ABSTRACT

A Portrait of War:
Case Studies of the Operation Iraqi Freedom Media Embed Program

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This study explored the press-military relationship during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) through case studies of embedded journalists and military personnel. Embedded journalists and military personnel were interviewed using the oral-history technique. Embedded journalists judged their performance as successful in covering the war and had a positive view of their relationship with the military. Military personnel responded favorably to embedded journalists' coverage of OIF and also positively assessed their relationship with the journalists. Interviews with both press and military members revealed multiple factors that influenced embedded journalists and their coverage of OIF.

A Portrait of War:
Case Studies of the Operation Iraqi Freedom Media Embed Program

by

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A Thesis

Approved by the Department of Journalism

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Clark Baker, Ph.D., Chairperson

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Arts

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Ed, who introduced me to the military
and provided daily encouragement all the way from Iraq

The first essential in military operations is that no information of value shall be given to the enemy. The first essential in newspaper work and broadcasting is wide-open publicity. It is your job and mine to try to reconcile those sometimes diverse considerations.

- General Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1944

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

On 20 March 2003, American and coalition forces crossed Kuwait's borders into Iraq, thus beginning Operation Iraqi Freedom. The rest of the world watched on televisions, heard on radios, and read online and in newspapers the step-by-step actions of the U.S. military in real-time as the invasion transpired. Why? Because the American and foreign press rode troops' passenger seats and stood next to them on their ships, recording their every move for a curious public back in the States and abroad. More than 700 journalists initially participated in the U.S. Department of Defense's Embedded Media Program and accompanied American troops into battle in spring 2003. Their observations became the products that the world used to learn about the early stages of war in Iraq.

As indicated by General Dwight D. Eisenhower's quote, spoken in 1944, the military and the press approach war differently. Obliged by its role in democracy, the press desires to publicize the whole truth of wartime operations. Compelled to achieve successful missions, the military need to protect its operations for security reasons. Hence the press and the military dance an awkward two-step when they attempt to work with and around each other during combat.

A free press is a necessary element in a democratic government. In a democracy, the government must be held accountable for its actions by its citizens. Democracies require the participation of informed citizens, thus inherently granting the citizenry with the right to know public information, which includes details of a publicly-funded war.

The role of a free press is to inform the public of this information and provide a forum for debate on local, national and international subjects. Therefore the press must act responsibly and report factual information while also allowing for fair debate. To perform these actions, the press must have access to public information, free from governmental interference. A free press allows for a journalist to be able to record and explain an event or situation without restraints. A free press should operate without governmental controls and should have legal protections, as constituted in the Untied States by the First Amendment.

In times of war, the public depends on these newsgathering folks to feed our famished curiosities with knowledge from afar of the battles, the victories, the losses, the wounded, and the dead. Embedded journalists present whichever slice of the story they can. Future generations and historians will require these published accounts so that they may piece together the full story of what happened and why it happened. But there is more to the full story than what is written in the published accounts. Embedded journalists' personal stories are just as important as their published news stories.

Previous research studies analyzed the filed reports of embedded journalists for potential bias. This study digs deeper beneath the surface of filed stories and explores embedded journalists' wartime experiences on a personal level. Through oral history interviews with embedded journalists, the researcher attempted to discover what really happened "over there" in Iraq and what may have influenced the journalists and their reports. This study also seeks to learn about the dynamics of the relationship between embedded press and the military. Understanding the need to consult both sides of the story, the researcher included military personnel's reaction to embedded reporters, their

journalistic performance as well as service members' views of their relationship with

embedded press. Their voices paint a valuable portrait of the "odd couple" together in

war during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

CHAPTER TWO

History of U.S. Press-Military Relations

While the First Amendment provides protection of freedom of speech, it does not

guarantee a right to gain access to information, only the right to communicate after

newsworthy information is learned.[1] This situation results in a gray, loosely defined

area in addressing access to or restrictions on wartime-information. What right does the

press have to the access of battlefields and to the reporting of military operations? What

right does the military have to restrict and to censor the press in reporting sensitive

information during wartime? These questions have plagued the American government

since the Civil War. The U.S. government has "experimented" with a variety of press

access systems during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and all systems have

granted some degree of censorship to the military.

World Wars I and II

America's limited access to wartime information and press censorship by the

military can be traced to Britain's method of "dealing" with war correspondents during

World War I. The First World War "set extreme standards for restrictive censorship,

military mendacity, and manipulation of journalists and news coverage until the early

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[1]John Zelezny, *Communications Law: Liberties, Restraints, and the Modern Media,* 4th ed., (Belmont, Ca.: Thomson Wadsworth, 2004), 94.

1980s."[2] The English system of press censorship during the World War I heavily

influenced the censorship of American reporters upon the United States' entry into the

war. Britain's War Office had not intended to accredit war correspondents and had

ordered military officials to seize and deport them if they were found near the action.

However, the lack of media access resulted in war reporting in the United States that was

sympathetic to the Germans as American reporters received assistance from German

military authorities. The concern about public opinion in the United States led the

British "to allow correspondents in the field under tight restrictions."[3] Six reporters

were clothed in officers' uniforms, provided with transportation, and were pooled to

share information on different battles. Articles were heavily censored to be optimistic of

the battlefront.[4]

Five hundred American reporters were in Europe by 1915 to cover the war.

Forty reporters actually followed the operations of the United States military, known as

the American Expeditionary Force. These forty reporters were subject to a strict

accreditation process but had little physical restriction. However, their reports in entirety

were censored through the press section of the Military Intelligence Service.[5]

World War II also witnessed government controls of the press. Journalists

received instructions from the Office of War Information and the newly established

Office of Censorship restricting them from divulging in their reports troop size, location,

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[2]Clem Lloyd, "The Case for the Media," ed. Peter R. Young, *Defence and the Media in Time of Limited War* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1992), 48.

[3]Judith Raine Baroody, *Media Access and the Military: The Case of the Gulf War* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, Inc., 1998), 50.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., 51.

and movement.[6] The "Code of Wartime Practices," issued by the Office of Censorship,

stated that this type of information could not be released without authorization. All

journalists' reports from abroad were subject to military clearance. Guidelines

established by the Office of Censorship stated that all stories must be attributed to an

official source, thus allowing the official military source to control the information.[7]

Reporters had to be accredited to work in combat areas, and "this accreditation was

conditional on their agreement in writing to provide all copy for military censorship."[8]

It was not uncommon for the military to refuse accreditation to journalists who had

previously published negative reports about the war. World War II censorship was not

only designed to prevent the enemy from acquiring sensitive data about the Allied Forces

but also to stifle reports that reduced levels of public morale.[9]

     While reporters worked under tight government restrictions, they did have

freedom to move around wherever they wished, although they were still heavily tied to

the military. The practice of press pools was again used in World War II. Journalists

"enjoyed incredible access to troops and commanders, often wearing uniforms and

traveling with active units."[10] A media plan for the D-Day invasion outlined that each

corps in the operation would be "accompanied by seven war correspondents, three

photographers, two public relations officers, four press censors, two radio operators and

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[6]Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, "Homefront Confidential: Covering the War and its aftermath," 19; available from http://www.rcfp.org/homefrontconfidential/covering.html; Internet; accessed 29 September 2005.

[7]Baroody, 52.

[8]Ibid., 51.

[9]Ibid., 52.

[10]RCFP, 19.

two driver-messengers."[11] The document also included "detailed instructions about landing and rendezvous points, radio frequencies, transmission instructions that included the order in which stories would be sent, and censorship of all copy."[12]

Although censorship regulations were in place, American reporters typically practiced "patriotic journalism" on their own anyway. Many suspended the journalistic value of objectivity and joined the "cause." They supported the American troops and were just as committed to the troops' mission and safety as was the Pentagon; the military's need to "handle" the press in World War II was irrelevant.[13]

Vietnam and Grenada

The press' free-reign during the Vietnam conflict resulted in a bitter relationship between the military and the press that heavily tainted the military's view on providing press access during future combat scenarios. The press received unprecedented access to the military and to war zones during the Vietnam War. Stanley Cloud, Former Washington and Saigon bureau chief for *Time*, called Vietnam "the first and only modern U.S. war that was completely free of press censorship."[14]

Military public affairs officers provided assistance to journalists in reaching their battle site destinations.[15] Reporters traveled by military aircraft to and from the

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[11]Debra Gersh Hernandez, "The Simple Days of War Coverage," *Editor & Publisher* 127, no. 31 (1994): 12.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Dan Rather, "Truth on the Battlefield," *Harvard International Review* 23, no. 1 (2001): 67.

[14]Stanley Cloud, "The Pentagon and the Press," *Nieman Reports* 55, no. 4 (2001): 13.

[15]Baroody, 54-55.

battlefield and were free to observe combat operations.[16] Media personnel also had the

option of using commercial transportation for not only visiting the battle sites but for

also transmitting their copy back to their newsrooms in the U.S. There was not a "strong

imperative for secrecy," and reporters could file their reports without censorship.[17] In

regard to censorship, a single page of guidelines for the release of combat information

was issued to reporters during Vietnam as compared to multiple pages of ground rules

issued by the Department of Defense for reporters and the military during the 2003

invasion of Iraq.[18]

The press' unprecedented latitude in accompanying American forces into battle

during Vietnam was not due to a pro-First Amendment government, but rather the

politics of President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration. Vietnam had not officially

been declared a war. For Congress to approve censorship of the conflict, a formal

declaration of war would have been required. A formal declaration of war would have

given Congress more power to control the course of the conflict, something President

Johnson was not willing to negotiate. The military could not physically control

journalists as it had been able to during previous wars. [19] Thus, the press enjoyed a lack

of censorship.

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[16]Frank Aukofer and William P. Lawrence, *American's Team; The Odd Couple – A Report on the Relationship Beween the Media and the Military* (Nashville: The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center, 1995), 43.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Glenn T. Starnes, "Leveraging the Media: The Embedded Media Program in Operation Iraqi Freedom," ed. Michael Pasquarett, *Perspectives on Embedded Media: Selected Papers from the U.S. Army War College*, 93; available from http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usacsl/publications/EmbeddedMedia3.pdf; Internet; accessed 29 September 2005.

[19]Baroody, 54.

But did it actually "enjoy" this freedom? Fred Friendly, former president of CBS News, explained that the lack of censorship during Vietnam "meant that the media had to walk a fine line since it gave the media 'a unique sense of responsibility to avoid giving aid and comfort to the enemy without doing commercials for the Pentagon.'"[20] Yet it was also the responsibility of the press to report the "whole story" of the conflict and to use its access to televise the stories that often revealed discrepancies with "official" government accounts, in turn wounding the government's credibility. The military had different goals for the press. It sought to maintain public support for the conflict through optimistic briefings and conservative body counts.[21] However, reporters claimed that military spokespersons lied to them in briefings, which led to reports of false information and a decrease in media credibility.[22]

Press-military relations soured during the latter years of Vietnam. "By the end of the Vietnam War, press-military trust was at an all-time low, and antagonism on both sides at an all-time high."[23] The conflict became a public relations nightmare for the military, and officials were determined to never allow reporters to have as much freedom covering combat again.[24] Some blamed the erosion of public support for the war on televised news reports of the conflict and their showing war's realities, specifically its casualties. Others claimed that poor tactics and strategy were to blame for the loss in

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[20]Ibid.

[21]Christopher Paul and James Kim, *Reporters on the Battlefield*: *The Embedded Press System in Historical Context* (Santa Monica, Ca.: RAND, 2004), 37.

[22]Baroody, 44.

[23]Paul and Kim, iii.

[24]RCFP, 19.

Vietnam, not the reporting of it.[25] Reporters became skeptical about the military and the

U.S. administration. Still, no matter who pointed fingers at whom, one fact remained

clear in regard to Vietnam: a horrible press-military breakdown had occurred. It would

take several future wars and a variety of press access strategies before the acceptance of

the press' presence during war would be reestablished.

The military's press policy during the 1983 invasion of Grenada was influenced

by the Vietnam press-military legacy. The administration approved the military's

request to restrict immediate access to the battle scene. Reporters were not present on

October 25, 1983, to document the U.S. invasion of Grenada to protect the lives of

American students on the island after a coup. Six hundred reporters arrived on Barbados

ready to cover the invasion. However, the Pentagon restricted all access to Grenada for

forty-eight hours, during which the entirety of fighting had occurred. By the time

officials allowed an initial pool of fifteen reporters to the island, the operation was over.

The press was not given free access until five days after the invasion.[26]

Journalist Frank Aukofer and retired U.S. Navy Vice Admiral William Lawrence

determined that the military's failure to allow media access to the conflict in Grenada

was not necessarily an intention, but rather an omission.[27] Military commanders did not

plan for the press's presence at Grenada and did not know how to handle it. Prior to the

1990s, the military viewed media relations as an element belonging only to military

public affairs personnel. All media arrangements were left to the military public affairs

office (PAO) to coordinate, and public affairs officers "conducted their planning

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[25]Baroody, 58.

[26]Paul and Kim, 39.

