journalists railroaded and corralled by the military to only those stories that the military wanted to tell? To fully understand the military public affairs efforts in response to journalists' access desires in Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, a review of military-media relationships is necessary.

BACKGROUND

Before the Vietnam War, war correspondents filed stories under a form of field press censorship. Commanders had freedom to express realities to the correspondent and not be self-censors--someone else did that. The Vietnam War

was reported without field press censorship. There were several reasons why field press censorship (FPC) was not feasible during the Vietnam War. One, it required South Vietnam's support, which was not present. South Vietnam had already set stringent rules on its own press and was at odds with the U.S. press. If denied total access and censorship imposed, reporters could file elsewhere such as Bangkok or Hong Kong. Also, there were technical difficulties in censoring television film. Consequently, how the public reacted to the news, both good and bad, influenced senior national policy makers. Additionally, the lack of censorship potentially put every senior Army leaders' personal comments and opinions as they related to the war and/or government policies on the front page. Additionally, television matured into a real media force.

While correspondents were afforded relatively free access to the battlefield during the Vietnam War, journalists wanting to cover the Grenada invasion, URGENT FURY, were excluded from reporting initial operations in total. Post-Grenada developments included the reevaluation of military/media relationships, incorporation of public affairs training at all levels of the Army training structure, and identification of the roles and benefits of the Department of Defense National Media Pool.

Operation JUST CAUSE in December 1990 was the first true activation of the National Media Pool (NMP). It didn't

work well. The NMP arrived late to Panama. It was not permitted to cover the operation adequately, and other reporters were already on the scene as more kept arriving.

The resulting policies from lessons learned established the foundation for public affairs operations in support of Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM. According to Peter Andrews, a national defense correspondent for Hearst newspapers, the war in the Persian Gulf

"...was the media's Cannae, and the press played Varro to Schwarzkopf's Hannibal: the military's victory over the press was total and devastating. The media were essentially reduced to being a conduit for official information offered by commanders who could scarcely disguise their scorn for the delivery system they were forced to use."

Of course, there is another side to this story.

In accordance with the inexorable law of dialectics, the media will develop strategies to counter so-called military control, undoubtedly causing the whole dreary struggle to continue.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the Department of Defense public affairs program is to:

- a. Evaluate public opinion toward the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Armed Forces.

b. Evaluate the effectiveness of policies and actions of the DoD and the Armed Forces on issues involving public opinion.

c. Make recommendations to defense officials and to commanding officers concerning policies and actions that have an effect on public opinion.

d. Conduct programs designed to keep the public informed, within the limitations of security, accuracy, propriety, and policy, on the actions of DoD and the Armed Forces. These external programs are termed public information and community relations.

e. Conduct programs designed to keep servicemen and women and civilian employees informed and motivated to be effective members of their service.³

This thesis and its resulting methodology focuses on the relationship between the military and the media. A variety of material was gathered and analyzed to assess the military's external public affairs program as was described above. Public affairs programs targeted for the internal audience (servicemen and women and civilian employees) were not considered in this study.

Existing surveys were used to evaluate public opinion toward DoD and the Armed Forces. A report compiled by the Gannett Foundation Media Center titled The Media at

³Public Affairs Handbook, Sixth Edition, June 1985, Public Affairs Department Defense Information School, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana 46216-6200, 1-3.

War: The Press and the Persian Gulf Conflict, was of great value. It provided a survey analysis of the public perception of war coverage during Operation DESERT STORM.

The effectiveness of policies and the actions of the DoD and the Armed Forces on issues involving public opinion during Operation DESERT SHIELD/STORM was subjectively evaluated. Non-quantified data was used in the analysis and interpretation. This exploratory study included unclassified government documents, media coverage of the Gulf War, a review of newspaper and magazine articles, historical documents, government documents, surveys, fiction and nonfiction literature, and theses. Existing surveys were used to evaluate public opinion toward the DoD and the Armed Forces during Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM.

An understanding must first be made that identifies the military's criteria compared to the media's criteria as they relate to wartime reporting.

Media criteria include freedom of access, ease of filing procedures, the deployment process, competent escorts, available transportation, and communication. Examples of the extremes and compromises in meeting those criteria are evident throughout recent history.

The military's concerns for operational security, propriety, and policy sometimes clashed with the media's want for greater freedom of access. The availability of

military logistical support sometimes does not meet the demands of the media for ease of filing, deployment, transportation, and communication. There has been a great deal written about military and media relations. This study evaluates the evolution of military-media relations in an attempt to determine whether the Gulf War public affairs policies were a compromise between Vietnam and Grenada or at least a middle ground for military and media concerns.

The research design was developed to gain new insights into the evolution of the military-media relationship in order to formulate a better understanding of the elements that comprise a successful and responsive public affairs program and establish priorities for further research. Discussion includes how the military developed its strategy and how the media responded, and the resulting strategies in covering conflicts of a military nature. The correlation between the policies of the military and how they satisfied the needs of both the military and the media from Vietnam through the Gulf War is the focus of this study.

This thesis chronicles the evolution of the military-media relationship and its problems and solutions from the Vietnam era up to and focusing on the Persian Gulf War.

ASSUMPTIONS

The main assumption, although a possible fact, is that while military efforts were positively conceived and planned to assist journalists in their quest for access, they did not meet journalistic needs.

There were no military operational security violations as a result of military-media interaction.

DEFINITIONS

National Media Pool. Approximately a twelve-person team representing U.S. media that deploys to areas of operations overseas to provide news coverage of DoD operations where adequate news coverage is not readily available for the American public. The pool normally deploys representatives of both print and broadcast media. Pool news products are provided to other national and local media as a condition of the pool agreement.

Accreditation. Formal recognition of a media representative by a U.S. commander in a theater of operations.

Correspondent. A journalist, press reporter, photographer, columnist, editor, publisher, radio or television reporter, commentator, camera operator, newsreel or other documentary picture production employee accredited

to the DoD and regularly engaged in the collection and dissemination of news to the public. (AR 360-65)

Ground Rules. Guidelines on information agreed to by military and media representatives which may be used when reporting on the operations of U.S. armed forces in combat.

LIMITATIONS

Time constraints and reliance on others for information are initial primary limitations. Although there is an abundance of research material available, time constraints do not permit more thorough research. Some information from Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM that would be pertinent for this thesis is still classified.

DELIMITATIONS

The relationship between the military and the media has been an adversarial one for ages. The scope of this study is limited to this struggle from the Vietnam War through Operation DESERT STORM, and will focus on DESERT STORM. Of the three areas of public affairs programs--command information, public information, and community relations--this thesis focuses on public information.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research should be relevant for the conduct of public affairs operations in future conflicts. It should provide assistance in the area of media relations and the Army. It will also provide perspectives from both the media and military on their responsibilities as they see and define them. The influence and power of the media are forces significant to the survival and composition of the military and thus warrant continuous study.

CHAPTER 2
MILITARY-MEDIA RELATIONS:
VIETNAM THROUGH JUST CAUSE

VIETNAM WAR

The press was not censored by the military during the Vietnam War. The impracticalities of field press censorship management directed the military's policy concerning press coverage of the war. That and the mistrust of the South Vietnamese to handle newsmen fairly left the military to rely on the restraint of reputable reporters and the use of guidelines. This was the first modern war not to use field press censorship as a means to handle the press. Several times throughout the conflict, however, the use of censorship was considered but never instituted. What follows are the resulting restrictions and guidelines placed on the press in lieu of censorship, problems encountered by the military, actions taken to counter these problems, and lessons learned.

The relationship between the military and the media was not always an adversarial one. With the advent of the Cold War and a reasonably expressed political agenda, the American public and the journalism community supported and approved of U.S. government policy toward South Vietnam. But as the war continued, government policies changed or became confused, the American cause became cloudy, and younger journalists became critical of the direction and focus of American operations in Vietnam.

By the time of the Tet Offensive of 1968, the print media became thoroughly skeptical in their coverage of the war. They felt as though they had been intentionally mislead and had been pawns of the U.S. government in the whitewash of the American public.⁴

In her book Shooting War, Susan Moeller points out that the military and the media were not the only adversarial relationship when it came to the Vietnam War. During this period of technological growth and changing social attitudes, the Vietnam War was a catalyst for the changes in war reporting and the attitudes of the journalists and photographers covering it. Print journalists were at odds with the electronic media. Photographers were considered idiots and incapable of writing.

⁴Susan D. Moeller, Shooting War, (New York, Basic Books, Inc., 1989), 352.