[27]Aukofer and Lawrence, 44.

independently from the operators and were rarely familiar with details of the plan for military action."[28] In Grenada, military operational commanders were unprepared for the reporters who arrived at Barbardos. The commanders were too focused on their mission to plan for accommodating journalists on the battlefield and reacted by denying them access.[29]

The Department of Defense National Media Pool

The exclusionary treatment at Grenada irritated the press corps, prompting their accusation of the administration's violation of their First Amendment rights. In response to their outcry, the Department of Defense (DoD) commissioned retired Major General Winant Sidle to review the military's press policy. Sidle offered several recommendations, which included the creation of the first DoD National Media Pool (DNMP) in 1985. [30] The purpose of the DNMP was to "facilitate coverage of the initial stage of a military action" with a pre-selected group of reporters.[31] This system would allow some press access to the "initial stage of military action" while still providing operational security for the military.[32] "A representative pool of reporters and photographers would be permitted to accompany U.S. troops into battle in return for

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[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Paul and Kim, 40.

[31]Cloud, 14.

[32]Paul and Kim, 40; Cloud, 14.

their agreement to play by whatever rules the Pentagon chose to set."[33] Cloud

commented on the press' acceptance of the pool creation:

> At the time, there was a great deal of self-congratulatory enthusiasm among
> many Washington journalists that the so-called Pentagon Pool would go a long
> way toward preventing a repetition of the Grenada unpleasantness. Few voices
> were raised in opposition to the whole idea of institutionalized pool coverage.
> Indeed, at regular quarterly meetings in the Pentagon, the journalists and the
> brass would amiably discuss the kinds of restrictions to be imposed on the pool
> members.[34]

Panama

The concept of the DNMP failed during its first major opportunity for

implementation, the 1989 invasion of Panama. Again, military commanders did not

include public affairs planning into their combat operations.[35] Many were in the mindset

that the DNMP "would smooth future relations with the press," and they did not feel the

need to become involved in the public affairs process.[36] What resulted in Panama was a

delayed activation of the press pool by several hours after the invasion, preventing

reporters from covering the launch of attacks and combat action on the front lines.[37]

"Reporters were not allowed access to the battlefield and were instead held in barracks,

where they were treated to a lesson on Panama's history for the first several hours of the

operation."[38] Upset with the Panama circumstances, the media demanded once again

immediate access to action in future military conflicts. Following the situation in

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[33]Cloud, 14.

[34]Cloud, 14.

[35]Aukofer and Lawrence, 44.

[36]Ibid.

[37]RCFP, 19.

[38]Paul and Kim, 41.

Panama, the military committed to improving press access while still providing for military operational security.[39]

The Gulf War

Yet during the next major military encounter, the Gulf War in 1991, the press would still not gain the access it desired. Post-Panama negotiations between media executives and the Pentagon resulted in agreement to a system of accreditation, press pools, and military escorts. What actually ensued during the Gulf War was a strict system of censorship and limited access. Cloud described the military's control of the Gulf War as "the most rigid control of combat coverage in American history."[40] Journalists were forced to abide by an "onerous" set of rules governing their freedom of movement, their freedom to photograph, and their freedom to conduct interviews.[41] Furthermore, the military reserved the right to review and censor all printed reports before they were sent back to U.S. news agencies.[42]

Retired Army Col. David Hackworth stated that "truth and the freedom of the press took a tragic beating during the Gulf War. Journalists were restricted free access, fired upon by our own troops, blindfolded, thumped with rifle butts, arrested, duped into playing out the propaganda scheme of the higher military command, interrogated, and treated with total arrogance."[43] U.S. Marine Corps Col. Glenn Starnes described the Gulf War as a "Nintendo War," where ninety percent of the war coverage originated

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[39]Ibid., 42.

[40]Cloud, 15.

[41]Cloud, 15.

[42]Paul and Kim, 42.

[43]Lloyd, 182-183.

from Combatant Commander's Headquarters, thus providing a "false image of war" to the American public.[44] The military had taken little advantage of the Gulf War opportunity to re-establish positive relations with the American press.

Following the Gulf War journalists once again demanded changes, and another series of negotiations between the Pentagon and the press occurred. An ad hoc committee of Washington bureau chiefs set out to reverse the damage done by the media pool system during the Gulf War. The result was the DoD Principles for News Media Coverage of DoD Operations, a statement of nine general principles to govern media coverage of war agreed upon by the committee and the Pentagon, signed by both organizations on 11 March 1992. These principles were to be "followed in any future combat situation involving American troops." [45]

> Principles that should govern future arrangements for news coverage from the battlefield of the United States Military in combat:
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> 1. Open and independent reporting will be the principal means of U.S. military operations.
> 2. Pools are not to serve as the standard of covering U.S. military operations. But pools may sometimes provide the only feasible means of early access to a military operation. 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 suspension of the credentials and expulsion from the combat zone of the journalist involved. News organizations will make

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[44]Starnes, 90.

[45]Cloud, 15-17.

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 DoD National Media Pool System.[46]

The Pentagon and the press representatives still could not come to an agreement regarding "security review." The news organizations proposed a tenth principle that read "News materials—words and pictures—will not be subject to security review."[47] The Pentagon officials responded that the DoD should have the option to review news material for security reasons: "Military operational security may require review of news material for conformance to reporting ground rules."[48] Neither side could come to an agreement, so both offered separate statements on the issue. The press's response stated that journalists will challenge prior security review if the Pentagon imposes it in future

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[46]Cloud, 14-15.

[47]Aukofer and Lawrence, 198.

[48]Ibid.

military operations.[49] The DoD's statement spelled out that a review system would be implemented if operational security was a consideration.[50]

Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia and Kosovo

The press had more control of their own operations during the U.S. military's humanitarian missions in Somalia in 1992 and in Haiti two years later. The press set up posts in Somalia before the military arrived. There the Pentagon did not implement the press pool and gave the press leeway in covering the relief efforts. The press again gained access to Haiti prior to the military's arrival in 1994, though the military did maintain more control over the press than it had in Somalia. However the press and the military worked closer together in Haiti by cooperatively establishing a set of ground rules. Reporters willingly abided by them and were given "sufficient latitude to write their stories as they saw fit."[51]

In 1995, U.S. operations in Bosnia encountered more press-military cooperation with the implementation of a proto-embedded press system. "Embedding" referred to the process of a "reporter being assigned to a unit, deploying with it, and living with it throughout a lengthy period of operations."[52] In all, thirty-three reporters from twenty-four media organizations embedded in fifteen different units for approximately a month.[53]

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[49]RCPF, 19.

[50]Aukofer and Lawrence, 198.

[51]Paul and Kim, 46-48.

[52]Ibid., 48.

[53]Ibid.

Embedded reporters also accompanied forces in Operation Allied Force in Kosovo in 1999, though the system "resulted in less access than had the previous campaign."[54] News coverage was more difficult due to the operation exclusively being an air campaign and because of the military's concern for operational security and pilot safety.[55]

Operation Enduring Freedom – Afghanistan

Even with the advances made in establishing the nine general principles and previous embedding experiments, the press covering the war in Afghanistan in fall 2003 again found itself "at the mercy of the Pentagon."[56] According to Christopher Paul and James Kim, the restrictive press policy used in Afghanistan was partly due to the nature of the operation. Army Special Forces were primarily engaged in ground operations, and their rapid actions and their use of classified equipment prevented reporters from covering their activities.[57]

The press was left to perform "unilateral" journalism, i.e. traveling freely and working independently of military-imposed constraints. The rugged terrain of Afghanistan and the enemy made it a dangerous field to cover. Reporter Peter Baker recounted the risky environment of working unilaterally in Afghanistan, due in part to the Pentagon's secrecy policy and its uncooperative nature in dealing with the press. He and other reporters sought safety at a U.S. base south of Gardez but were denied entry. Victoria Clarke, chief spokeswoman for the Pentagon and then-Assistant Secretary of

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[54]Ibid.

[55]Ibid., 48-49.

[56]RCPF, 8.

[57]Paul and Kim, 50.

Defense for Public Affairs (ASD PA), made it clear to Baker's editors that the American military was not responsible for war correspondents in Afghanistan.[58]

Military sentiment toward the press seemed to pivot during the Afghanistan war. Top DoD officials for press affairs realized the significant press exclusion in the Afghan campaign and apologized publicly to the press for failing to fulfill its needs.[59] Although a positive gesture, it still did not grant the press escorted access to military operations. While the official word from the Pentagon was "no" in regard to giving the press access to the military in Afghanistan, Navy and Marine public affairs officers decided to try embedding journalists into their units without the Pentagon's permission. Six journalists initially embedded with the Marines and forty more were added later. Even though Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) was not a "principal war" for the Marines, more than 300 stories about them went out to the American public, just because the reporters were present.[60]

On 17 October 2001, journalists reminded the White House of the principles established by the Pentagon for coverage of combat operations. The Society of Professional Journalists sent a letter to the Bush administration and to Congress urging them to "help maintain a free and autonomous press in the war on terrorism."[61]

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[58]Peter Baker, "On Their Own," *American Journalism Review*, 24, no. 4 (2002): 5.

[59]Paul and Kim, 51.

[60]Alicia C. Shepard, *Narrowing the Gap: Military, Media and the Iraq War*, Cantigny Conference Series Conference Report (Chicago: Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation, 2004), 21.

[61]"SPJ Leads Fight for Press Freedoms in War Coverage," *Quill*, 89, no. 9 (2001): 1.

CHAPTER THREE

Operation Iraqi Freedom

Taking into account Afghanistan's zero-access policy and a long line of anti-press sentiment after Vietnam, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld had an important decision to make regarding the military's relationship with the press during the second phase of the war on terrorism, Operation Iraqi Freedom. According to Starnes, Rumsfeld had three choices: limit the media's access to the battlefield and conduct press briefings at the Pentagon; return to the usage of media pools as in the Gulf War; or leverage the media by using a "radical" public affairs plan now known as the Embedded Media Program.[1]

Press and Military Prepare for Impending Iraqi War

As the impending conflict between the U.S. and Iraq neared, the sour grapes of past media-military relations began to dissipate as both sides collaborated on how to respond to the potential situation. The press and the Pentagon officials met in 2002 to discuss the situation. Clarke clearly communicated to the media that the intent of the Pentagon was to have "as widespread and fair and balanced coverage as possible."[2]

In November 2002, Rumsfeld informed his uniformed commanders that members of the American and foreign press would be accompanying them in battle if America

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[1]Starnes, 86.

[2]U.S. Department of Defense, DefenseLink News Transcript, *ASD PA Clarke Meeting with Bureau Chiefs*, 14 January 2003; available from http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=1259; Internet; accessed 18 May 2007.

and Iraq went to war.[3] On 1 November 2002, Clarke and her staff met with news bureau chiefs and press representatives to discuss the media-military situation as the U.S.-Iraqi conflict loomed in the future. Bryan Whitman, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs under Clarke, acknowledged that public-affairs planning was being synchronized with military contingency planning for potential future operations: the military was finally planning ahead and accounting for the press' presence in potential combat operations.[4] Whitman assured the press that "from the highest levels of this department the leadership is committed to making sure that you and your reporters . . . have access to our troops in the field should there be any military operation."[5] Clarke confirmed, emphasizing that public affairs planning for Iraq would not model public affairs plans from any previous conflict, esp. that of the Gulf War.[6]

The military and the press worked together to prepare journalists for reporting from the field in combat. The Pentagon offered a "boot camp" for journalists to help them prepare for war and give them a sample of what they would experience in Iraq. Participation in media training camps was not required by the Pentagon. By 14 January 2003, the Pentagon had received a total of 771 requests for media training slots.[7] Prior

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[3]Shepard, 22.

[4]Department of Defense, DefenseLink News Transcript, "ASD PA Clarke Meeting with Bureau Chiefs," 1 November 2002; available from http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx? transcriptid=3325; Internet; accessed 18 May 2007.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]*ASD PA Clarke Meeting with Bureau Chiefs*, 14 January 2003.

to the invasion, 240 journalists actually participated.[8] The Pentagon welcomed feedback

from media boot camp participants to make the training sessions better. Clarke

positively commented on the media-military rapport, describing the relationship between

the two entities as "constructive."[9]

On 10 February 2003, Rumsfeld announced his decision to implement the

Embedded Media Program. He understood that media coverage shaped public

perception and that modern technology would overpower military public relations

efforts. With the common availability of satellite telephones, the press had the capability

of mobilizing themselves to virtually any remote location in Iraq and communicating

American military operations directly to the world. With such capabilities, it was

necessary that American and international media had "freedom of access and reporting,

free of the restrictive nature of press pools and without unnecessary censorship."[10] The

press had finally received the access to the battlefield and wartime information that it

was due; this was greater access than the press had been granted in more than two

decades.[11]

Embedding was defined by Whitman as "living, eating, moving in combat with

the unit that [journalists were] attached to" for as long as they desired. Whitman

explained that advantages of "embedding for life" included building relationships and

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[8]Shepard, 25-26. Forty-two senior members of the military and the press gathered in August 2003, three months after the official end of the war, to discuss the media's coverage of the war and the government's role in that coverage. Alicia Shepard's *Narrowing the Gap* is the official report from this conference.

[9]*ASD PA Clarke Meeting with Bureau Chiefs*, 14 January 2003.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Nancy Bernhard, "Embedding Reporters on the Frontline," *Nieman Reports*, 57, no. 2 (2003): 87.

trust with units as well as gaining a better understanding of a unit's Standard Operating

Procedures.[12]

Wartime restrictions were placed on embedded reporters as they still had to

observe ground rules set by the government. Rumsfeld issued in a Public Affairs

Guidance more than five pages of rules for reporters and the military.[13] The policy was

"security at the source;" soldiers whom reporters interviewed were expected to exercise

caution in revealing information.[14] Any violation of ground rules could result in the

termination of that journalist's embed status.[15]

Rules prohibited reporting the names of casualties and the filming of casualties.