"The number of these visiting correspondents, short-term press people, and resident journalists accredited to Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) added up over the course of the war: In 1961-63 there were no more than 10 accredited members of the foreign (non-Vietnamese) press; in 1964, there were 40; in 1965, there were 400; and by the height of the Tet Offensive in 1968 there were 637. After Tet, the numbers began to decrease; 1969, 467; 1970, 392; 1971, 355; and 1972 295. By mid-1974, only 35 journalists were left, although the number rose again in 1975, during the last days of South Vietnam."⁵

In order for journalists to get accredited, they needed only obtain a government of Vietnam press card and submit a letter from their home office to receive a MACV accreditation card which entitled the card holder to air, water, and ground transportation within South Vietnam. The Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI) would lend cameras, film, light meters, and instructions to accredited journalists regardless of their capabilities.

A sound and reasonable public affairs program was not yet in place when controversy arose following the publication in local newspapers of personal letters of soldiers and airmen in Vietnam. The letters revealed the character of American operations in South Vietnam.

⁵Moeller, 358.

The American public wanted the truth about the United States' involvement in South Vietnam.⁶

In June 1964, following a fact-finding trip to South Vietnam by Carl Rowan, director of the U.S. Information Agency, to assess the public affairs program, the following recommendations were made:

a. One person would coordinate and administrate the public affairs program in South Vietnam. This "Czar" would "advise members of the U.S. mission on which newsmen to see and what points to make."⁷

b. Journalists serving in South Vietnam should have access to available transportation.

c. Military must provide high quality information officers.

d. Military services must conduct internal education programs to reduce the number of incidents where soldiers, Marines, airmen griped to the press.⁸

In an attempt to foster mutual cooperation (and in the absence of any fixed guidelines), correspondents were free to obtain military transport to wherever they wanted to go with the exception of accompanying units on preplanned

⁶William M. Hammond, Public Affairs: The Military and the Media, 1962-1968, (Center of Military History, United States Army, Washington D.C., 1988) 78.

⁷Hammond, 79.

⁸Hammond, 80.

operations.

On 12 July 1965, Saigon correspondents received the following rules in reporting the ground war:

- a. The Military Assistance Command would announce casualties by number once a week.
- b. Losses for particular engagements would be described only as light, moderate, or heavy.
- c. Troop movements would not be confirmed until the enemy already knew.
- d. Troop units participating in specific combat operations would never be identified by number or type.
- e. If reporters uncovered information of the nature described above on their own, they were to consider it classified and refrain from using it.⁹

The first problem the military faced concerning the press was not the press, but rather the Johnson Administration. The United States was escalating war efforts in Vietnam without the clear consent of the American public and Congress. Officials in Washington attempted to play down the American role in the war. Military leaders, General William C. Westmoreland and Colonel Benjamin W. Legare, MACV Chief of Information, knew that Washington's ploy to downplay the American role in the war would fail. There were already reporters in Vietnam who saw soldiers and

⁹Hammond, 179.

Marines engaged in active patrolling and some combat. The military planned to provide a background briefing to selected media representatives on the concept of American combat operations in South Vietnam. The Johnson Administration opposed the idea.¹⁰ In the eyes of the press, the military's credibility was questioned.

Eventually the military was permitted to provide a background briefing and established regularly scheduled media briefings, known irreverently as the "five o'clock follies."

The media enjoyed relatively free access, adequate transport, and communication. The military, on the other hand, suffered the insecurities of a lack of censorship and changing or unclear policies concerning President Johnson's strategy of limited war. The media became critical of the policies concerning the war and the military blamed the media for the credibility problems it experienced. This attitude on the part of the military would perhaps have some influence on future media interactions.

¹⁰Hammond, 164.

GRENADA

On October 25, 1983, approximately 1,900 Marines and Army Rangers and three-hundred soldiers from six Caribbean nations assaulted Grenada.

The Reagan administration's policy, and thus DoD's, in managing the press brought about significant problems in any military media relationship that was to develop during this conflict. The news media was not informed of the invasion. In fact, many members of the news media believed they had been misled to believe that no invasion was to take place. The Reagan administration was so concerned with secrecy that officials who routinely worked with the press such as Larry Speakes, the principal White House spokesman, were not informed of the invasion until shortly after it began. In fact Speakes passed on wrong information to CBS reporter Bill Plante, denying any allegations of a planned invasion of Grenada. The next morning President Reagan announced the invasion of Grenada. Because Grenada had recently been in the news as a result of a coup of pro-Marxist Maurice Bishop and the resulting massacre of him and members of his cabinet, many news reporters were on hand to record the assault.

Within a few days of Reagan's announcement of the invasion, almost 370 journalists were in Bridgetown. This posed another problem--there was no military information

bureau and no military spokespeople available. Military public affairs officers were not involved in the planning of the invasion and were therefore unprepared to manage the influx of media.

The first published photographs and film footage came from military audio-visual teams that arrived in Grenada on 25 and 26 October. All initial news releases came from Washington. Many reporters claimed that much of the misinformation was intentional and designed to show the administration and the invasion in a favorable light.

After the Joint Information Bureau (JIB) was established at Barbados, a press-television pool was granted permission to go to the island on October 27. When the pool arrived there was no transportation available to get them around or to take them to the units in action. Instead they received a tour of Cuban billeting areas, a prison compound, and some warehouses where captured weapons were stored.

Twenty-four journalists were permitted access by the JIB to Grenada on October 28th. Forty-seven more journalists went the following day. All restrictions on press access were lifted on October 30, but by then the Rangers had departed, and the Marines were about to depart. The JIB established an office at the Grenada Beach Hotel on November 1st. For the next four days more than one hundred journalists were transported daily from Barbados to Grenada.

By November 2, troop withdrawal began; by December 15, the last combat troops departed the island.¹¹

What followed was a series of legal challenges and allegations by the press concerning the First Amendment and freedom of the press issues. "Media organizations are reluctant however to pursue the issues through the courts. They reason that if the court does not rule in the media's favor, the decision could set a harmful precedent in future cases concerning access to government activities."¹²

Following the agonizing experience of public relations efforts in Vietnam and the more recent Grenada exclusion, the military set out to devise a workable plan and restructure public affairs policies in dealing with the press.

General John Vessey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, appointed retired Army Major General Winant Sidle, former Army chief of information, to chair a panel to design guidelines for media coverage of military operations in the future. It consisted of several public affairs officers, retired media personnel, and representatives of several schools of journalism considered experts in military-media relations.

¹¹Marlys M. Campbell, "Media Access to United States Military Operations: Grenada and Beyond" Kansas State University Thesis, 1989, 37..

¹²Campbell, 61.

The main complaint the panel considered was that Grenada operation planners did not plan for press access. The plan deliberately excluded experienced military and civilian public affairs officers who could have planned for press access consistent with troop safety and security early in the planning process.

Concerns of the military were for security, the great influx of correspondents wanting access to military operations, and the impact of communication technology as it relates to security.

Besides freer access, available transportation, and communications, the media were concerned that officials would review their material for other than security considerations. Both the military and media expressed concern for the need for mutual trust and understanding.

The Sidle Panel forwarded eight recommendations to the Secretary of Defense, Casper Weinberger. As a result of the panel's deliberations and recommendations, the Secretary approved the report as the basis for procedures to be employed by the Department of Defense to enhance media coverage of military operations.

The main recommendations were:

- 1) Concurrent public affairs planning with operational planning for military operations;
- 2) Use of a media pool when full media coverage is not feasible or immediately available;

- 3) Accreditation of correspondents;
- 4) Establish and issue security guidelines and ground rules governing media access to military operations;
- 5) Plan for logistics support such as adequate transportation, communications assets, and equipment for the media;
- 6) Improve the relationship between the military and media through education.¹³

¹³Campbell, 68-69.

PANAMA

Following URGENT FURY in Grenada, the Sidle Panel recommendation of a national press pool was exercised on several occasions. The press pool was successfully used during the U.S.-Iranian hostilities in the Persian Gulf when U.S. forces attacked Iranian oil platforms and frigates in April 1988.

The relationship between the media and military seemed to be smoothing when, again, a decision was made not to immediately send a media pool to Panama. But this time it wasn't the military that made the decision, it was the Secretary of Defense.¹⁴

The purpose of a media pool is to transport American journalists to cover a military operation that is conducted in a remote area where there is no American media. There were American media representatives already in Panama. Some media representatives and military both believed that a press pool was not really necessary. In fact, Colonel Ron Sconyers, then the Southern Command's Public Affairs Officer, suggested to DoD that the Panama invasion be covered by media already in Panama--media representatives with whom he had already developed a working relationship.

¹⁴Fred S. Hoffman, "The Panama Press Pool Deployment: A Critique," Newsmen and National Defense Mathews, Lloyd J., ed. (New York: Brassey's (US), Inc.) 1991. 92.

Secretary Cheney insisted a pool should be sent.¹⁵ The media pool landed four hours after U.S. troops attacked. Evidence that the military and media relations were improving was when Lieutenant General Carl W. Stiner, who commanded all the combat troops in the invasion, said he could have taken a small pool with him to Panama ahead of the paratroop deployment. General Maxwell Thurman, commander of Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), regretted that the press did not accompany the 18th Airborne Corps.¹⁶

These good intentions however, did not provide the necessary support the media found wanting in Panama. Adequate transportation, telecommunications equipment, and escorts were not available.

The military received relatively positive reviews in its initial participation in the Panama invasion, Operation JUST CAUSE. One point of view is that the military did such a good job in the operation that the media were reduced to reporting stories concerning women in combat and the Combat Infantryman Badge. These two cases, in particular the "kennel war", were poorly explained to the American people.

The "kennel war" concerns the women in combat issue. U.S. Army Captain Linda Gray and her military police company were charged with the responsibility of responding to a Panama Defense Force (PDF) kennel in the event anything

¹⁵Hoffman, 92.

¹⁶Hoffman, 94.

happened. By virtue of her position as company commander, she directed the raid on the kennel which raised the women in direct combat issue. The other issue was the controversy over the awarding criteria for the Combat Infantryman Badge.

The other point of view is that because of the inadequate support available media representatives were reduced to providing "fluff" stories.

Once again, there was no public affairs plan.

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

The military's Vietnam experience with media proved that policies must be standard and set. There was a need to educate the military on how to talk to and manage the press.

URGENT FURY lessons include the need for planning for public affairs in all operations. Keep the media informed. The military public affairs community must have systems in place to establish information bureaus at a moments notice.

Operation JUST CAUSE reinforced the need for prior planning, logistic support, and a public affairs plan incorporated in the operation plan. Continued education of military in managing and responding to the press is essential. Were any of these lessons applied to DESERT STORM? Did the military and the media come closer to meeting each others' needs?

CHAPTER 3

MANAGING MILITARY-MEDIA RELATIONS

Since its experience with the media during the Vietnam War, the military has taken great strides to improve its ability in managing the press during armed conflict. Relying on lessons learned from previous experiences, the military had a treasure of institutional knowledge from which to develop strategies for public information programs.

Meanwhile, the press did not have a collective institution that could singularly champion media interests in developing better means in which to counter military controls and provide freer access coverage.

The military took a collective, proactive stance in developing public affairs policies and training programs. Retired U. S. Army General Maxwell Thurman said that the Army's detailed after-action self-critiques were "the most profound thing we have done in training in the past 15 years." The military public affairs policies used during the Gulf War were a result of these detailed self-critiques of previous military conflicts.

CENSORSHIP

The U.S. Government first censored the media during the Civil War. The technological development of the telegraph provided the press a medium to report on military engagements as they were happening. The government was capable of "controlling" the telegraph and closely "monitoring" written dispatches. It is interesting to consider that the continued technological advances of communications have now virtually rendered censorship obsolete.

Measures now taken by the military to manage the press take the form of press pools, guidelines, escorts, and accreditation to name a few. These management techniques have evolved from experiences of prior conflicts.¹⁷

The decisions not to impose censorship during Vietnam have already been discussed in previous chapters. The military recognized the valuable utility of the press and feared censorship could alienate the press from the military. The military imposed a set of guidelines similar to the ones used in North Africa and Western Europe during World War II.¹⁸ "Between August 1964 and the end of 1968, for example, approximately 2,000 news media representatives

¹⁷David Stebenne, "The Military and the Media," The Media at War: The Press and the Persian Gulf Conflict, (New York: Gannett Foundation Report, June 1991), 14.

¹⁸Stebenne, 14-15.

were involved in reporting the Vietnam story, and yet only six of them committed violations of the guidelines so severe, in the military's view, as to warrant revoking their credentials."¹⁹

In a March 14-18, 1991 Times Mirror survey, "The People, the Press, and the War in the Gulf: Part II," a two-to-one majority of those polled said that "...military censorship is more important than the media's ability to report important news."²⁰ Although censorship was not even considered, the public, in a shift since after the Vietnam War, would probably have condoned some form of censorship imposed by the military. The public was content with the amount of information about the war that it was receiving. If, however, the American public believed the whole story was not being told, support for any type of censorship would vanish.

The ground rules used during the Gulf War were "...intended simply and solely to prevent publication of details that could jeopardize a military operation or endanger the lives of U.S. troops."²¹ The Gulf ground

¹⁹Everette E. Dennis et al., The Media at War: The Press and the Persian Gulf Conflict (New York: Gannett Foundation Media Center, 1991), 83.

²⁰Everett E. Dennis et al., The Media at War: The Press and the Persian Gulf Conflict (New York: Gannett Foundation Media Center, 1991), 83.

²¹Pete Williams, "The Persian Gulf, the Pentagon, the Press," Defense 91, May/June 1991, 11.

rules, according to Williams, left the final decision to publish or broadcast in the hands of journalists, not the military.

Only one of 1,351 story products from the print pool was changed to "protect sensitive intelligence procedures."²²

²²Williams, 12.

PRESS POOLS

In what could be considered a response to the dissatisfaction of the guideline policy used in Vietnam, the Reagan administration elected to ban press access to initial military operations during the Grenada campaign altogether. Although the ban was successful from the military perspective, it angered the media community. Not only was the ban successful for operational reasons, it raised media consciousness to the needs of military control.

In an attempt to come to a common understanding, the concept of pools was reluctantly agreed to by the media as a result of the Sidle Panel. They agreed to cooperate in pooling agreements if that was necessary for them to obtain early access to an operation.

From April 20, 1985 through August 1, 1986, the Department of Defense conducted a series of five press pool tests. The tests took place in Honduras, Fort Campbell, Kentucky, off the southern coast of California, and at Twenty Nine Palms, California. The purpose of the tests was to evaluate whether pooling was a reasonable way for the media to gain access to and report news during the initial phases of a military operation.²³

²³William G. Ackerly, Major, US Army, "Analysis of the Pentagon's Press Pool Tests" (Master's Thesis, University of Kansas, 1987), 32-33.

The military test objectives were: to maintain operational security of the press pool test; to implement procedures for organizing, activating and deploying a press pool; and to improve the proficiency of the military in supporting media operations in a combat situation. The media test objectives were to ensure that the news was timely, thorough and accurate.

Test results showed continuous improvement in each of the four tests.²⁴ The first test was conducted on April 20, 1985. This was a five day test that took media representatives from CNN, Mutual Radio, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, Newsweek, UPI, AP, and Copley News Service overseas to observe a U.S. military exercise, UNIVERSAL TREK 85, in Honduras.

Within hours of the pool activation, word of the pending pool deployment was leaked. For test one, the most significant result concerned the objective of operational security which of course was lost.

Test results for press pools two and three showed marked improvement. The test durations for these two press pools were only one and two days respectively and were conducted in the United States. All test objectives were achieved.

The fourth press pool test was conducted during daylight hours. On August 1, 1986, thirteen media

²⁴Ackerly, 68.

representatives and three military escorts left Andrews Air Force Base for March Air Force Base, California. The next day they observed a military exercise at Twenty Nine Palms, California. All objectives of the test were satisfactorily achieved. The fact that this test, which was assembled and deployed during daylight hours, was conducted with no information leaked was significant. The test proved that operational security could be maintained.²⁵

²⁵Ackerly, 62.

SECURITY REVIEW

During Operation DESERT STORM, news gathered in the field by pool participants was subject to security review by a DoD public affairs officer before release. The purpose of security reviews was to ensure compliance with DoD guidelines and ground rules. If the media representative and public affairs officer couldn't agree on the sensitive nature of the material in question, it was sent to the Joint Information Bureau (JIB) in Dhahran. If the JIB director was unable to make the security determination, it was sent to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) for review with the appropriate bureau chief. The final decision according to the guidelines whether to present the information in question to the public was ultimately determined by the originating reporter's news agency.

CHAPTER FOUR
MILITARY-MEDIA RELATIONS
DURING DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM

The media blasted the Department of Defense for its handling of the press, demanding even greater access. Journalists claimed the Pentagon restricted reporters' travel, delayed story transmissions, and military escorts were not helpful and interfered with reporters gathering stories. Media executives recommended pools be dissolved after the first 24 or 36 hours, then allow reporters to roam freely in search of news. Media executives offered the following recommendations:

1) Journalists in a combat zone should receive military credentials and abide by a clear set of military security guidelines, risking expulsion if they don't.