Journalists could report that there had been casualties and even the exact number of dead

and wounded if they knew for certain. As long as reporters did not identify casualties or

breach operational security, the military could not censor their reports.[16] Ground rules

restricted the reporting of specific destinations and locations, and of missions and other

operational details that could possibly aid the enemy. Journalists were not allowed to

report on ongoing missions, and all interviews with military personnel were "on the

record."[17] Ground rules also included provisions regarding "inadvertent disclosure of

classified information, identification of deployed personnel, and [protection] of

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[12]*ASD PA Clarke Meeting with Bureau Chiefs*, 14 January 2003.

[13]See Appendix A.

[14]Public Affairs Guidance for News Media Coverage of Operation Enduring Freedom, 20 December 2001; 3; available from http://www.aetc.randolph.af.mil/pa/pan/PAG/endfreepag.htm; Internet; accessed 29 September 2005.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Starnes, 94.

[17]Shepard, 23.

operational/intelligence tactics, techniques and procedures."[18] The military was also

expected to follow a set of ground rules. For instance, they could not exclude journalists

from covering the front line because of gender, and a female reporter could live with a

rifle company, although by law female soldiers could not serve in an infantry unit.[19]

Embedded reporters were expected to be in good physical condition. They were

required to carry their own personal and professional gear. They could not, however,

carry a personal weapon nor could they wear "colorful news jackets."[20] The military

provided a list of personal items that journalists should bring with them, including a

sleeping bag, dog tags, and baby wipes.[21] While the U.S. military provided rations,

transportation, and nuclear-biological-chemical protection gear—in case of nuclear,

biological, or chemical (NBC) warfare—journalists were to provide their own protective

equipment (e.g. Kevlar helmets and armored vests) as well as any communication

equipment required to transmit their reports.[22]

Operation Iraqi Freedom Begins

President George W. Bush issued an ultimatum on Wednesday, 19 March 2003,

to Saddam Hussein, telling him to step down from his position or face military action.

The ultimatum expired without Hussein's exile, and coalition forces reacted.[23] On

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[18]Public Affairs Guidance for News Media Coverage of Operation Enduring Freedom.

[19]Rick Atkinson, *In the Company of Soldiers: A Chronicle of Combat in Iraq* (New York,: Henry Holt and Company, 2004), 16.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid.

[22]*ASD PA Clarke Meeting with Bureau Chiefs*, 14 January 2003.

[23]The New York Times (New York), 20 March 2003.

Thursday, 20 March 2003, British and U.S. forces crossed the Kuwaiti border into Iraq,

and the ground war began. The Minneapolis Star Tribune described the ground assault

as:

> a massive burst of artillery, mortar and multiple-launch rocket fire that rumbled for hours across northern Kuwait, shaking houses miles away. . . . Soldiers from the Army's 3rd Infantry Division poured across the border around 8 p.m. local time [Eastern Standard Time] at the westernmost edge of the advance. To the east, the Marine 1st Expeditionary Force moved about the same time to seize control of Iraq's southern oil fields.[24]

More than 770 embedded journalists accompanied coalition military forces into

battle with 550 reporters and photographers positioned with ground forces.[25] They

generated more than 6,000 stories each week at the peak of the conflict.[26] More embed

slots were available than the American and foreign press wanted or could fill.[27] Eighty

embeds were female, and more than half of them were placed on Navy aircraft carriers.[28]

Very few, if any, journalists were embedded with the Air Force due to political reasons.

Coalition countries that permitted U.S. aircraft to depart from their bases did not allow

American journalists on the bases. Logistical reasons were also impediments: some Air

force planes could not accommodate an additional passenger.[29]

A statue of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad pulled down by Marines on 9 April

2003 amidst a cheering Iraqi crowd signaled the end of Saddam's rule and the triumph of

coalition forces. On 1 May 2003, President Bush announced on the deck of the USS

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[24]*Star Tribune* (Minneapolis), 21 March 2003.

[25]Stames, 89.

[26]Starnes, 89.

[27]Shepard, 23.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Shepard, 31-32.

Abraham Lincoln, at sea off the coast of San Diego, that major combat operations in Iraq had come to an end.[30] Numerous embedded journalists believed their work was done and departed the country. As of 30 April 2003, the day before President Bush formally declared the end of major combat operations, 137 American troops had lost their lives in the war. More American soldiers died after the official end of the war than during it, and few journalists were there to directly report the reasons for those deaths.[31] By mid-August 2003 when a group of top media and military officials met to discuss the post-invasion press-military relationship, 159 more troops had died since April and only fifty-two embedded reporters remained in Iraq.[32] At the August meeting, media and military professionals agreed that the press had left too soon.[33] On 1 October 2006, more than three years after that conference, eleven embedded journalists were in Iraq.[34] American military deaths in Iraq totaled 3,545 on 21 June 2007.[35] On that same day, the Multi-National Force-Iraq embed coordinator estimated that on a daily average there were about thirty-five to forty embeds throughout theatre.[36]

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[30]George W. Bush, delivered 1 May 2003; available from http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/05/print/20030501-15.html; Internet; accessed 25 May 2007.

[31]Shepard, 62.

[32]Shepard, 72, and "Forces: U.S. & Coalition/Casualties," CNN.com Special Reports; available from http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2003/iraq/forces/casualties/index.html; Internet; accessed 19 June 2007.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Associated Press, "Number of Embeds Drops to Lowest Level in Iraq," 15 October 2006; available from http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/news/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003254981; Internet; accessed 19 June 2007.

[35]Hamid Ahmed, "US military: 14 troops killed," Yahoo! News, 21 June 2007; available from http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20070621/ap_on_re_mi_ea/iraq; Internet; accessed 21 June 2007.

[36]Specialist J. Wyatt Harper [mnfi.mediaembed@iraq.centcom.mil], "RE: Media Embed Query," private e-mail message to Jennifer Hannah, [Jennifer_Hannah@Baylor.edu], 21 June 2007.

Media Performance During Operation Iraqi Freedom

The intentions and success of the embed program have been a forum for heated debate. Media and military critics as well as professionals in both fields have varying opinions.

Whitman, the deputy defense secretary, explained that the objectives of the program were straightforward: to "neutralize the disinformation efforts" and "counter Iraqi lies;" to "demonstrate the professionalism of the U.S. military;" and to "build and maintain support for U.S. policy" and the "global war on terrorism" as well as for the troops.[37] The DoD was well aware that embedded reporters would write stories about the men and women serving in the armed forces, thus connecting the American public to their service members.[38]

Numerous sources have applauded the embed program, viewing it as a success for several reasons. It granted immediate access, free of censorship. The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press commented that, "for the most part, [the embed process] worked smoothly because the Department of Defense opted to refrain from controlling the system too much."[39] Embedded reporters provided reports in real time about the war from a firsthand perspective. News media had access to the front lines and gathered information for themselves instead of through "sanitized briefings."[40] At times

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[37]Shepard, 11-12.

[38]Ibid.

[39]RCPF, 2.

[40]Shepard, 25.

their reports corrected military personnel's misstatements.[41]   It appeared to be a win-win

situation for all involved. U.S. military received positive public affairs coverage in

numerous reports showing U.S. troops at their finest, and Americans acquired a "living-

room view of war."[42]

Skeptics, however, had concerns with the embed program. Some worried that

embedded journalists were too "close" to specific action and could not provide an

accurate overview of the war. While they offered striking footage and lively

commentary, they often could not provide context of how their unit's actions fit in with

the rest of the war.[43] George Wilson of the *National Journal* worried that television

correspondents' broadcasts were negatively balanced, perhaps focusing too much on

"show" than substance.[44] Journalist Nicholas von Hoffman criticized the reporters sent

to cover the invasion story, saying they were "neither well enough read nor well enough

trained to resist co-option" and that they "simply enlisted and out-gunghoed the

Marines."[45] To him, television news stations packaged war as a "reality show played

around the clock on the news channels as the journalistic war profiteers promoted

themselves and their careers."[46]

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[41]Shahira Fahmy and Thomas J. Johnson, "'How We Performed': Embedded Journalists' Attitudes and Perceptions Towards Covering the Iraq War," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 82, no. 2 (2005): 302.

[42]RCPF, 2.

[43]Shepard, 38.

[44]Shepard, 61.

[45]Nicholas von Hoffman, "In the War Whorehouse," *Index on Censorship* 3 (2003): 38.

[46]Ibid., 39.

Complaints arose about a lack of geo-political context, as well.[47] Being attached

to one unit only provided journalists employed by American media outlets with an

American military perspective. BBC chief foreign correspondent John Simpson asserted

that American media coverage of the war was too "parochial" and that Americans as

well as U.S. soldiers in combat tuned into BBC broadcasts to gain an international

context.[48]

Some felt that reporters' footage exaggerated the significance of individual

skirmishes.[49] Von Hoffman rejected the government's contention that the U.S. was

involved in a violent invasion of Iraq. He described the invasion as nothing but a

"turkey shoot," a "battle-free" conflict.[50] While the press "diligently" reported on

bombs being dropped on Iraqi military, von Hoffman attacked the press for failing to

mention "that the turkeys could not or would not shoot back."[51] He suggested three

reasons as to why the American press failed to emphasize what he described as a

"battle-free nature of the conflict:" intellectually lazy American journalists, the

embarrassment that media would endure by admitting that its previous reports "didn't

happen," and failure of the government to promote "humane" and "non-destructive"

warfare.[52]

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[47]Shepard, 61.

[48]Shepard, 67.

[49]Shepard, 35.

[50]Von Hoffman, 37.

[51]Ibid.

[52]Ibid.

Other concerns were that embedded reporters developed an emotional attachment to the troops in their respective units, thus impairing their objectivity.[53] They depended on the military for food, transportation, and security, which perhaps influenced their telling the important stories about the war. Kirsten Scharnberg of the *Chicago Tribune* spent two weeks with her unit in Kuwait before the invasion, observing their preparations for war. During this time she saw a humanized side of the war:

> I know my experience among the soldiers . . . will ensure that I am a very human reporter in any conflict that may come. War will not be 'big news,' it will be as tangible and three-dimensional as the soldier sitting next to me at dinner.[54]

Because they were dependent on the military for transportation and could not travel independently, critics argued that embedded reporters were not able to rely on any other sources but the military. They accused the military of ensuring that only the military's version of the war was reported.[55]

Military public affairs officers were also challenged by the situation. Embed reports went out faster than the information scaled up the military chain of command. Official military briefers often could not quickly determine if the reports from the embeds were true.[56]

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[53]RCPF, 15.

[54]Shepard, 29.

[55]Fahmy and Johnson, 303.

[56]Shepard, 36.

CHAPTER FOUR

Review of Academic Studies

While there has been much speculation among media and military professionals

as to the success and failure of the embed program and of the journalists who

participated, only a handful of academic studies have really assessed the situation. Most

of those studies have analyzed the coverage by embedded reporters through content

analysis.

Michael Pfau et al. published in spring 2004 a content-analysis study that provided

hard data on the effects of embedded reporting of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Pfau et al.

asserted that prior to the publication of their research, there had been "no systematic

attempt to determine whether embedded coverage" was different from nonembedded

coverage of OIF, "either in form or tone."[1] Pfau's research team conducted a study

investigating whether reports by embedded journalists of the first days of the 2003 U.S.

invasion of Iraq "produced news print coverage that was either decontextualized in form

or more favorable in tone."[2]

Pfau et al. analyzed 291 articles about military combat operations printed in four

newspapers during the first five days of OIF (20 to 24 March 2003), OEF (7 to 11

October 2001), and Operation Desert Storm (24 to 28 February 1991). The articles had

been published in *The New York Times, The Washington Post, Los Angeles Times,* and

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[1]Michael Pfau et al., "Embedding Journalists in Military Combat Units: Impact on Newspaper Story Frames and Tone," *Journalism & Mass Communications Quarterly* 81, no. 1 (2004): 83.

[2]Ibid., 76.

Chicago Tribune.[3] The study determined that compared to nonembedded coverage during OIF, reports by embedded journalists featured more episodic frames and were "more favorable in overall tone toward the military and in depiction of individual troops."[4] When news reports about OIF were compared with those from OEF and Desert Storm, results showed that OIF and Desert Storm reports contained more episodic framing than stories from OEF.[5] However, results indicated that OIF did not produce more positive coverage of the military compared to the other two conflicts, "despite the magnitude of embedding" in OIF.[6]

Pfau et al. concluded that their examination "simply indicate[d] that embedding alters the nature and tone of coverage,"[7] They provided possible reasons for these outcomes, suggesting that the "positive bias" is explained by the situation of journalists becoming too close to their subjects, i.e. the troops, referencing the Social Penetration Theory.[8] The study also alluded to the possibility of embedded journalists becoming "encultured" into the military organization and, to some degree, accepting the values of military culture.[9] It warned of the potential damaging effects embedding may have on

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[3]Ibid., 80.

[4]Ibid., 83. Episodic framing "seeks to personalize issues" as opposed to thematic framing, which "'presents collective or general evidence' about issues." Episodic frames provide specific illustrations of issues, while thematic frames are more in-depth, interpretive, and place issues within a broader context.

[5]Ibid., 83.

[6]Ibid., 83.

[7]Ibid., 84.

[8]Pfau et al. describe the Social Penetration Theory on p. 78. The theory offers an explanation of how "relationships develop through contact" and allow for increased self-disclosure, which leads to relational trust and can result in biased perceptions.

[9]Ibid., 78, 84. Enculturation is described as "the process in which members of an organization 'acquire the social knowledge and skills necessary to behave as component members.'"

journalism: in the process of covering combat operations close up, journalists "lose

perspective and, thus, sacrifice the idealized standard of reporter objectivity."[10]

Pfau et al. then conducted a similar second study, this time comparing television

news reports by embedded and nonembedded reporters aired during the first five days of

OIF. Researchers performed a content analysis of 147 segments relating to military

operations broadcast by ABC, CBS, CNN, and NBC during the 5:30 to 6:00 p.m. (CST)

time slot from 20 March to 24 March 2003. The investigation examined whether

embedded televised news reports were more positive in their portrayal of the military

than nonembedded reports.[11] Results indicated that embedded television news reports

"were more favorable toward the military generally and toward individual troops" than

nonembedded, i.e. unilateral, television reports.[12] Pfau et al. connected this result to the

claim that "embedding inherently makes journalists members of the military units to

which they are assigned."[13] Embedded journalists form a personal knowledge of the

troops and become "encultured" to their assigned unit, thus "internalizing" the values of

and "producing greater relational trust" with the military organization they cover.[14]

The study also explored whether these reports differed structurally, perhaps

utilizing more episodic news frames than thematic news frames, in turn "featuring more

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[10]Ibid., 84.

[11]Michael Pfau et al., "Embedding Journalists in Military Combat Units: How Embedding Alters Television News Stories," *Mass Communication and Society* 8, no. 3 (2005): 187.

[12]Ibid., 190.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid.

positive affect."[15] Episodic framing "seeks to personalize issues" as opposed to thematic framing, which "'presents collective or general evidence' about issues."[16] Results determined that television news reports by embedded journalists were structurally different than those by nonembedded journalists. While television news reports tend to regularly employ episodic framing, Pfau et al. suggested that this technique was "exaggerated with embedded television reports because . . . they provide a close-up, personalized view of combat."[17] Additionally, results revealed that, when contrasted against nonembedded reports, embedded television reports expressed more "happiness and contentment" as well as "positive relational communication" with interviewed soldiers.[18]

Pfau et al. acknowledged that this study utilized a limited time frame of the first five days of OIF and that it would have benefited from a longitudinal study over an extended period of time. The study provided theoretical reasons for the differences in tone and structure of embedded and unilateral reports. According to the researchers, alternative reasons for the tendency of embedded reports to have a "promilitary tone" may include journalists' personal feelings toward the military and/or the mission as well as decisions made by news producers or editors, rather than by the journalists, in the final televised presentation of their reports.[19] Pfau et al. recognized that the explanations

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid., 183, 190.

[17]Ibid., 190.

[18]Ibid., 191.

[19]Ibid., 192.

they provided may not be the actual cause of these differences and that other plausible explanations should not be ruled out.

Michel Haigh et al. conducted a study that expanded on Pfau et al.'s two previous studies by examining the effects of embedding on newspaper coverage of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq. Pfau et al.'s 2004 investigation of embedded television news reports was essentially replicated, though focusing on newspaper reports instead of television reports. A content analysis was conducted on a sample of 452 articles about military operations printed during the first 21 days of the invasion phase (20 March to 9 April 2003) and during the first 21 days of the occupation phase (1 to 21 November 2004). The articles had appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times*. The articles were examined for the "tone of newspaper coverage, trustworthiness of military personnel, framing, and authoritativeness of news reports."[20]

Results agreed with the foundational studies and indicated that there was a difference between embedded and nonembedded print coverage of the war. "Newspaper coverage by embedded reporters during the invasion and occupation were significantly more positive toward the military than those of nonembedded reporters."[21] Reports by embedded journalists were judged to be more authoritative and presented combat operations in more episodic frames than unilateral reports.[22]

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[20]Michel M. Haigh et al., "A Comparison of Embedded and Nonembedded Print Coverage of the U.S. Invasion and Occupation of Iraq," *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 11, no. 2 (2006): 145-147.

[21]Ibid., 149.

[22]Ibid., 149.

The previous studies used the Social Penetration Theory to explain the process that can lead to a pro-military bias among embedded reporters.[23] In an attempt to explain these findings, Haigh et al. suggested that embedded reports portrayed the military in a more positive light because of relationships that journalists developed with their units. "Because of the situation, the journalist must trust and depend on the military … [and] this trust seems to grow and carry over into the newspaper articles the journalists write."[24]

Haigh et al. responded to the study's indication that embedded reports contained more episodic framing than unilaterals by suggesting this was due to timing and the desire for a "more visually stimulating story of war."[25] Thematic framing needs "in-depth, interpretive analysis" and usually requires more time to prepare.[26] The researchers insinuated that embedded journalists attempted to provide a "quick . . . portrayal of the events they were covering in a combat zone" and did not have time to analyze and interpret the story they were covering.[27]

A study published in 2005 contradicted the previous content analyses of media reports of the Iraq war. Research by Sean Aday et al. determined that stories produced by embedded reporters were not biased but were neutral and objective: "we did not find evidence that stories produced by embeds were more likely to adopt a tone favorable to

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[23]Ibid., 143.; Pfau et al., "Television News Stories," 180.

[24]Haigh et al., 150.

[25]Ibid., 150.

[26]Ibid., 150.

[27]Ibid., 150.

the American war effort."[28] Aday et al. conducted a cross-cultural, content analysis of

television coverage of the Iraq War to evaluate objectivity in the news during the war. A

total of 1,820 stories on five American networks—ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox News

Channel (FNN)—and the Arab satellite channel Al Jazeera were examined for bias on

two different levels: coverage at the story level, and the overall picture of war presented

by the news organizations, i.e. the selection of stories that appeared and did not appear.

The stories were broadcast during 20 March to 20 April 2003, a longer time span than

those covered in studies by Pfau et al. or by Haigh et al.

Aday et al. measured "tone" using a different measurement scale than the global

attitude measure utilized by Pfau et al. and Haigh et al.[29] Aday et al. noted that the

global attitude measure used in these previous studies was an "imprecise fit with the

reality of news coverage. . . . We feel it better to use a measure closely related to the

phenomenon under study [and adopt an] admittedly conservative assessment of whether

the story deviated from professional standards of neutrality."[30] They determined that the

vast majority of the networks, with the exception of FNC, achieved a neutral tone and

presented balanced news on the story level. However, results did show evidence that

culture influenced a network's objectivity when analyzing what stories were and were

not shown.[31] The American networks "ran very few if any stories that were critical of

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[28]Sean Aday et al., "Embedding the Truth: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Objectivity and Television Coverage of the Iraq War," *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 10, no. 1 (2005): 17.

[29]Ibid., 9; Pfau et al., "Television News Stories," 186; Haigh et al., 147.

[30]Aday et al., 9.

[31]Ibid., 14.

the war."[32] Al Jazeera, however, provided more critical coverage of the war than the American networks, and this critical coverage "revolved around stories about civilian casualties."[33] According to the study, it appeared that balance, or a lack thereof, was affected by network-level decisions, e.g. deciding which stories to air and not to air, rather than by the individual journalist.

When analyzing the sources of the stories—unilaterals or embedded reporters—Aday et al. found that "embedded reporters had among the highest percentage of neutral stories (ninety-one percent) of any type of reporter." They were no more likely than other reporters to "produce supportive articles even in stories featuring quotes by soldiers" nor were they were more likely "to be supportive in stories about battle, strategy, or tactics."[34] The findings suggested that the difference between embeds and unilaterals lay not in the bias within the story, but in the stories they covered: embeds covered coalition soldiers more than unilaterals, and unilaterals produced more stories about Iraqi and civilian casualties than embeds.[35] In summary, Aday et al. determined that the American press "may not have covered the entire story, but in general what they covered they covered well."[36]

These content analyses present contrasting data about the type of coverage provided by embedded journalists yet do not take into account the reactions of the

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[32]Ibid., 14.

[33]Ibid., 14.

[34]Ibid., 15.

[35]Ibid., 17.

[36]Ibid., 16. It should be noted that this study did not admit that its results were grounded in sound statistical methods. While Aday et al. reported that there were "significant" differences between groups, there was no evidence to confirm that these differences were statistically significant.

reporters who produced them. Two survey-based studies revealed an agreement among embedded journalists: they believed the embed experiment was successful and that they performed well under the circumstances.

A study conducted in fall 2003 surveyed fifty-four journalists who participated in the embed program earlier that year. The researcher, a journalism student at the University of Dortmund, Germany, sent e-mails to embedded journalists, asking them to participate in the study by answering questions on an online questionnaire. The study concluded that the majority of respondents believed the embed system was a positive experience. Specifically, 44.5 percent said the experience of working with press officers or military contacts was "altogether positive," and the same percentage reported that their experience had both positive and negative elements. Of the surveyed journalists, 80 percent claimed their objectivity was not "undermined by the fact that they were living with the troops." Almost all participants agreed they could not have gotten access to the information in any other way, though acknowledging that the reports they provided were fragments of the larger story. The group was unanimous in believing that unilateral reporters should also be in the field, collecting information outside of the military arrangement. Only 25 percent of the journalists believed that the ground rules established by the military "went against journalistic ethics." [37]

A similar study was performed in early 2004 by Shahira Fahmy and Thomas J. Johnson of Southern Illinois University.   They conducted an online survey of embedded journalists that examined "journalists' perceptions of how well they covered the war" and examined "factors that may have influenced how they framed war coverage." A

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[37]Terry Ganey, "Mixed reviews on embedded reporters," *St. Louis Journalism Review* 34, no. 263 (2004): 25, 30. The results of this study were reported in Ganey's article. The article did not mention the statistical foundation of the study, and a published version of the original study was not accessible.

total of 159 embeds representing 22 different countries participated in the survey, a Web-based questionnaire that asked respondents to evaluate statements assessing their work as embedded reporters and to answer questions about potential influences of various factors that may have impacted their reports from Iraq. Such factors included influences at the individual level (individual attitudes, personal attitudes toward the war, and professional norms), extra-media level (military terminology and the Pentagon media boot camp), and ideological level (the Iraqi culture and the Arabic language).[38]

Fahmy and Johnson found that there was an "overall positive perception of embedded reporting among those doing the reporting." While a limited number of participants believed embedded reporting to be "biased and sensational," the majority asserted that their reporting was "accurate, trustworthy, and fair, and did not jeopardize the safety of the troops."[39] The study concluded that individual-level factors had more impact on embedded reporters than extra-medial or ideological-level factors.[40]

While these survey-based investigations did consult embedded journalists, their answers were limited to a quantitative analysis. The survey studies did allow for some comments from individual journalists, but the comments mentioned in the results were few and were not the main focal point of the studies. There is a void in the academic study of the embed program. It does not seem that academic researchers have engaged embedded journalists in conversations about their experiences and the situations in which they produced their reports. Their products have been analyzed, and their written responses to questionnaires have been evaluated, but their voices have not been actively

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[38]Fahmy and Johnson, 306.

[39]Ibid., 310.

[40]Ibid., 312.

sought. The stories behind their reports may confirm the suggested theoretical

explanations or it may reveal alternative reasons. Their personal experiences will offer

insight into the real working relationship between the military and the media.

CHAPTER FIVE

Methodology

For its forty-fifth anniversary, the editors of *Columbia Journalism Review* (*CJR*)

dedicated the entire November-December 2006 issue to the voices of reporters—

embedded and unilateral—who have covered the war in Iraq. The editors focused on

recording the oral histories of forty-five journalists in an effort to construct "a different

kind of history of the war . . . the first of its kind."[1] The introduction to the article

summarizes the type of work being performed by these war correspondents: "These

people are covering the most significant story of our time and doing it under

circumstances that nearly defy belief. They have lived and studied 'the situation'

closely, some of them for four years or more."[2]

Wartime correspondents, especially those embedded with military troops during

Operation Iraqi Freedom, have witnessed firsthand a multitude of elements relating to

combat: troops' preparation for war, the dynamics between military personnel, combat

failures and successes, run-ins with opposing forces, victories and death—in essence, the

realities of war. Their own personal experiences as journalists covering a war, either

embedded or non-embedded, provide a unique perspective that may not be fully

communicated through their filed reports. For some reason or another, certain stories

may not have been written, printed or even broadcast. The stories these journalists do

not present to their audience are just as important as the ones they do. Their oral

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[1]"Assignment Iraq," *Columbia Journalism Review* 45, no. 4 (2006): 1; "Into the Abyss," *Columbia Journalism Review* 45, no. 4 (2006): 14.

[2]"Into the Abyss," 18.

histories offer additional insight into their filed reports. Even more importantly their oral

histories reveal other elements of their experiences that were not presented to the public,

possibly due to a variety of issues, including embedding ground rules established by the

military that prevented the release of certain information, equipment malfunction, time

constraints, and personal decisions. Interviews with embedded reporters also shed light

on the American media-military relationship, which has historically gone through ups

and downs. They also provide civilian observations of military operations. Their oral

histories are valuable pieces of a larger puzzle.