2) Journalists would have access to major fighting units and be allowed to file articles and pictures without unnecessary delay. Public affairs officers act as liaisons without interfering with the reporting process.

3) News material would not be subject to security review.²⁶

CNN

The media were accused of bringing the war to American living rooms during the Vietnam War. In Susan Moeller's book, Shooting War, she points out that the American public had but few means to get any information about the war. Those means included two wire services, three networks, two national newsmagazines, two national news-photograph magazines, and a handful of newspapers that maintained staff in Saigon.

Television was a potentially potent medium to expose the horrors of war. However, Moeller contends that it was the still photograph that portrayed the even greater horror of war during Vietnam and had the larger impact on the American public. American television technology at the time could not provide the lasting or lingering image as did still photography.

Since Vietnam, television technology and its potential has exploded. Ted Turner recognized television's potential and established Cable News Network (CNN). This television news network brought the Gulf War and other armed

²⁶"United media protests restrictive military press policy in gulf," Grant Willis, Army Times, July 15, 1991, p8.

conflicts to the American living room 24 hours-a-day. With the advent of this 24-hour news network, military and media strategies in reporting military actions took on another light. CNN played a very important role in shaping American support and attitudes concerning the Gulf War.

In a Times Mirror poll conducted on January 25, 1991, 61 percent of the respondents rated CNN as the best in covering the gulf war. ABC was next with just 12 percent followed by NBC and CBS with seven percent each of respondents rating them highly.²⁷

The media can provide very positive assistance to the military in that it can educate, enlighten, and inform the public. The public found out more about the military and its equipment than since the Vietnam War. Not only could the American public revel in the capabilities and power of the American military but so could Iraqis and other people of the world.

The top television news story from December 1990 through February 1991 was the Iraq-Kuwait crisis: Operation DESERT STORM. This story commanded 2658 minutes of television air time during this time frame. The second ranked story during this same time frame was when Shevardnadze resigned as defense minister for the Soviet Union, which comprised a mere 56 minutes total.²⁸

²⁷Dennis, et al., xii.

²⁸Dennis, et al., 47.

CNN provided the medium to educate viewers about the military's high-tech weapons. The Patriot, a surface-to-air missile, was described as the darling of defense. Its apparent actions on the battlefield blasted the critics of this weapon system who believed it too technical to be reliable.

High-tech systems that worked well threw off the nay sayers of journalism. Television tape of bombs landing on target with no collateral damage shot down those journalists who emphasized before the war that military technology systems were unreliable--too sophisticated.

Many reporters and editorialists assumed Schwarzkopf was overstating results of the air campaign and was following the pattern of false reporting that developed during Vietnam War.

Now that the fog of war has lifted, considerable skepticism is now rampant regarding the effectiveness of the Army's Patriot missile and Apache helicopter, Navy's Tomahawk cruise missile, and the Air Force's F-117A "stealth" jet fighter and other technologically advanced weapons systems. Besides equipment, the competence of the intelligence community and the thoroughness of the intelligence estimates used before and during the war are being questioned.

In his book, How CNN Fought the War: a View from the Inside, Major General Perry Smith, retired Air Force

general and CNN analyst, rated the Los Angeles Times, USA Today and U.S. News and World Report as providing the best unbiased coverage of the Gulf War.²⁹

"Military briefings played a key role in how this war was reported."³⁰ An intermedia issue was related to the fact that CNN was carrying all the military briefings live--resulting in heavy TV coverage which the print media didn't like. Schwarzkopf enforced a 30-minute briefing schedule.

This briefing schedule served several purposes, the main one being a form of military control. Additionally, it exposed military leaders to the public. In particular, General Thomas Kelly, J-3, developed a masterful rapport with the media. He seemed to understand their needs and they genuinely believed he was forthright throughout the operation. This short briefing schedule forced reporters to focus their questions and be knowledgeable about the topic at hand. The quality of questions coming initially from reporters in Riyadh was unimpressive. Most reporters covering the Pentagon and Riyadh had never covered a war or served in the military. A spinoff from this short briefing schedule was the extensive use of military analysts by television networks. The analysts' responsibility was to

²⁹Perry M. Smith, Major General, U.S. Air Force, retired, How CNN Fought the War: A View From the Inside (New York: A Birch Lane Press Book, 1991), 27,28.

³⁰Smith, 75.

listen to the briefings carefully and to determine what had not been said or what was evaded when asked.

Newsrooms needed at their immediate disposal people with recent or well-grounded military experience who could answer questions and had a thorough knowledge of strategy, operational doctrine, tactics, and high-tech/modern weapons systems. Harry Summers, retire U.S. Army colonel, was hired by NBC. NBC also recruited Gary Sick, a retired Navy captain who was more of a political strategist than a military tactician.³¹ The CBS team included retired General Mike Dugan, former (albeit briefly) Air Force chief of staff and commander of U.S. Air forces in Europe and General George Crist, U.S. Marine Corps, retired--former Commander, U.S. Central Command, Schwartzkopf's predecessor. The ABC team consisted of retired Lieutenant General Bernard Trainor, U.S. Marine Corps; former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, retired Admiral William Crowe (Powell's predecessor), and Tony Cordesman. Although Cordesman had no previous military service experience he was well-versed in political-military affairs.

CNN had the luxury of in-depth military analysis and education. The other networks' military analysts found 90% or more of their copy on the editor's floor in order to keep to a one hour show. According to Smith, Dugan found working with CBS very frustrating. Dugan was the most qualified to

³¹Smith, 100.

talk about air war issues that clearly dominated 38 of the 42 days of the war, but he wasn't given the air time to do so.

The difference between Vietnam and the Gulf is that neither the Pentagon nor Washington ran the war--the field commanders did. Military analysts provided a bridge between the press and military, albeit a shaky and narrow bridge.

The potential for the analysts to unintentionally uncover the true operational plan or to get inside the minds of the military and decision cycle will always be a danger. The phenomena of military analysts, retired military personnel working for the press, will develop even further in the event of future conflicts or even when dealing with defense issues.

According to CNN analyst Perry Smith, the U.S. military seemed to be more comfortable in dealing with a former military person employed by the press than with a journalist. They knew Smith, trusted him, and knew he would use the information they gave him prudently.

The American public saw the congressional debate and knew how their representatives and senators voted. The public witnessed how the Congress overwhelmingly approved military action in the Gulf. This was a "just" war and had the approval of Congress and the people it represented. This support was evident and viewed via television...CNN and major television networks.

FOG OF WAR LIFTED

The Bush administration scored a masterful foreign policy victory by securing Congressional support for a declaration of war by master minding tough U.N. resolutions and by leading a coalition of forces into a "just war." The press's flattering portrayal of American military might is unsurprising--popular wars, legitimized by Congress and by favorable public opinion are more often than not treated favorably by the American press. Mainstream news organizations want to support the President on foreign policy issues but now that the fog of war has lifted and the scribes have finished their after action reports, considerable skepticism is rampant.

Weapons performance have come under attack from defense experts in the United States and Israel and from the committee staff which traveled with the General Accounting Office and Congressional Research Service to Huntsville, Alabama to review Army data.

Originally, the Army said the Patriot missile was successful against 80 percent of the Iraqi Scud missiles fired at Saudi Arabia and 50 percent fired at Israel. In an updated review, the Army determined the Patriot was actually successful against 70 percent of the Scuds fired at Saudi Arabia and 40 percent of those fired at Israel.³²

³²Donna Cassata, "Army Softens Praise of Patriot in Gulf War," Detroit Free Press, 8 April 1991, sec. NWS, p. 11A.

Journalists claim military officials fear that reports of less than flawless weapon performance during the gulf War could result in continued military budget cuts.³³

³³Barton Gellman, "Gulf Weapons' Accuracy Downgraded Success Rate of 'Stealth' Jet, Cruise Missile Less than Previously Stated," The Washington Post, 10 April 1992, sec. A, p. a01.

PRESS POOLS

Journalists complained more about access than censorship during the Gulf War.