The transcripts featured in *CJR*'s article offer rich explanations about the

journalists' encounters "over there." Their accounts revealed several story lines,

including reporters' observations of the developing rifts between various groups—

Americans and Iraqis, soldiers and civilians, and between Iraqis themselves.[3] They also

revealed the obstacles—practical, political, professional—journalists have faced while

on assignment in Iraq, and how they did or did not overcome them. [4] The *CJF* editors

noted two important themes that emerged from these interviews: journalists' "passion

and expertise" for the work that they have done, and "the fact that the conventions and

traditions of journalism sometimes muffle this power and passion in their work."[5]

Embedded journalists' print and broadcast reports studied by academics have lacked the

insight from the individuals who created them, whose real-life experiences have often

been "muffled." It is these explanations that are deficient from the academic analyses of

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[3]Ibid., 1.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

the embeds' products and the embed program itself. In the words of the *CJR* editors:

"We need to hear them. They know things."[6]

Oral History Research Technique

Oral history refers to the process of conducting qualitative research through in-depth, personal interviewing "suited to understanding meanings, interpretations, relationships, and subjective experience."[7] The term is also used to define the actual product—a video or audio tape recording—that comes from an oral history interview. The recording is considered a primary source and an original historical document.[8] The Texas Historical Commission suggests that the oral history method is the best technique to use "to get an idea not only of what happened, but what past times meant to people and how it felt to be a part of those times."[9] Oral history interviews allow for the recording of eyewitness accounts and personal recollections about events experienced firsthand.[10]

There are four basic approaches to oral history research: life histories, thematic studies, site/artifact specific studies, and topical histories.[11] Life histories focus on an individual's background throughout his or her life, from childhood to adulthood.

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[6]Ibid.

[7]"Introduction to Oral History," *Oral History Workshop on the Web* (Waco: Baylor University Institute for Oral History, 2006): 1; available from http://www.baylor.edu/Oral_History; Internet; accessed 18 May 2007.

[8]Ibid.

[9]*Fundamentals of Oral History*, Texas Preservation Guidelines (Austin: Texas Historical Commission, 2004): 2; available from http://www.thc.state.tx.us/publications/guidelines/OralHistory.pdf; Internet; accessed 1 October 2006.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid., 2-3.

Thematic studies approach interviews by gathering information about broad concepts.

Site/artifact specific research allows for an oral recollection of specific locations, like a

particular home on Main Street, or an explanation of certain museum objects, like how to

operate a flat iron. Topical histories focus on studies of specific events or organizations.

While perhaps seeming narrowly focused, topical histories "provide latitude for

exploration within a general topic."[12]

The interview usually begins with a basic, routine question. The oral history

interview technique then allows for the interviewee to develop his or her own train of

thought. The interviewer must listen closely for areas of investigation that surface

during the interview and may be probed further. The interviewer should "seek the

unexpected."[13] Because of the nature of the oral history technique and the uniqueness of

individuals being interviewed, no two oral histories will ever be alike in format or

content.

This research study will explore the experiences of journalists who embedded

with American troops during Operation Iraqi Freedom using oral history's topical studies

approach. This research method will probe for in-depth explanations from the sources

themselves so that there may be a better understanding of the media-military relationship

during OIF as well as insight into what factors may have influenced their reports.

Fahmy and Johnson's survey asked embedded journalists for their perceptions of

their personal performance during the war. Their study, however, utilized a quantitative

coding technique and did not adequately allow for qualitative explanations from survey

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[12]Ibid.

[13]Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2d ed. (Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 2005), 96-98.

participants. Prior content-analysis research has indicated a pro-military bias among broadcast and printed reports. Yet other content-analysis research contrasts, indicating that journalists' coverage was actually neutral and balanced. Several of the studies provided theoretical explanations of their results. Some cited the social penetration theory[14] and enculturation,[15] suggesting that journalists formed relationships with their subjects and internalized their values, which led to tainted reports. Other explanations advocated that journalists' reports lacked analytical interpretation, perhaps due to time constraints[16] or their personal attitudes about the military and/or the conflict.[17] While theoretical, these suggestions are speculative and do not directly consult the source of these reports: the embedded journalists themselves. Few studies, if any, have asked journalists for their opinions of their own work or about their relationships with the military. Therefore this study will address the following questions by consulting directly with embedded journalists:

RQ1: How did embedded journalists judge their performance during the war?

RQ2: How did embedded journalists judge their relationship with the military?

RQ3: What factors may have influenced their performance?

Professional journalistic practices mandate that multiple sides of the story be taken into consideration when producing a news report. Academic studies, especially on this specific topic, should do the same. Critics often like to point their finger at the military and place blame upon them for various issues, including withholding

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[14]Pfau et al., "Television News Stories," 180-181, 190; Haigh et al., 149.

[15]Pfau et al., "Television News Stories," 181, 190.

[16]Haigh et al., 150.

[17]Pfau et al., "Television News Stories," 192.

information or access and placing restrictions on the press. Both U.S. military personnel

and embedded media professionals were to abide by the ground rules established by the

Pentagon. Previous studies have not included the military's evaluation of the press'

coverage of OIF nor their opinions on the behavior of embeds or unilaterals. While

studies have analyzed journalists' reports on the military for potential bias, the military

have not been asked for their opinions about embedded reporters' coverage of the war.

In addition, military personnel have not been invited to asses their own performance in

working with media during the war. It is also necessary to include their voices in this

study for the sake of understanding their interactions with the press. This study will also

address the following questions:

RQ4: How did U.S. military personnel judge the performance of embedded

journalists during OIF?

RQ5: How did U.S. military personnel judge their relationship with the press

during OIF?

RQ6: What factors do military personnel believe may have influenced journalists'

performance?

Methodology

The researcher contacted via email journalists who worked for news

organizations in the northern and central regions of Texas and had been embedded with

U.S. troops. Four journalists responded and were interviewed. Interviews lasted

anywhere from one hour to three hours, depending on reporters' personalities and the

nature of their embed experience; some had more to say than others. Interviews took

place in offices at each journalist's news organization.

The researcher also contacted the Fort Hood, Texas, public affairs office (PAO) via email, requesting interviews with public affairs personnel who had served in Iraq within a unit's PAO and had directly worked with the press, specifically with embedded journalists. One soldier currently assigned to the Fourth Infantry Division's PAO sat for an interview in the division's PAO in the 4ID headquarters building. Another soldier who had just finished his assignment as the lead officer of 4ID's PAO and was preparing for his next assignment at the Pentagon also agreed to be interviewed. The researcher interviewed him at his home. In total, one commissioned officer and one noncommissioned officer (NCO) were interviewed.

The initial email sent to potential participants described the research project, explained who the researcher was—a Baylor University journalism graduate student who was also a military spouse—and asked them to participate. Participants were informed prior to the session that their interviews would be audio recorded. All participants were individually interviewed by the researcher.

Because the oral history interview technique was used, the direction and flow of each interview was different. While each interview was unique, the interviewer did try to ask similar questions pertaining to certain themes to each participant, including preparation efforts, the nature of day-to-day activities, and a job performance self-evaluation. Interviews were recorded on audio cassettes and were then transcribed. Using the transcriptions, the researcher summarized and analyzed participants' oral histories using the research questions as guidelines.

CHAPTER SIX

Case Studies

Embedded Journalists

Byron Harris – Channel 8 WFAA-TV, Dallas ABC affiliate

The ABC affiliate television station in Dallas, WFAA-TV, assigned reporter

Byron Harris and photographer Doug Burgess to cover the story of the Iraq invasion in

spring 2003. A thirty-year veteran reporter for Belo Corporation, Harris had reported on

military affairs in the past, and he and Burgess had previous experience reporting from

the Middle East. To prepare for the embed assignment, Harris attended a three-day

training session in Georgia that was sponsored by Belo, WFAA's parent company.

The Pentagon had instructed Harris and Burgess, as well as other reporters who

had been selected for embed slots, to report to a specific hotel just outside of Kuwait

City on the Persian Gulf. There they would learn of their embed assignments. Harris

and Burgess traveled by commercial flight to Kuwait City and waited for their

assignment, trying to "drum up" stories while they waited. Finally they received word

that they would embed with a Marine supply unit and were able to spend time with their

unit before the war began.[1]

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[1] Harris could not recall the exact Marine unit with whom he embedded, though a Marine Parents' Web site maintained a catalog of embedded reporters and listed Harris as being embedded with the Eleventh Marine Expeditionary Unit's Service Supply Group (MSSG-11), http://www.marineparents.com/usmc/embedded.asp.

The two-week period that Harris and Burgess spent with the Marines prior to the official beginning of the war on 20 March 2003 provided time for the Marines and the WFAA team to become acquainted with each other. Harris noted that the adjustment period was beneficial and that without it, his embed experience may have been different. "They thought it was odd that we wanted to be with them. They kept saying, 'do you get extra pay for this?' And we said, 'no, we don't. We are just interested and this is what we do for a living. This is our job, and we want to know what's happening.'"

Harris witnessed an intense pre-war mistrust among the Marines toward the press. The level of press trust and cooperation was dictated by a unit's commander, and his "attitude was defined by his superiors." Two separate incidents that occurred before the invasion clearly illustrated the tension between the Marines and the press in this particular unit.

> There was an event where a French photographer took a picture . . . of a general, and there was a blackboard behind [the general]. And he had written some stuff on the blackboard, and this turned out to be four or five days before the war started. And it was a Marine general. And the Marine, the commanding officer, well, not the top guy, but the second commanding general, second or third down, saw the picture on the front of *The New York Times* and said that the press was out to reveal military secrets. So there was a lot of anger. I mean there was a lot of nervousness, and the mistrust was already there. The photograph was pretty harmless. It would have to be a genius to figure out what it was. And even if you could, it was probably irrelevant. But, you know, they monitored our . . . I was using a cell phone to call back here [to the station]. We were still in Kuwait, and they were listening to my phone calls and cut one of my phone conversations off. They had somebody watching me. All of a sudden my phone went dead. So there was a lot of mistrust.

Adjusting to each other took time, and Marines' ranks played a role in accepting Harris.

> The enlisted men accepted us first and then the officers did after that. . . . I think everybody came to respect the fact that we were there for the whole thing.

And they respected the fact that we were going through exactly what they were going through.

Once the Marines began to understand the reasons why Harris and Burgess were there and saw that they would be living with them in the same conditions, the suspicions and distrust began to dissipate. The Marines saw that they were "just regular people" who wanted to tell the Marines' stories. "They respected the fact that we were living with them, just like they lived, like we were with the regular troops. And we got no special treatment, privileges or anything. And they liked that." Harris had served in the Army years earlier, and his prior experience in the service was also an asset for him because the Marines knew that he was familiar with what they were experiencing.

As negotiations with the U.N. continued, Harris' observation of the military presence in Kuwait led him to believe that an invasion was imminent; it was just a matter of time. The official word had not been released, but there were strong hints of war:

> Once you got there and you saw the huge physical presence of all these . . . men and equipment, you knew that it was going to happen. So everyone was logistically preparing, waiting for the right day and the right weather conditions, the right moonlight, because generally the war starts at night these days. And about two days before the war started, it became clear it was going to start soon. One of the officers, one of the majors, said "you might take a shower tonight." And that was a clue, because he was saying "take a shower tonight because you're not going to get one for a month." And that was one clue. But the other clue was aviation units tend to stand down before a war starts. I looked out one night and I saw that all the Marine helicopters from the Marine aviation units were essentially parked on what looked like a mesa if it were in the United States, you know, in New Mexico. I could see them out there, and I said to myself, tomorrow is the day. And it was. We moved out that night and went up to the border.

While suspicions of the press' presence decreased, they did not completely disappear once combat began. Harris and Burgess found themselves in a near-fatal situation with a Marine when he thought they were violating the embed ground rules.

About the third or fourth day after the invasion started, a guy . . . he was probably an E-6 from a reserves unit in Pennsylvania, and he was clearly really tired. . . . The commanding officer said [to us], "You can go take pictures of some of the prisoners we're taking." And there were ground rules that you couldn't show their faces. And that's fine, we knew that. So we're taking pictures of their feet, and this guy saw that and thought that you can't take pictures of them at all. And he drew a gun on me and said, "Get on your knees. I am going to shoot you unless you quit that." And it was clear to me that this guy was really tired. I mean once the war starts, you're up all the time. It's a hard environment. It was a hard environment before we left because you're still up all the time, because our deadline is in the middle of the night. So that meant we had to work like a twenty-two-hour day most of the time, even before the war started. But this guy, he was just stressed and started screaming at us and said, "I'm going to shoot you, get on your knees." But that was the only time that I recall anybody really giving us any heat, and that was just a guy who had totally . . . you know, he was not bearing up under the stress very well.

Burgess did not respond to the Marine's orders, but Harris' military background gave him the insight to know to cooperate in a situation like that.

My reaction was, "If you don't do that he is going to shoot you." And I knew that. And I knew this guy was disturbed. So, I tried to, you really can't stand on principle in a moment like that, even if it's wrong. It doesn't do any good to be shot. So I kind of cooperated and Doug . . . he was kind of like a good cop, bad cop. Doug took it as an affront, and I knew the guy was over the line, and at some point he figured it out. . . . If you've been in the military you kind of learn to know when to give in and when to object and what battles are frivolous and what battles might bear fruit. So I got on my knees and nothing happened. We didn't get all the video we wanted, but it turned out the war moved on.

Although embedded reporters were guaranteed transportation by the military, finding transportation within their assigned unit that could accommodate them and their equipment was not an easy task. According to Harris, the Marine supply unit and its unit commander were not all that concerned about him and Burgess. This ambivalence was apparently present in the transportation situation, which changed throughout their assignment. They first rode in a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV)[2] with a medic, then rode in the back of a truck, and eventually Harris and

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[2]Pronounced Humvee.

Burgess split up with Burgess riding with the colonel, and Harris riding in a HMMWV

armed with a machine gun on top. Though separated during the day, the two were able

to be together at the end of each day to work on their stories.