On December 14, 1990, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) Pete Williams issued a memorandum to Washington bureau chiefs of the Pentagon press corps outlining the plans for pools and flights for auxiliary staff in the event of hostilities in the Persian Gulf. The plan detailed three phases for "...exercising and deploying rotating correspondent pools, aligned with front line forces to permit combat coverage."³⁴

In Phase I of the plan the first two pools would deploy immediately and become familiar with the troops, mission, area, and filing procedures. Phase II would begin with the onset of hostilities by prepositioning pools to cover the first stages of combat. More pools would be deployed when possible to expand the coverage. Phase III would begin when open coverage was possible and would provide for unilateral coverage of activities. The pools would be disbanded and all media would operate independently, although under U.S. Central Command escort.³⁵

³⁴Pete Williams, memorandum, "Plans for pools and flight for auxiliary staff in the event of hostilities in the Persian Gulf," (December 14, 1990).

³⁵ibid.

Each pool would consist of eighteen news media personnel: three newspaper correspondents, two wire service correspondents, two three-member television crews, one radio correspondent, one wire service photographer, one newspaper photographer, one news magazine reporter, one news magazine photographer, one Saudi reporter and one third-country reporter. Membership in the pools would be drawn from news media personnel already in Saudi Arabia.³⁶

Shortly after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, August 2, 1990, U.S. forces began to arrive in Saudi Arabia. Pete Williams, Assistant Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs, wrote in a May/June 1991 article of Defense 91 Magazine that the U.S. military was bringing in a small number of reporters while the Saudi government contemplated whether to grant visas to journalists. There was no other way to get Western reporters into Saudi Arabia.³⁷

The public's opinion of the value of the press pool differed from that of the media's. On March 14, 1991, Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press sponsored a telephonic survey of 1,857 respondents that was conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates (PSRA).

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Pete Williams, "The Persian Gulf, the Pentagon, the Press," Defense 91, May/June 1991, 11.

"Overall, do you think the press pool system served the public interest very well, fairly well, or not so well?"

Served very well	35%
Fairly well	51%
Not so well	13%
No opinion	1%

While the largest and most frequent complaint by the journalists was the inability to get to the front lines, they did so in greater numbers than during the Normandy invasion. "...by the time the ground war began, 132 reporters and photographers were out with the Army and Marines on the ground."³⁸ Compare that amount of access afforded journalists to the 27 U.S. reporters who actually went ashore with the first wave of forces on D-Day.

³⁸Williams, 13.

PUBLIC OPINION OF PRESS GULF WAR COVERAGE

Public opinion can be shaped by the media. The public is also very careful to assess the media on the type and amount of coverage a particular story receives. In an attempt to understand the public psyche, surveys are conducted.

Times Mirror sponsored two telephone surveys asking respondents to rate the job the press did in covering the War in the Gulf. On January 25, 1991, just after the ground offensive started, Times Mirror sponsored a telephone survey of 924 adults that was conducted by PSRA.

"In general, how would you rate the job the press has done in covering the war in the Gulf: excellent, good, only fair, or poor?"

Excellent	36%
Good	42%
Only fair	15%
Poor	5%
Don't know	2%

On March 14, 1991 Times Mirror sponsored another telephone survey of 1,857 adults that was again conducted by PSRA. The survey showed an improvement in how the press was rated.

"In general, how would you rate the job the press has done in covering the war in the Gulf: excellent, good, only fair, or poor?"

Excellent	45%
Good	38%
Only Fair	11%
Poor	5%
Don't know	1%

Moreover, in a Gallup survey sponsored by Newsweek, the press received high marks from the respondents. On March 3, 1991, a telephone survey of 769 national adults revealed that 59% of the respondents thought better of the news media during the coverage of the Gulf War.

"On balance, does coverage of the Gulf War make you think better or worse of the United States news media?"

Better	59%
Worse	24%
The same	12%
Don't know/refused	5%

Even though the American public thought more highly of the news media than in the past and believed the media covered the Gulf War well, some media organizations believed they were denied First Amendment freedoms. Three lawsuits were brought against the Department of Defense.

LEGAL CHALLENGES

Two of the three lawsuits brought against the DoD accused the military of denying the media access to the battlefield, and complaints about the pool system, military escort requirements, and the strict security review system. The third lawsuit accused DoD of denying the public and the press freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment by barring them from covering the return of military personnel killed in action during Operation DESERT STORM.

The first two suits were heard by the U.S. District Court of the Southern District of New York. Because the plaintiffs' complaints address similar issues and concerns they were consolidated.

The first lawsuit addressed what the plaintiffs believed to be excessively strict press guidelines and ground rules for use in the Persian Gulf.

The plaintiffs in *NATION v. Department of Defense*, *The Nation*, *Mother Jones*, and *The Villager*, contended that the ground rules and guidelines used during the Vietnam War which allowed relatively unimpeded access to the battlefield were adequate.³⁹

In the second lawsuit, Agence France-Presse (AFP) accused DoD of denying it freedoms of the First Amendment.

³⁹NATION v. Department of Defense (U.S. District Court of Southern New York District 1991).

AFP was denied access to the press pool because it did not meet DoD's criteria of principally serving the American public. AFP argued that it served more than 24 million people and met the required standard. Additionally, AFP believed DoD's policy of coordinating press pool memberships through Reuters was "unfair and illegal."⁴⁰

In the Court's view, the right of access claims, and particularly the equal access claims, are not sufficiently in focus at this time to meet the Rescue Army requirement that "the underlying constitutional issues (be presented) in a clean-cut and concrete form." See 331 U.S. at 584. For the reasons articulated throughout the Opinion, prudence dictates that a final determination of the important constitutional issues at stake be left for another day when the controversy is more sharply focused. Accordingly, the complaint is dismissed.⁴¹

DoD set criteria for participation in the pools in order to best logistically accommodate a limited number of media representatives. Central Command (CENTCOM) Pool Membership and Operating Procedures dated January 30, 1991 gave preference to "media that principally serve the American public and that have a long-term presence covering Department of Defense military operations."

Membership in the pools was essential to obtaining access to any Operation Desert Storm information. Pool membership, however, did not give free access to the

⁴⁰NATION v. Department of Defense (U.S. District Court of Southern New York District, 1991), 7.

⁴¹NATION v. DoD, 38.

battlefield. Due to logistical considerations, the press pool members rotated among themselves in order to gather news, which was shared with other pool members.

The third lawsuit concerned the freedom to report the return of military personnel killed in the Gulf War to Dover Air Force Base. Here the plaintiffs argued that this particular news story was worthy of coverage and did not threaten military operational security. Not since Vietnam had there been a war to anticipate a large number of casualties. Even during Vietnam, the press was not permitted to photograph returning dead military personnel.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the twenty years since Vietnam, the military has been working to solve its media problem while the media has been comfortable in sitting on its First Amendment rights. The military has become sensitive to the delicate issues that can stem the tide of popularity. Experiences in Vietnam taught the military that it is better to break bad news yourself than to have it broken for you. After the incidents of fratricide during the Gulf War, high ranking officials were quick to report and admit the mistakes of killing their own.

Even the daily military briefings from Riyadh took a decisive turn in the military's favor compared to the "Five O'clock Follies" of the Vietnam era. The briefings were structured and conducted by well-trained, professional military officers accustomed to meeting with the press.

The news media were unprepared to fight the military's strict press controls. The military took its

lessons learned from Vietnam, Grenada, and Panama and fashioned a structured, controllable public affairs program for managing the media during the Persian Gulf War. The media didn't or couldn't apply those same collective efforts and found themselves responding to the military's press restrictions. John Balzar, a reporter from the *Los Angeles Times* who covered the Gulf War lamented, "I was a sergeant in Vietnam and now I am a journalist here. I feel like I'm in the wrong place at the wrong time, and I am going to go home and have people throw rocks at me."⁴²

Despite press restrictions imposed by the military, the press, according to the American public, managed to provide adequate and timely information about the war.

Although not totally banning the press from the combat zone as was the case in Grenada, the military did restrict media access to the battlefield. These restrictions were certainly more stringent to the guidelines used during the Vietnam War.

While both the military and media did have their problems and were not totally satisfied in the conduct of managing the press and covering the war, a compromise was in fact achieved. The military exercised control--perhaps not to the extent it had wished--and the media was able to gain

⁴²Peter Andrews, "The Media and the Military," *American Heritage*, Jul/Aug 1991, 84.

limited access to the battle, again, not to the extent the media had wished.

The use of military experts by the television networks provided more analytical coverage of the war. Because of the speedy availability of war coverage via satellite, military analysts brought the pictures into context (as they saw it) for the viewing public.

The use of military experts also served another purpose. Few journalists have actual military training experience let alone military combat experience from which to draw expertise. Military politics, particularly activities from within the Pentagon, have been a popular news beat for the journalist. But little has been reported or known of the military mission. "When the siren went off in the Gulf, the American media were caught flat-footed. ...the ranks of the press were suddenly swollen by correspondents who, in one veteran's downright phrase 'don't know a tank from a turd.'"⁴³ This phenomena of military analysts is something the military must contend with in the future and address in future public affairs guidance.