Finding transportation was one challenge. Creating and filing stories proved to

be another set of challenges, largely due to technical equipment issues. The equipment

they had with them was incomparable to the equipment back at the studio. What would

take one to two hours to edit at the studio required six to seven hours of work in the

field. A simple element like light figured into the equation: "There was absolute light

discipline. You couldn't turn on any light at all. No lights allowed because the Iraqis

are looking for lights, and they would shoot you." So Harris and Burgess had to se up

their satellites before dark "and hope that nobody walked by and tripped over one of the

wires and got the alignment screwed up." And then there were issues with the satellites

besides having to worry about misalignments due to tripping on the wires:

> You had to acquire as much bandwidth as you could. So we would
> essentially get two radio telephone uplinks so we could send our signals back.
> And we'd have to align them to hit a satellite. . . . You kind of have an idea where
> in the sky the satellite is. Obviously you can't see it. So you have to aim that
> until you have a little indicator on the uplink when the beam is the strongest. So
> you have to set up two of these things. . . . Then the satellites themselves started
> to fail. And ultimately both of our satellites failed about halfway up Iraq. . . . So
> we would have to find people . . . in the Marine Corps who had uplinks who
> would let us use them. And they are not there to help us. They have their war to
> fight. So it was very difficult. Then we had another one, another satellite uplink
> shipped in from the United States. It was a whole learning curve that we didn't
> know. When I could get a phone and call the office—we didn't have satellite
> phones with us, either. A lot of other people had them, and so we borrowed one
> from the Kuwaiti. We'd say "hey, we can't uplink," so [the station] air-freighted
> us one and then they gave it to some second lieutenant who was driving up from
> Kuwait City. And this guy just got lost for three days, and so by that time we
> were really good friends with a lot of people in the unit. And another sergeant
> and I, one night we just started driving. We were going to find this guy. We
> kind of knew what camp he was in. That was very dangerous. We gave up on
> that. We could've been, it was insane. It was really difficult.

Technology problems sometimes dictated the stories that Harris and Burgess reported, or did not report. The nature of the Marine's operation – constantly on the move during the invasion – meant that this WFAA team did not always have access to electricity every night. No electricity meant no filing. And no filing meant that stories went untold. They had to abandon news reports because of the reality of the situation: they had no way to file.

Harris and Burgess were the two initial journalists embedded with this supply group, but others joined them as the invasion advanced. French journalist Diego Bunuel, a Kuwaiti television journalist named Hussein, from whom Harris borrowed the satellite phone, and groups from *The New York Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* joined them at various times during their assignment in Iraq. Harris commented that while the *Times* may not have admitted that they were embedded because of the way their journalists were traveling, in essence they really were.

> *The New York Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*, especially the *Times* . . . say "we are not embedded." What the *Times* did during the war was they went from one unit to another, and they were essentially embedded. It's very interesting. There's a lot of self-righteous "we weren't embedded, we didn't sign any documents, our stories weren't controlled." But basically what the *Times* did was they went from one unit to the next and said, "Can we stay with you for a couple of days?" And no commanding officer is going to say, "No, you can't," and then have reporters killed in the field. Or [say] "No, you can't" to *The New York Times*. It's interesting how history remembers how it really was.

Harris noted that the reporters all assigned to this Marine unit became close: "we had to support each other." In addition to borrowing equipment, they worked with each "to figure out how to communicate and how to get our stories out." Harris and Burgess depended on the Kuwaiti journalist for his translation abilities, especially in one particular instance recalled by Harris:

> [As] the Marines . . . moved through [the countryside], [they] have to re-
> supply [their] troops. Among other things, you have to find places to land
> airplanes. And there was an airfield [at South Salman Pak] that Saddam had tried
> to render useless by putting dirt over it and putting obstacles in it. But the
> Marines knew through satellite photographs and intelligence that the airfield was
> there. So they found this airfield, and then they found a house next to it. . . .
> There is an Iraqi family that had built a house right on the edge of the airfield. So
> the Marines had to figure out how to get the Iraqis out of the house in a good
> way. So the colonel, our colonel, called on the family to try to open up
> negotiations to buy the house from them. And so we went into their house, and
> we all sit down and had tea, which was a big deal.
>   . . . It's not just the tea that makes it ceremonial, it's that you always have
> sugar in the tea, and sugar is harder to come by than tea is most of the time. And
> water is hard to come by, too. So it was a big deal. And we were lucky enough
> that there was a journalist from Kuwaiti television. . . . And the Kuwaiti, our
> Kuwaiti friend, was able to go into this kind of town meeting with this little
> family. There were probably ten Iraqis there, and ten of us, including the
> Marines, and our Kuwaiti friend translated it for us. So that was pretty cool.

Critics have found fault with the embed program because of what they perceived

as the inability of embedded reporters to have access to the "other" side of the story—the

Iraqis—due to reasons including a fast-moving military that did not have time to wait for

reporters to interview Iraqi bystanders. Such was not necessarily the case for Harris.

When asked if he was able to have direct contact with the Iraqis, he responded with

reasons that critics may not have taken into account.

> Most of the time they were dead by the time we got to them. . . . Other than
> that, [when] we finally got to Baghdad, we saw a few Iraqis. But most
> everybody was so shell shocked that most of the people we saw were just kind of
> walking around in a daze, most of the Iraqis. Even in the cases when we had a
> translator with us, we were unable to communicate because they were so shell
> shocked. So the answer is we didn't talk to many of the Iraqis.

Harris acknowledged that the nature of the embed program only provided a "soda-straw"

view of war. Placing it into context of the larger picture was difficult. Harris found it

better not to try to do that, but to report only what he knew and what he saw.

> It's very difficult for journalists to figure out what's going on, because all you
> know is what's in front of you. . . . So if people are getting killed in front of you,

they're getting killed in front of you, but that may or may not be representative of what's happening in a larger battle, and that's the hardest thing for a reporter. You really have to know what your limitations are in a situation like that. And all you really know is what you see in front of you. So all I can really tell the audience every day is, this is generally where we are, and this is what happened in front of us today. . . . It was a story on its own, regardless of . . . what the larger context of the war was. And when we didn't have contact with the enemy . . . we would do stories of how these people were surviving.

Harris and Burgess listened to BBC every night on a small short-wave radio that Harris took along with him, hoping to receive broader context on the war. "Listening to the BBC it sounded like the Americans were losing the war. And Doug and I would look at each other and say, 'maybe we are dead.'" At post-war meetings with other journalists, Harris said the topic of context would arise, and "they would talk about essentially reporters who overreached what they were really seeing and who reported more than they knew, who led the audience to believe something was happening when it really wasn't."

A closeness developed between Harris and the Marines. He still receives e-mails from some of the Marines with whom he was embedded. The age gap between him and most of the Marines placed him in a "father-figure" role; he was fifty-six years old during his embed assignment in 2003. On one occasion just prior to the invasion, he offered an ill Marine some medicine because the medic was not providing it to him.

There was one second lieutenant who was almost like a son to me, he was that much younger. And the fact that, if you've been in the Army, you have some impression of what these guys are going through. The war was going to start the next day and everybody knew it was going to start the next day. And he had this incredible sore throat, and the medic wouldn't give him any medicine. He kept giving him aspirin. And since I've been in a lot of places of the world, I always carry a ton of medicine with me. And I said, "Here, take these for four days and it will be okay." And it was just stupid to start a war if you're so sick you can barely talk. It didn't make sense. So I was close to a lot of them.

For Harris, maintaining an objective perspective among a unit he admired was challenging, although he contended that it did not have a significant impact the types of stories he filed. "There's no question that we got close, very close to them. That kind of reporting we were doing, in general, . . . didn't really interface with the affection that we had for them. So it was different. But I think . . . it's hard to maintain your objectivity." Although Harris contended that his fondness for the unit did not hinder his objectivity, he did acknowledge that on one occasion his relationship with the unit may have influenced his reporting. The unit came upon a small city outside of Baghdad that Saddam Hussein had used to make nuclear weapons in the late 1980s. They were the first American group—military or press—to reach this location.

> The colonel made some comments to me on camera that were probably, I should have been more skeptical of. We didn't know whether [Saddam] had nuclear weapons, and we didn't know what was at this place. And [the colonel] said that, but I probably made a bigger deal out of that story than I should have. And it was still important. In fact, after the invasion, it was a place where Iraqis began looting the nuclear facilities. It was very dangerous because they got radiation poisoning from the equipment that they looted from. But the significance of that may have been less than I reported it to be. And that was probably because I was close to the unit.

The rapport that he was able to build with the Marines and the lack of censorship control by the military allowed Harris access to individual service members. Burgess' television camera did not faze them; the Marines stayed focused on their jobs and even responded favorably to interviews.

> They were amazingly candid in many cases. They would say things that were astounding sometimes. And nobody ever censored them. There was never anybody there when we were shooting, ever. We could ask them anything we wanted, and they would say anything they wanted, and nobody ever told them what to say or what not to say, that I could tell. . . . We were . . . outside of Nasiriyah headed north on a highway, and there were oil wells on fire all around us. And I'm interviewing these guys in the back of a truck. And I said, "Why do

you think we are here, why are we having this war?" And one guy said, "It's because we're all driving SUVs, and I think we made this war up." That really blew me away. And then the other guys said, they were a little more politically correct, but they said some similar things. So you never know what they are going to say.

Harris approached the unilateral v. embedded debate from an angle not heavily considered by media critics. He contended that few Americans really know what war is like and that they need to understand the reality of war. This reality is best communicated through embedded reporters who have seen it firsthand.

Most people have no experience with the military in this country. We have a mercenary army, basically. And that's a story that needs to be told in any condition, and embedding is one way to do it. Americans have no idea what it's like to be in a war. The vast majority of Americans have no family members who are in the military. They have no sense of what being in war is like. They have never seen people bleed. They have never seen people with their limbs cut off. They've never seen people die in front of them. . . . And for that reason we get into wars. We get into wars because people don't know what the consequences are to Americans, let alone other people. Given that, it's good for Americans to know that. And if embedding is the only way to do it, then that needs to be done.

According to Harris, one downfall from embedding is that the misery and hardships that have been inflicted on the Iraqis have not been portrayed, and he believes that "is a terrible thing." While he and other reporters may have attempted to communicate the Iraqi hardships, self-censorship or even censorship by the news organizations prevented the reports from presenting the gore and horrors of war. Harris said that since his station did not show images of "bloody bodies on a normal day in Dallas, Texas; we don't show the carnage that we see [here]." The war was not treated any differently when it came to the type of images the station would and would not air.

When we finally got to Baghdad, we found there was a bridge over the Diyala River that the Marines had gone across and pretty much shot every body. And we came upon this truck where there were two guys, two Iraqis, in the truck, and they were just full of bullets. There were bullets in their heads and there was

blood all over the truck. And then not too much farther down the road there was a body that had been burned beyond recognition. And I said "Doug, shoot that stuff" because I wanted to show [it]. . . . I think the opening line was "Yesterday, there may have been someone sitting in this living room, and today the house was gone." You could tell it had been a living room. And I wanted to show what we were doing to them. I said, "Doug cut the story," and I said, "I want that shot and I want that shot." And through no fault of his own, he didn't put those shots in because he thought that they wouldn't air when they got back to Dallas.

After covering the invasion and the fall of Baghdad, Harris returned to Iraq for two weeks in January 2005 to cover the Iraqi election. He embedded once again with the Marines. This time the living conditions and technology issues contrasted greatly from his first embedding experience with the supply Marine unit, which he described as a "cog" in the greater, fast-moving "war machine."

 I actually had a bed, that was good. We were with a semi-fixed unit. They had a camp. They had electricity so we could edit our stories. They had hot food, which was different. We knew we could get our story out every night because they had satellite. They had a phone line, and we could plug into it. They had an Internet café for the troops so they could access the Internet every night. So we could . . . send our stories over the Internet. And the stories were a lot different. We actually got to go on foot patrol. It was vastly different, because we were . . . covering, even though we still didn't talk to many Iraqis, we were really covering the interface between the Marines and the Iraqis in a non-militant way.

For Harris, reporting as an embed with the Marines was a privilege on both occasions. He has an interest in returning, though he does not think he will be able to return because of the dangerous conditions and the financial expenses it would impose on the station. News organizations "don't want to take that risk" of their reporters getting killed. The two trips Harris has made to Iraq proved to be life-changing experiences, ones that will remain with him for the rest of his life. He's visited the Army hospital in Landstuhl, Germany, where badly wounded service members from Iraq are

flown almost immediately. He's seen the "human cost of this war" on the field and in

the hospital.

> Every time I see or hear of another American being killed, not that I wouldn't
> have been affected before, but now I have to stop every time, every night when I
> see the pictures of the people who have been killed that day. . . . We both stop,
> my wife and I stop, and we just can't talk. . . . I can't be gentle about my feelings
> on the frivolity of pain that we have inflicted on so many people by an ill-
> considered decision. . . . It's with me everyday that I get up, and it's with me
> everyday that I go to bed.

Jim Ryan – ABC/WBAP Radio

Jim Ryan, a reporter for ABC Radio and its local affiliate station, WBAP

News/Talk 820, in Arlington, Texas, embedded with the U.S. Navy on an aircraft carrier

within the USS Constellation battle group during March and April 2003.

Ryan prepared for his assignment by attending one of the Pentagon's "boot

camps" in January 2003. He spent a week with seventy other reporters at Fort Dix, New

Jersey, learning about the organization of the military and the rules of engagement in war

as well as training on gas-mask usage and first aid methods. "It was a good experience

. . . Didn't use much of the information that I learned there, but what I did learn was a

little more about the structure of the military . . . Learning how the Navy is arranged and

how the Army is organized was helpful to me as better ground for being embedded."

On 28 February 2003, Ryan arrived at a naval base on Bahrain, an island in the

Persian Gulf. After three days of paperwork and logistical preparations there, the Navy

transported Ryan by cargo plane to his assignment on the USS Constellation, home to

approximately 5,500 sailors. During his two months on the ship, there were anywhere

from eight to twelve other reporters from all over the world also reporting from the

Constellation.

Ryan arrived on the Constellation a couple of weeks before the actual invasion

occurred, which he believed was a benefit and allowed him to build rapport among the

folks he would need as sources once the war began.

> I think putting people in place early enough so that we could build
> relationships with the pilots and with the officers and with the sailors [was
> beneficial]. And once the war began, we knew these people by name and they
> knew us by name and I think there was a level of trust, and so while they're very
> focused on their job, their life was in life and death situations, really . . . they
> were still willing to talk with us. . . . The pilots coming back from their nightly
> bombing runs, they would land on the deck and then they would come down
> through this door and off to their quarters to be de-briefed. And they were still
> willing to sit there and talk with us for a few minutes about what they had seen
> and about how, from their perspective, things were going.

Ryan said his sleeping quarters provided him with a direct perspective of naval

living conditions and enabled him to build relationships with sailors. He and the other

reporters onboard bunked with the enlisted men below the decks, per the military's

assignment.

> We were in these triple-stacked steel bunks, called racks. And I had a
> middle rack. And they're short, and I'm tall, and it's not terribly comfortable.
> And they had these little blue curtains that go across and so there's some degree
> of privacy. But it was a real taste of the military and those conditions.

Ryan noted that there was a difference in the dynamic between reporters and sailors,

depending on where the reporters lived on the ship. He felt that the bunking assignments

on the Constellation were a wise move by the military because they promoted

camaraderie among enlisted sailors and the reporters.

> It was a good decision for us to be with the enlisted . . . because I know in
> the other ships, reporters were put up in officers' quarters in state rooms, which
> are much less crowded. . . . It's almost like a dorm setting instead of triple-
> stacked bunks, row after row, below decks on a ship. I think that there was some
> resentment on the part of the sailors on the ships where the reporters were living
> with the officers instead of the enlisted . . . I know that we were accepted and

there was a lot of camaraderie and atta-boys given back and forth between the enlisted men and the reporters on our ship. . . . So we were welcomed, in other words, as opposed to others who were living with the officers.

He believed that this setup resulted in a different perspective for his reporting, as he heard stories from "the kids . . . these were kids, twenty, twenty-two years old, enlisted men who were their first time away from home, a lot of them."

During his two months with the Navy, Ryan spent two days aboard the USS Higgins, which was a new, "state-of-the-art" destroyer in the same fleet as the Constellation. He bunked in the officers' quarters on the destroyer as opposed to living with the enlisted sailors. When asked if he felt a difference in his rapport with the sailors onboard because of living with the officers, he felt there was a little difference, likely because the Higgins had a different dynamic altogether than the Constellation. Ryan speculated this different "aura" could have been due to several reasons: the presence of women, the mission of the destroyer, and the newness of the ship.

On the Higgins, a much smaller ship [when compared to the Constellation], the executive officer was a woman, the ratio was almost fifty-fifty of women [to men]. And I think . . . that added a different dynamic. It was more genteel on the Higgins. You know . . . people interacted much more formally on the Higgins. More politely, men to women and women to men. When I was on the Constellation it was men really who ran the show, and the women were a much smaller part of it. . . . Maybe that was part of it, maybe it's just that it was a newer ship . . . had a different mission from the Constellation. That's the impression I had, because women were in leadership positions on the Higgins and because the numbers were so much higher, it just had a . . . different aura to it.

The embed program allowed journalists to report what they wanted without censorship. While there were no content restrictions for Ryan, there were physical restrictions. Ryan noted that it was not a matter of what they could report, but when they

could report it, due to security reasons. He voiced an understanding and even a sense of

respect for the security restrictions placed upon the reporters:

> We were not given guidelines or rules or restrictions per se on what we could
> cover. . . . We were never edited or censored, or never had anybody looking over
> our shoulders as we were writing our stories. . . . Now there were restrictions at
> various points during my embed time for the purpose of the security of sailors or
> soldiers, I'm sure for our own safety and protection, [that] we were told that we
> couldn't broadcast or couldn't file stories home because it would compromise
> security. And I think that's something people have to live with all the time, but
> [as] reporters there are certain things, for your own safety and for the safety of
> the people around you, that you simply can't report on.

Ryan, an ABC News Radio reporter for more than twenty years, kept in constant

communication with the news stations and his family back home in Texas through email.

He also relied on satellite email communication for filing and transmitting his stories

back to the stations. "When the restrictions were put into place periodically, all that shut

down." Blackouts occurred at different times when secure operations were being

performed within the fleet.

> During certain times of day—sometimes it would happen once a day,
> sometimes it wouldn't happen it all, sometimes it would be two to three times a
> day—the captain would come on the ship's intercom and say 'ok, we're in a
> blackout right now. What is going on right now is so sensitive that no
> information can leave the ship. . . . The sailors couldn't send email home,
> reporters couldn't file their stories home, and so in that way we were restricted in
> some ways from communicating, but we were never told the content of the
> stories; we were never edited or censored.

Though the Navy did issue ship-wide blackouts at times, there were other

instances when the military refrained from placing restrictions on journalists, even when

their reports could have risked operational security. It was up to the journalists to

determine their own actions.

> The job of the USS Higgins was to fire tomahawk missiles. Missiles would
> come off the ship, they would go into Iraq and into Baghdad or wherever they
> were going, and do their job. During my time on the Higgins, the executive

officer said "we're going to launch tomahawk missiles today." And everybody . . . got all ready for that and got fired up. And the tomahawk missiles, as soon as they left, it was going to take ninety minutes from the time that the missiles left the ship until they hit in Iraq. And I went to the . . . executive officer, and I said, "Can I file on this? . . . You hadn't put any sort of restriction in place regarding this and the missiles aren't going to reach there in an hour and a half from now." And she told me, "You could file, you can file right now, sure you could file right now. I wish you, I hope you don't." There was sort of a lapse on her part, she realized that she should have put that restriction in place but had not. So I told her, "You know there's no particular urgency. If I go on the air right now and say the tomahawk missiles have left the Higgins headed for somewhere in Iraq, we won't tell where." And somehow if the military commanders in Iraq knew that, that they'd heard that report somehow, certainly their defenses [would] go up because those missiles are inbound. So I told her I would wait until the moment at which the missiles would be landing because that was going to be the time of a newscast anyway. So I got on my satellite phone and I called New York and I said, "In a few minutes missiles are going to land in Iraq. So I'm ready to go on the air and to talk about that." . . . Right at the top of the hour during the newscast Doug Limerick threw it to me and says "there is activity in the Persian Gulf. Here's ABC's Jim Ryan aboard the USS Higgins." So I went on the air and then said that "at this moment tomahawk missiles are landing in Iraq. They were fired an hour and a half ago from this destroyer." So, it was a cooperative venture I think between the military and the embedded reporters. You could say pretty much anything at anytime, but for your own safety I think, and for the safety of the people on the ship and the soldiers on the ground, it was wiser not to.

Ryan noted that the other reporters onboard also exercised restraint in this situation and waited to file the story. His story reiterates his respect for operational security and perhaps concern for his personal safety and illustrates the "cooperative" spirit that emerged between military and the press.

The cooperative spirit was not limited to that one occasion; it permeated his two-month-embed experience with the Navy. Much to Ryan's surprise, the entire staff was accessible to reporters. The media relations staff assisted reporters in setting up interviews with ship personnel. Sailors even volunteered their off-duty hours to help reporters locate their interviewees on the ship.

They had sailors who were interested in public relations who were doing their own jobs during the day. They might be working with . . . a Marine squadron or doing their own thing related to the ship, and then they would volunteer time with the media relations office to lead us around. The place is huge. It's like living in an office building or living in a factory. Just getting around from one place to another was very complicated to learn. It took a couple of weeks before I wasn't getting lost getting back to my bunk. . . . People were very accessible and eager to help, I think.

He suspected that some of that accessibility and eagerness to talk with reporters was due to the mundane routine of the sailors' lifestyles onboard a ship at sea.

Probably part of it I think was just boredom. If you sit there launching planes all day long and somebody is coming to you saying, you know, "tell me about what your job is like," I think it was cathartic for all these to just let go and just tell me everything. So it was very easy to get access to people, from the Rear Admiral down to . . . the cooks in the galley.

Ryan reported on a variety of topics, ranging from the daily operations of a ship carrying thousands of personnel to the history of the ship and the psychological warfare conducted by the military. While some stories "would just pop in your face," other stories were sought out because of their interest to him or to listeners back home in the states.

I think everybody did a story about the food and about the preparation . . . because they're feeding 5,500 people three times a day. That part of it was sort of interesting. That was a good, a good sidebar. . . . I was doing stories, a lot of stories about Texans who were on board. About the history of the ship, and about . . . this being the last mission that it was going to have to undertake. So talking about the history of the ship was sort of a natural story to do. Once the war started . . . again it was more, much more of the numbers game about how many . . . planes went out and how many came back, what they had dropped. An interesting story that came out of that was that if you looked under the wing of the bombers, you would see missiles down there below. Some of them were just big canisters with a blue stripe around them. And it turned out that those were canisters holding little propaganda sheets that the U.S. military was dropping on Iraq. And so that turned . . . into a full new area that I found really interesting . . . about the psychological operations, the PSYOPS war that was going on. You know, the dropping of leaflets on the countryside . . . in Iraq, trying to convince the [Iraqi] soldiers to give up.

. . . They ran the fliers with the leaflets in conjunction with . . . radio broadcasts that they were doing from above Iraq. And part of the psychological warfare that was going on to try to spread messages and to try to convince the Iraqis in a non-violent way to put down your weapons. I don't know how much of it worked. They told us that it was working . . . that Iraqi army units were giving up.

Because Ryan was reporting for two audiences—a national audience with ABC Radio and a Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex audience with WBAP—he worked to customize his stories for his listeners. His focus for ABC Radio was on broader stories "about different things going on around the ship or about the operation itself out there in the Gulf" and how the ship's operations fit into the context of the war-at-large. Texas-related stories fit his audience better for WBAP broadcasts. The parents of a sailor from Irving contacted the station and suggested that Ryan speak with their son, who was away from home at sea for his first time. Able to locate this specific sailor, Ryan interviewed him about what it was like to be away from home. He also interviewed a sailor nicknamed "Cowboy" from Dallas who was one of the oldest service members on the ship.

Ryan acknowledged the criticism that the embed program has received. He agreed that embeds cannot report the whole picture of war from their positions within the military:

That's a legitimate criticism. You can't tell the whole story. I couldn't, sitting on an aircraft carrier in the middle of the Gulf, I couldn't tell the story of what was happening in Baghdad. But at the same time, the reporter who might be embedded with the Marines in Baghdad can't tell the story of what's going on with the air operation. . . . There just have to be enough people out there to try to put the whole thing into a bigger picture. And I think that . . . consumers, news consumers, benefit from that because they see the whole picture.

Ryan asserted that the onus is on the journalist to maintain objectivity in an embed situation: "I think that there is that danger, that coziness that can take away some

of your objectivity. But I think then it's on the reporters to stay objective, to not be so friendly that you're not doing your job anymore." He felt that his physical closeness to the sailors he lived with did not inhibit his objective status: "We weren't intentionally telling…positive stories just for the sake of keeping our relationship with them. And there were criticisms about how things were going."

His advice for anyone wanting to cover stories when embedded with the military was "to just be prepared . . . to have open eyes and not let yourself be used as a mouthpiece for anybody, but to keep telling the stories that you know need to be told, not that somebody else tells you that needs to be told." The Navy did try to influence Ryan and other reporters to file stories that would benefit the military. "There were stories that they really wanted to get out. But a lot of hometown stories couldn't be told because there just wasn't time. I was too busy doing stories about different aspects of the ship, about different operations, to do too many hometown stories. But they wanted to get those out."

Overall, Ryan had positive comments about his experience and about the embed program, in general.

> I think it's a good program, and the more information that's out there the better. And consumers can read on the internet or listen to the radio or watch TV and see different parts of this conflict going on from different angles. And the consumers are the ones who are paying for it. They're the ones whose tax money is funding this operation. I think they should know as much about it as they can. And it's their sons and daughters who are over there doing the work, so I think that if they can have the perspective of somebody who's on a ship, you know, with their kid, or watching their tax dollars being spent, it's a good thing.

He understood the dangers associated with reporting either unilaterally or embedded as a war correspondent. The embed program provided for "some measure of safety that you wouldn't find if you were not embedded. Of course the stories are different, too,

though." Commenting on the reduction of reporters covering the war and embedding with troops, Ryan noted that "it's important to stay with it . . . because those stories are important to tell, the stories of what's happening within those units.