⁴³ Andrews, 84-85.

The military learned the very valuable lesson of telling its own story. It released a series of videos that captivated the American public showing the accuracy and deadly results of smart bombs and high-tech weaponry.

In the Gulf War, it seems we made sure to position the press so our professionalism and our technological superiority could not be ignored. In Vietnam, when left to their own devices, it seems most reporters positioned themselves where they could see our failures but not our success.⁴⁴

⁴⁴William A. Hamilton, "A Vietnam Soldier's View of the Media: The Transition to Reality," Remarks prepared for the AIM "War and the Media" Conference held on April 25-26, 1991, in Washington, D.C.

FUTURE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The commercial media should act as an honest broker for those who do not trust the war fighters and the politicians who put them in the fight. If they do this, there is a place for it....There is a ghoulish propensity on the part of some members of the commercial media to record the human body in its most grotesque configuration. These acts, I believe, are a direct affront to the dignity of our dead soldiers, and commanders have an obligation to protect the dignity of their soldiers in death as well as life.⁴⁵

The journalists think the press came out with a black eye in this war. No doubt media executives will be looking to their recently-initiated veterans of armed conflict reporting to pass on some lessons learned.

Besides struggling with the military, the media was fighting amongst itself...print versus television. This rivalry, although possibly competitively healthy, must be harnessed in order to focus energies in getting the story to the public.

Train journalists who are able to speak to the military and understand its mission. They need to learn to ask the right questions or the hard questions in a timely manner so those concerns can be addressed during a fast-paced conflict. Journalists won't have the time to learn

⁴⁵Major General Patrick H. Brady, "Telling the Army Story: As It Is, Not As It Should Be," Army, September 1990, 43.

the capabilities of military equipment or intricacies of the military command and control systems in any possible future conflict.

GANNETT FOUNDATION MEDIA CENTER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Research Group of the Gannett Foundation Media Center offer the following recommendations for the media as a result of the findings of its report.⁴⁶

1. The American news media must learn to represent themselves collectively with one voice on matters of access to information and censorship in time of war without sacrificing the independence of individual media or their essential competitiveness.

2. The news media must more effectively articulate the case for freedom of information in wartime in a manner that is understood by the general public.

3. New organizations that covered the gulf war need to asses carefully the qualifications and performance of their war correspondents with an eye toward future improvements.

4. In keeping with the recommendations of the Sidle Panel, the pool system should be used only as a temporary expedient, to be abandoned as soon as is consistent with genuine national security needs.

⁴⁶Dennis, et al., 96-97.

5. The pool must also be reformed to include a mechanism for arbitrating judiciously between the needs of different media.

In addition to the principal recommendations directed toward the media, the Research Group of the Gannett Foundation Media Center also proposed the following general recommendations.⁴⁷

1. Serious attention should be given to the range and diversity of sources of news used in wartime to assure readers and viewers that they are getting full and complete reports.

2. Media organizations should keep the public informed about how they cover war and other domestic or foreign affairs.

3. Efforts to encourage and widen public discussion and debate are critical.

4. Media organizations, such as the major television networks and others who are often criticized for downsizing and cutting back on news coverage, should be praised for their commitment of resources and resolve in covering the Persian Gulf war and should be further encouraged to continue their commitment to quality news.

5. Schools of journalism should take special note of the media's performance in the gulf war in their curriculum decisions.

⁴⁷Dennis, et al., 97.

6. First Amendment freedoms should receive more attention at the elementary and high school level.

ASSOCIATED PRESS PROPOSED GUIDELINES

A set of nine draft guidelines was announced April 17, 1992 by the Associated Press. The guidelines are the result of more than six months of discussions between six major news organizations and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs.⁴⁸ The Department of Defense Public developed a set of principles that were negotiated with editors since the end of the Persian Gulf War. The proposed guidelines require further study by senior Pentagon and service officials.

The new guidelines are designed to provide greater access to media to cover American forces in combat. Listed are the nine guidelines drafted by major U.S. news organizations and the Pentagon as principles to be followed in the coverage of any war involving U.S. troops.⁴⁹

1. Open and independent reporting will be the principal means of coverage of U.S. military operations.

⁴⁸Grant Willis, "Press, Military May Bury Hatchet," Army Times, 4 May 1991, 12.

⁴⁹Associated Press, "New War Coverage Policy Proposed," European Stars & Stripes, 20 April 1992, 9.

2. Pools (composed of reporters who report to the entire press corps) are not to serve as the standard means of covering U.S. military operations. But pools may sometimes provide the only feasible means of early access...Pools should be as large as possible and disbanded at the earliest opportunity within 24 to 36 hours when possible. The arrival of early access pools will not cancel the principle of independent coverage for journalists already in the area.

3. Even under conditions of open coverage, pools may be appropriate for specific events, such as those at extremely remote locations or where space is limited.

4. Journalists in a combat zone will be credentialed by the U.S. military and will be required to abide by a clear set of military security ground rules that protect U.S. forces and their operations. Violation of the ground rules can result in the suspension of the credentials and expulsion from the combat zone...News organizations will make their best efforts to assign experienced journalists to combat operations and to make them familiar with U.S. military operations.

5. Journalists will be provided access to all major military units. Special Operations restrictions may limit access in some cases.

6. Military public affairs officers should act as liaisons but should not interfere with the reporting process.

7. Under conditions of open coverage, field commanders will permit journalists to ride on military vehicles and aircraft whenever feasible. The military will be responsible for the transportation of pools.

8. Consistent with its capabilities, the military will supply PAOs (public affairs officers) with facilities to enable timely secure, compatible transmission of pool material and will make these facilities available whenever possible for filing independent coverage. In cases when government facilities are unavailable, journalists will, as always, file by any other means available. The military will not ban communications systems operated by news organizations but electromagnetic operational security in battlefield situations may require limited restrictions on the use of such systems.

9. These principles will apply as well to the operations of the standing Department of Defense National Media Pool system.

CONCLUSIONS

As an old military adage goes, generals train for the last war they fought. In the case of the Gulf War, journalists got caught in that mindset. Although media representatives had participated in national media press pool tests and actual deployments, they were not prepared to cover this war using the military's new rules. *Journalists need to be flexible enough to recognize that every war will be different, requiring different rules.* The relative luxury of freer access afforded journalists during the Vietnam war needs to be expunged from the media community's soul.

The media would do well to educate the American public to help the public better understand that the press serves the nation's larger interests. Peter Arnett who gained notoriety as the only Western reporter in Baghdad Iraq during the Gulf war claims that the U.S. government not only concealed information but deliberately misled the American public. "It worries us in the media that the public would buy the line that information is dangerous. An informed public is what keeps this democracy together."⁵⁰

⁵⁰Teresa J. Gaines, "War Reporter Condemns Government Censorship," Kansas City Star, 24 April 1992.

A recommendation that the military may want to consider is the need to better accommodate the press in helping the press get the stories back to the rear. Computer modems and tactical telephone facsimile machines aided those journalists working with responsive units.

As recommended to the media community, the military needs to continue to educate servicemen and women as to the mission of the media. The best spokespeople for the military are the men and women serving in the United States Armed Forces. They need to be exposed to the media and learn to talk to them. Servicemen and women do best that which they practice.

Continue to incorporate public affairs training and planning at all levels of the military professional schooling system. Public affairs plans must receive the same emphasis as logistics and intelligence annexes when preparing operation plans (OPLANs) and operation orders (OPORDs).

Limit the number of media representatives with access to the conflict. Williams stated that it is an obligation to get reporters out with the action so that they are eyewitnesses to history. It is said that journalists write the first draft of history. But, the physical limitations in the number of media representatives the military can effectively manage and manage efficiently must

be considered. Transportation, communication, facilities, equipment, and safety are all the government's concern.

Continued study and analysis of military-media relations can provide recommendations for a reasonable basis for coverage of the next conflict. The precarious balance of open coverage and the need for military security may sometimes tip in the other's favor.

APPENDIX A
BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

APPENDIX A
BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Magazine and newspaper articles comprise the majority of the literature review. Primary sources of research material included the Combined Arms Research Library (CARL) at the United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and the Army Office, Chief of Public Affairs (OCA), Pentagon, Washington, D.C.

Initial interest in the topic of military and media relations was as a result of reading The First Casualty by Phillip Knightley. His book chronicles the evolution of war correspondents from the Crimean War in 1854 through Vietnam. His chapters on the Vietnam conflict beginning in 1954 provide a British perspective because, as Knightley put it, "British correspondents were better placed to write about Vietnam than were their American colleagues..." This war, unlike others, had no front line, no simply explained cause, and no real identified villain or immediate threat to the United States, and therefor no patriotic fervor.

There had not been any major escalation of warfare since World War II and this was the first opportunity the American public had of viewing the awesome technological advancements of warfare weaponry against a peasant

population. Because there was no front line or simply explained cause, reporting the war was confusing for American correspondents, according to Knightley. He said American correspondents didn't argue the intervention, they just questioned the military's effectiveness.

The resulting public relations or affairs efforts by Washington were to get Washington's version of the war to the American public. Instead of imposing censorship, the government invited correspondents over, provided lodging and transportation to provide them access, so they could see what was really going on. Knightley accused American correspondents of becoming part of the propaganda machine.

Because there was not any censorship it became increasingly difficult for correspondents to tell whether or not what they were reporting was true. They could talk to anyone and file anytime, but their credibility was at stake.

Knightley focuses the rest of the chapter on the My Lai massacre and its exposure by a reporter, not a war correspondent. He contends that correspondents began to seriously consider the ethics of their profession during this war.

Public Affairs: The Military and the Media, 1962-1968, by William M. Hammond examines the evolution of public affairs policies in Vietnam between 1962 and 1968. The Vietnam war was the first war reported without any form of field censorship. Because there was no censorship, the

resulting speculation caused some concern. General Earle G. Wheeler, then Chief of Staff of the Army, said that this "...idle speculation injected more menace into the situation than the facts warranted." In February 1965 in response to the President's "displeasure" with official press policies, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs drafted guidance to restrict information on air strikes against North Vietnam. The rules permitted release of the times of attack, the locations and general categories of targets, the participation of either South Vietnamese or U.S. aircraft, the names of American killed and wounded after search and rescue operations were completed, and very general characterizations of mission success. The guidelines restricted the access of the press to information that might either embarrass the military services, help the enemy, or increase discussion of the war. Guidelines as a rule were followed but seemed futile when secret military information was disclosed anyway by military standing operating procedures.

On the title page of Vietnam: 10 years Later, Major General Winant Sidle, USA (Ret.) was poignantly quoted,

I'm not sure we learned too many lessons. They were there for the learning, but I haven't noticed any great change in how we are operating public affairs at the top level of government. We're still making the same old mistakes that we made in Vietnam.

In the aftermath of military action in Grenada the document

Vietnam: 10 Years Later was published. It is a compilation of observations, recommendations, analyses, and speeches featuring prominent correspondents and military figures of the Vietnam era. This Department of Defense publication was compiled March 18-23, 1983 by an assemblage of Department of Defense public affairs officers shortly after the military action in Grenada. The document is organized in four sections: The Issues; Speakers' Remarks; Hindsight; and What Have We Learned.

a. The Issues. George Esper, a special correspondent for the Associated Press during Vietnam, thought that actions by military public affairs officers were restricted by Washington policies. The press was accused of not reporting objectively. The adversarial relationship between the military and the press was antagonistic. Sidle observed that "one of the problems since Vietnam that [he'd] seen in a lot of the public affairs officers is that they hate the press and their commanders hate the press."⁵¹

b. What Have We Learned. The following three quotes from this document seem to best express the dichotomy of the media aspects of the Vietnam War as it relates to public affairs.

⁵¹Department of the Army, Defense Information School, Vietnam: 10 Years Later, 1983, 18.

"Lord help us. No one has learned anything."
Phil Goulding, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of
Defense for Public Affairs and Assistant Secretary
of Defense.

"My God, I think there are a thousand lessons to
learn from Vietnam and I don't think we've begun to
understand them all yet because we have feared
confronting it again." Robert L. Pisor, former
reporter for the Detroit News from 1963-74.

"If you're going to get fair coverage of what you
are doing, you've got to treat the press fairly,
yourself." Sidle, former chief of information, U.S.
Military Assistance Command, Vietnam and Army chief
of information.

Susan Moeller's book, Shooting War, 1989, is an
interesting combination of a historical essay and analysis
of armed conflict from the Spanish-American War through
Vietnam with the photojournalist's perspective of those
conflicts. She confirms the age-old struggle between the
military and media with explicit examples from several wars.

Accusations made against the media by the military
have a tendency of repeating, as does history. For example,
Moeller wrote that the French General Staff blamed the
press' publication of information about "military movements,
plans of the generals, and the condition and morale of the
troops for their defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of
1870."⁵² Even today some still accuse the press of
singularly losing the Vietnam War.

⁵²Moeller, 107.

Focusing on the role of war photographers and the images they produced, Moeller effectively portrayed the photojournalist's sense of duty, propriety, and truth. It provided this thesis an understanding of the mission, if you will, of this medium to the American public.

Moeller's chapters on the Vietnam War provided insight to the motivations and concerns of the press. "Although the press believed in the American cause, the younger journalists, even during the first half of the 1960s, felt they could be critical of the direction and focus of American operations in Vietnam; they thought they could criticize the American military and government without being unpatriotic."⁵³

Several theses and other papers address the feasibility of field press censorship as a means of handling the press in any future conflict. Captain Paul A. Aswell's thesis, Wartime Press Censorship by the U.S. Armed Forces: A Historical Perspective, completed in 1990, addresses the debate over U.S. wartime press censorship and the effects of technology. In Patricia Grossman's 1989 U.S. Army War College paper, "The Future of Field Press Censorship: Is there One?", the question of whether field press censorship has a role in future conflicts is answered by an emphatic NO. Grossman contended that field press censorship is obsolete with the advent of recent technological

⁵³Moeller, 352.

advancements in communications. Satellite communications, notebook computers with modems, and portable ground stations make information monitoring by the military nearly, if not totally, impossible. She made several recommendations, some of which were implemented during Operation JUST CAUSE and may have contributed to the public affairs operation in Operation DESERT STORM. They were:

- a. Establish an accreditation policy for news media.

- b. Develop a basic set of ground rules.

- c. Plan accommodations for media representatives in the war zone. This includes Sidle's recommendations of escorts, transportation, housing, telecommunications, and equipment as well as Grossman's recommendations of providing details as to the number, location, and type of press centers and camps to be established in the theater of operations.

- d. Develop an education program for media representatives to ensure they understand how the U.S. military is organized, how it operates jointly, independently, or with allied nations, and what its missions are.

- e. Develop an education program for military personnel so they understand the mission of the media as it affects their own mission.

Association of the United States Army's Institute of Land Warfare promoted the book, Newsman & National Defense, Is Conflict Inevitable?, 1991. Peter Braestrup, senior editor of the Library of Congress, former Washington Post Saigon bureau chief, and author of Battle Lines: A Study of Wartime Military-Media Relations provides an introduction to this book of essays which focuses on the military-media relationship during Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM. Well known military and journalistic figures such as William Hammond, Richard Halloran, and Bernard Trainor contributed to this collection.

A Gannett Foundation Report, The Media at War: The Press and the Persian Gulf Conflict, 1991, examines press censorship, journalists covering the conflict, news media technology, media and editorial coverage of the war, and the public and the media. It includes a historical analysis of wartime censorship and a legal assessment of reporting guidelines placed on the media by the military. Surveys of journalists, media executives, and technology experts are included as is as an assessment of public opinion.

The numerous newspaper and magazine articles contributed to an overall understanding of the frustrations and constraints placed on correspondents and their military public affairs counterparts. There are far too many to

individually cite. Authors and their articles are referred to throughout the thesis as they pertain to the topic at hand.

Accusations of Pentagon press control and the resulting frustrations are balanced against the military's public affairs responsibility to assist yet maintain some semblance of order. But when the number of journalists/correspondents in-country reached well over a thousand, military public affairs support operations were severely hampered.

The inexperience of Gulf reporters became painfully evident to the American public during televised press briefings. These articles provide actual accounts and incidents and suggestions for remedy. Many proposed solutions from both the military and the media were similar or even the same. The Pentagon's Early Bird was also a ready source of material for this thesis.⁵⁴

Other literature review includes: Operation JUST CAUSE After Action Reports; Operation DESERT STORM After Action Reports; Public Affairs Guidance for Operation DESERT STORM.

⁵⁴The Pentagon Early Bird is a compilation of defense-related newspaper and periodical articles. It is prepared daily by American Forces Information Service to inform key personnel of news items of interest to them in their official capacities.

APPENDIX B
OPERATION DESERT STORM PRESS GROUND RULES
AND GUIDELINES

APPENDIX B
OPERATION DESERT STORM
GROUND RULES AND GUIDELINES

What follows are the ground rules and guidelines established on January 14, 1991 as printed from the hearing before the Committee on Governmental Affairs United States Senate, One Hundred Second Congress first session, February 20, 1991 titled Pentagon Rules on Media Access to the Persian Gulf War.

The following information should not be reported because its publication or broadcast could jeopardize operations and endanger lives:

(1) For U.S. or coalition units, specific numerical information on troop strength, aircraft, weapons systems, on-hand equipment, or supplies (e.g., artillery, tanks, radars, missiles, trucks, water), including amounts of ammunition or fuel moved by support units or on hand in combat units. Unit size may be described in general terms such as "company-size," "multi-battalion," "multi-division," "naval task force," and "carrier battle group." Number or amount of equipment and supplies may be described in general terms such as "large," "small," or "many."

(2) Any information that reveals details of future plans, operations, or strikes, including postponed or canceled operations.

(3) Information or photography, including aerial and satellite pictures, that would reveal the specific location of military forces or show the level of security at military installations or encampments. Locations may be described as follows: all Navy embark stories can identify the ship upon which embarked as a dateline and will state that the report is coming "from the Persian Gulf," "Red Sea," or "North Arabian Sea." Stories written in Saudi Arabia may be datelined, "Eastern Saudi Arabia," "Near the Kuwaiti border," etc. For specific countries outside Saudi Arabia, stories will state that the report is coming from the Persian Gulf region unless DoD has publicly acknowledged participation by that country.

(4) Rules of engage : details.

(5) Information on intelligence collection activities, including targets, methods, and results.

(6) During an operation, specific information on friendly force troop movements, tactical deployments, and dispositions that would jeopardize operational security and lives. This would include unit designations, names of operations, and size of friendly forces involved, until released by CENTCOM.

(7) Identification of mission aircraft points of origin, other than as land or carrier based.

(8) Information on the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of enemy camouflage, cover, deception, targeting, direct and indirect fire, intelligence collection, or security measures.

(9) Specific identifying information on missing or downed aircraft or ships while search and rescue operations are planned or underway.

(10) Special operations forces' methods, unique equipment, or tactics.

(11) Specific operating methods and tactics, (e.g., air operations angles of attack or speeds, or naval tactics and evasive maneuvers). General terms such as "low" or "fast" may be used.

(12) Information on operational or support vulnerabilities that could be used against U.S. forces, such as details of major battle damage or major personnel losses of specific U.S. or coalition units, until that information no longer provides tactical advantage to the enemy and is, therefore, released by CENTCOM. Damage and casualties may be described as "light," "moderate," or "heavy."

GUIDELINES FOR NEWS MEDIA

News media personnel must carry and support any personal and professional gear they take with them, including protective cases for professional equipment, batteries, cables, converters, etc.

Night operations--Light discipline restrictions will be followed. The only approved light source is a flashlight with a red lens. No visible light source, including flash or television lights, will be used when operating with forces at night unless specifically approved by the on-scene commander.

You must remain with your military escorts at all times, until released, and follow their instructions regarding your activities. These instructions are not intended to hinder your reporting. They are intended to facilitate movement, ensure safety, and protect operational security.

For news media personnel participating in designated CENTCOM Media Pools:

(1) Upon registering with the JIB, news media should contact their respective pool coordinator for explanation of pool operations.

(2) If you are unable to withstand the rigorous conditions required to operate with the forward-deployed forces, you will be medically evacuated out of the area.

(3) Security at the source will be the policy. In the event of hostilities, pool products will be subject to security review prior to release to determine if they contain information that would jeopardize an operation or the security of U.S. or coalition forces. Material will not be withheld just because it is embarrassing or contains criticism. The public affairs officer on the scene will conduct the security review. However, if a conflict arises, the product will be expeditiously sent to JIB Dhahran for review by the JIB director. If no agreement can be reached, the product will be expeditiously forwarded to OASD (PA) for review by the appropriate bureau chief.

Casualty information, because of concern of the notification of the next of kin, is extremely sensitive. By executive directive, next of kin of all military fatalities must be notified in person by a uniformed member of the appropriate service. There have been instances in which the next of kin have first learned of the death or wounding of a loved one through the news media. Casualty photographs showing a recognizable face, name tag, or other identifying feature or item should not be used before the next of kin have been notified. The anguish that sudden recognition at home can cause far outweighs the news value of the photograph, film or videotape. Names of casualties whose next of kin have been notified can be verified through the JIB Dhahran.

APPENDIX B
OPERATION DESERT STORM PRESS GROUND RULES
AND GUIDELINES

APPENDIX C

CHRONOLOGY OF THE PERSIAN GULF WAR⁵⁵

July 17, 1990--Iraqi President Saddam Hussein accuses Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates of plotting with the U.S. to keep oil prices low by flouting their OPEC export quotas.

August 1--Kuwait talks break off concerning oil and border disputes.

August 2--Iraqi troops and tanks storm the border of Kuwait. President Bush orders economic sanctions.

August 6--The U.N. authorizes a trade and financial embargo of Iraq.

August 6-7--Bush orders American military forces to Saudi Arabia to defend its oil fields from Iraqi attack.

August 8--Saddam Hussein annexes Kuwait.

August 15--Iraq offers Iran a peace deal.

August 20--Bush declares Americans held in Iraq to be "hostages."

August 20--Bush calls up U.S. Reserves.

November 8--Bush orders a major U.S. buildup of troops in Saudi Arabia.

November 29--The U.N. authorizes the use of force against Iraq if it does not withdraw totally and unconditionally from Kuwait by January 15, 1991.

⁵⁵Dennis, et al., 7.

December 1--Saddam Hussein accepts Bush's proposal for talks, but no date is set.

December 6--Saddam Hussein orders all hostages freed.

January 9, 1991--U.S. Secretary of State Baker and Iraqi Foreign Minister Aziz hold more than six hours of talks in Geneva, but make no progress. Aziz refuses to deliver a letter to Saddam from Bush.

January 9--U.S. press rules finalized.

January 10--Congress opens debate on giving Bush authority to use military force against Iraq.

January 12--Congress grants Bush the authority to use military force against Iraq.

January 10-12--Western envoys leave Baghdad.

January 15--Bush gives written authority to attack Iraq unless Iraq begins a withdrawal soon after the midnight U.N. deadline to withdraw from Kuwait.

January 16--The U.S. begins launching an attack on military targets in Iraq and Kuwait. Bush addresses the nation.

January 17--The first Iraqi Scud-type long-range missiles hit Israel.

January 16-17--The Cable News Network (CNN) broadcasts live from Baghdad.

January 24--CBS News reports that veteran foreign correspondent Bob Simon and three other crew members are missing.

January 25--U.S. charges that Iraq deliberately created an oil spill in the Persian Gulf that grew to be among the largest on record.

January 26--Tens of thousands join in an antiwar protest in Washington, D.C., the biggest protest of the war.

January 29--Iraq begins an incursion into Saudi Arabia in the first major ground offensive of the war.

January 30--Eleven Marines become the first U.S. military killed in ground fighting.

January 31--Allied forces retake the Saudi town of Khafji.

February 13--As many as several hundred Iraqi civilians die when U.S. bombs destroy a Baghdad building where people are sheltered. U.S. says that the building was being used for military communications.

February 15--Iraq announces that it will consider withdrawing from Kuwait, but imposes strict conditions. Bush calls the offer a "cruel hoax."

February 22--Bush sets a noon, Feb.23 deadline for Iraq to begin a "large scale" withdrawal from Kuwait or face a ground assault by the multinational coalition.

February 23--Bush announces at 10:00 p.m. that the allied ground offensive has begun.

February 25--an Iraqi Scud missile kills 28 U.S. soldiers in a barracks in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Baghdad announces orders for Iraqi soldiers to withdraw from Kuwait, and troops begin to leave Kuwait City.

February 28--Iraq announces a cease-fire and agrees to a meeting of military commanders to arrange terms.

March 2--Bob Simon and his CBS crew are released in Baghdad.

March 3--The U.N. approves a resolution backing Bush's insistence that allied troops remain in Iraq until Iraq has complied with cease-fire terms.

March 4--Iraq accepts all allied terms, including the release of all prisoners. Civil unrest spreads in Iraq.

March 9--The first American troops return to jubilant, flag-waving, horn-honking crowds. Forty journalists held captive in Iraq for almost a week are turned over to the International Red Cross in Baghdad.

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