Jim Landers – The Dallas Morning News

On a Saturday morning in November 2002, Jim Landers, Washington correspondent for the *The Dallas Morning News* (*DMN*), boarded a bus in the Pentagon parking lot, headed to one of the first media-training camps organized by the Pentagon. Working in Washington, he was well aware of the anticipation of war and became involved in the embedding process "early on." The training camp he attended included a stop at the Navy assault ship USS Iwo Jima off the coast of North Carolina, a tour of the USS Harry S. Truman aircraft carrier based in Norfolk, Virginia, a visit to a submarine, and several days of training at Quantico Marine Corps Base in Virginia. Trainers from different branches of the military educated the participants about the military's organizational structure, first aid, navigation, chemical warfare suits and gas masks, and other areas that reporters may confront in embed situations.

Landers departed for Kuwait in January 2003 under the impression that he had a better chance of receiving an embed position by being physically present and making himself known to the military that were already there. At the time he thought that maybe twenty reporters would be embedded, not realizing that slots would be available for almost anyone who wanted one. His newspaper did not want to be perceived as just a regional paper but that it was a serious news organization and wanted a "piece" of whatever was going to happen from a position on the frontline, not from the rear supply areas or from an aircraft carrier.

While he waited, he "cultivated the public affairs officers with coalition land forces," lobbying for a good position in case they had any control over embed assignments. He attended training exercises with Marines when they test-fired their tanks. Sandstorms interrupted such exercises, giving him and the military a taste of what other battles they would be facing: environmental conditions. *The Dallas Morning News* staff photographer Cheryl Diaz Meyer joined Landers in Kuwait. They tried to urge the Marines to give them embed slots together so that her pictures would be related to his stories.

DMN's parent company, the Belo Corporation, received the embed assignments and divvied them up among its news organizations. One of the open spots was with the Second Tank Battalion of the First Marine Division, which Landers chose. A photographer from the Knight Ridder chain was also assigned to the same battalion, although he did not have a reporter with him. Diaz Meyer negotiated with the Knight-Ridder photographer and talked him into swapping positions so she and Landers could work together. The battalion of 900 Marines hosted Landers and five other journalists. Fifty-two years of age at the time, Landers said he was the "oldest guy" with the battalion.

While "helpful and friendly," the public affairs officers played a very minor role in Landers' embedded experience. "They dropped me off and that was it. I never saw one again until it was over, or until the fall of Baghdad. So it was just a question of getting us into position and that was all." The rest was up to the Marines of the Second Tank Battalion.

After weeks of waiting, Landers, a reporter with more than thirty years of

professional journalism experience, finally received his opportunity to get a "piece" of

the action. The invasion began days after Landers and Diaz Meyer met up with the

battalion. As with Harris, transportation proved a problem for Landers. A tank battalion

was not exactly setup in a manner to accommodate hitchhiking onlookers.

> The difficult part of embedding with a tank battalion is finding a place where you can go and actually see what's going on. There's no room in a tank. There's a four-man crew: a driver sits by himself in a compartment in the front of the tank and three men . . . are in the turret area itself, and there's no room for anybody else to be there. So what we had to do was find a place with one of the Amphibious Assault Vehicles (AAV) that the Marines were using. These are tracked, they call them Amtracks and gators and different things, but they're designed to carry as many as twenty men and a crew from one of those amphibious landing ships, like the Iwo Jima, to shore and then the doors in the back swing open and then they all come out on the beach. Well, the Marines were using these things as troop transporters on land. . . . There were some of those with the battalion, and the commander of the battalion and his executive officer each kept a communications module in one of these Amtracks, and behind that [was] a security detail to work with the communications module. So we basically hitched a ride with the security detail.

The transportation situation created a somewhat competitive atmosphere among the

reporters with the Second Tank Battalion. They all rode together in the same Amtrack

with the security detail that followed the command element. "And that meant that all the

press were basically in one sardine can trying to see what was going on."

> Landers' description of the first night of the invasion sets a clear tone for the type

of environment in which he was working: pre-war blackout restrictions, issues with his

equipment (and what turned out to be a lack thereof), working conditions in a crowded

Amtrack, lack of broader knowledge of the invasion, etc.

> Lt. Col. Oehl, who was the commander of the tank battalion, had told us that as far as he was concerned as soon as we crossed the line of control [from Kuwait into Iraq] "you can light up your communications gear and let your people know what's going on." Because we had been in a twenty-four-hour blackout before that, . . . nobody could gain an appreciation that we were moving up the border and so on. Well, you've got five journalists and a squad of maybe nine . . . or ten

Marines . . . in one of these Amtracks racing through the desert in the middle of the night because the assignment that the tank battalion had was to do a big . . . right-hook . . . around the southern oil fields and get to the highway outside of Basra to block any armor [that may] come down from Basra or elsewhere to . . . provide reinforcements for the Iraqis who were defending Al Safa or Salfa, which is the hillside, which is where the Iraqi defenses were concentrated around the oil fields. And so we had, I guess, about a 100 km race to get to that highway before dawn and through whatever resistance there might be. It was probably even more than 100 km. And we were initially going to be leaving at dawn and then they said, "you know, change of plans," and . . . we wound up leaving at like two in the morning or something like that. So the ride up that night involved, you know, everybody lighting up their phones as soon as we'd cross the line, first of all, and letting people know. We're in an Amtrack that is going at top speed and if you're standing up outside the hatch as we all were, you're where the exhaust pipes are for that machine. And it's very noisy, very dirty, but pretty exhilarating I suppose. It's just that we were crammed together. And the driver couldn't see that great where he was going, so there were a lot of potholes and ditches and things like that that really gave us quite a bouncing ride. My laptop computer got stepped on and broken that first night, so I was basically reduced to old-fashioned dictation for the rest of the way instead of being able to file electronically as we all are able to do these days. I had to essentially use the satellite phone. I had to call somebody in Dallas and dictate the story.

Having to resort to phone dictation impacted the way he wrote his stories: "It probably made them pithier." While inconvenient to be without a laptop, his situation actually helped him to "write clean prose" so that he could "give people an idea of what it was like for these guys on the front lines."

As the Marines continued with their mission, they made a wrong-turn and ended up being ambushed by insurgents, and a dangerous firefight between the Marines and the insurgents ensued. Landers described what happened, placing himself within the action by his use of third-person plural.

We had been assigned at that point . . . to plow up ahead on this road heading toward Nasiriyah. . . . The Second Tank Battalion had been brought up to the front again and . . . had essentially been . . . busting through several villages of Iraqi communities. . . . We had gone through I think three of these towns before we got to the last one where there was a fair amount of fire directed from both sides of the roads at the tanks and the Amtracks. . . . Everybody had kind of gotten accustomed to being under fire all day long. And then we went into a

village at the end of the afternoon where, as the lead elements of the battalion entered the town, all this black smoke started to boil from trenches that were lit on fire, trenches that I guess were full of crude oil or heavy oil. I could see on top of the store fronts stuff that looked like it was out of *Road Warrior*, where there were junked buses and junked cars and whatnot, piled on top of the roofs. . . . This was basically an ambush. . . . There was a loud explosion that turned out to be a car bomb that went off next to a tank. There were a lot of rocket-propelled grenades that were fired in unison at the tanks, and with the tank turrets open there were some casualties immediately. We were supposed to make a right turn just before we reached this town, to race up to what had been the supply dump for a Republican Guard division. We'd been chasing this division since the start of the war . . . and finally had to track them down to their lair, so to speak. So that was the mission: to get there and take their supply depot. Instead of taking the turn, [Lt.] Col. Oehl's GPS wasn't working, or for some [other] reason, . . . we missed the turn. We hit that town, we hit that ambush, and it was just pandemonium. A lot of firing from all directions. I couldn't really tell what was going on, other than these medieval defenses and everything. We raced through the town and then we turned around and raced back through the town and went back up that turn. It didn't seem like it was that long. An awful lot of things were happening, but then we finally got to the intersection about a mile or so away from the ambush site [and] there was a crossroads. We could see this minivan racing toward us on the other road at the intersection. The machine gunner in the Amtrack and on one of the tanks that was with us opened fire in front of the minivan with tracer rounds so everybody could see what was going on, to try to warn him to stop. Instead he accelerated, and so they opened up on the minivan itself. And the driver came out alright, but his passenger on the other side was an older man who got out and raised his hands and then fell. The medic that was in the Amtrack with us and one of the other Marines on the security squad ran out of the Amtrack to go over and help. A lieutenant jumped off one of the tanks to also go over and help. The minivan caught on fire. Cheryl jumped out of the Amtrack and took a picture of them helping this Iraqi man with a burning van. We heard later that the picture she took was on the front page of sixty-four newspapers across the United States. So it was one of the outstanding photographs of the war. But they called in a C-9 helicopter to MEDEVAC this old man and a sergeant with the infantry company who had taken what proved to be a fatal wound in the head from some exploding ammunition, and others. It turned out that there were four Marines killed, several others injured, one severely – Capt. Houston, the commander of C Company of the tanks and a descendent of Sam Houston. . . . He'd been shot through the throat, and a corporal, who was the driver of Capt. Houston's tank, had jumped out and saved Capt. Houston's life by getting a compress on his neck to stop the bleeding and using a side arm to return fire on the Iraqis who were shooting at him, even while Capt. Houston's tank was on fire. . . . Cpl. Picsono was quite the hero in my reconstruction of events that I did a couple of days later. But I didn't see too much of this happening, because it all went so fast. And at that same intersection we set up camp for that night, discovered the bodies of a driver and an Iraqi

general who had tried to flee in the face of the battalion and had come under fire. [The Iraqi general] turned out to be the chief-of-staff of the special Republican Guard unit, so he was a pretty high ranking fellow. But as that night went on the battalion came under rocket fire. There were 3, 122 mm Iraqi rockets that landed within 100 yards of where we were in the middle of the night. We were all trying to get to sleep, and these things started exploding and nobody had any idea. . . . But just a little ways away from where we were the infantry company had set up a roadblock to stop anybody from approaching the battalion. And this is a road that was leading out of Baghdad. So while they were setting up a roadblock to stop people from approaching the battalion, the Air Force was bombing Baghdad and the civilians were trying to flee the city right at us, because we are at the northern edge of Baghdad at that point. And it turns out that there were nine civilians who were killed by the Marines that night . . . [civilians] who just wouldn't stop driving vehicles to get out of the city. It was really a horrible, horrible night.

Landers directly witnessed this horrific occurrence. He saw both Americans and Iraqis victimized by violence. Not only were the Marines being fired upon, but he and the other reporters with him were also targets of this attack.

Following the event, Landers did his job as a journalist to reconstruct the event, to determine what had actually happened, and to write the story. A minibus that had tried to run the roadblock was fired upon by the Marines, killing a family of five inside. Landers watched the Marines remove the dead bodies from the minibus. A group of Iraqi civilians that had tried to run the roadblock were being held prisoners because the Marines were unsure of what to do with them. Landers interviewed the Iraqi individuals with the help of a Kuwaiti translator. "I just started writing this stuff down. I started talking to everybody I could, just trying to do my job and reconstruct what had happened."

He talked to a Marine captain who was a friend of Capt. Houston, asking him about the loss of four Marines and the near-fatal injury of his friend. Landers was surprised by the captain's response: "Those Marines died for their country, we've still

got work to do, we'll make time for grief later." While he originally thought this was a

cold reaction, Landers came to realize that Marines were trained to stay focused on the

mission and wait for calmer moments for emotional reflection. "That was quite a

demonstration to me."

Landers also was impressed with the Marines' endurance ability to maintain non-

stop action during the push of the invasion with little rest.

> The emphasis throughout the war in those early days was speed. Speed,
> speed, speed. And it was incredible to me to see how that remained the priority
> even when the Marines were exhausted, even when they'd been awake for sixty
> hours or more. It was, . . . "saddle up, we're going, we're going to go, go, go.
> We're going to go as fast as we can." And everyone was wearing their chemical
> warfare suits, which are bulky and hot. There was a real fear about chemical
> attack.

Landers continued to reconstruct what happened at the roadblock and borrowed

someone else's laptop computer to write the story. Concerned about his accurate

recounting of the event, he asked two Marine officers to read his story.

> They went ahead and did what I had asked. We didn't really talk about it. I
> just said, "I know this is a sensitive story and I want to make sure I've got it
> accurately. And so I would like you to read it for that and that's all, just for that."
> And there was a blind quote in there from a [Marine] who said that . . . "this
> didn't have to happen. It was excessive use of force." And they didn't ask me
> about that, they didn't challenge me about who said that, they let it go. So I
> would not ordinarily do that. And that's as close to I got to inviting censorship, I
> suppose.

Landers had two main reasons for writing the story about the roadblock incident

and making sure it was correct: it was his job as a journalist to make sure this was told to

the public, and it was his job to make sure it was told accurately and objectively for

posterity's sake. Part of his drive to get this story out was due to his admiration for those

he observed.

By that point I had a lot of respect for these guys. And I knew that if I didn't write that story and we just went along, then I would, first of all I'd be completely compromised. But also at some point in the future that incident would come to light, and it wouldn't come to light with the same objectivity I hoped to bring to it because people would assume that it had been covered up. And if it had been covered up they would have assumed that something sinister happened here. So all of that cascade was avoided by being able to face up to this at the time the event occurred. After that, the next day, the next couple of days I tried to reconstruct the ambush and understand what had happened and who had been shot when, because it turned out to be quite a battle.

Landers admitted that his objectivity was challenged during his embed experience, though he did not necessarily perceive his relationship with the troops as having an influence on his reporting. As with Harris, Landers found it difficult to remain detached when dealing with the humanity of war.

The incident that I remember as being one where I compromised my position as a neutral was after that fight. There was a group of combat engineers that were with the battalion in convoy . . . and one of their sergeants had been killed in the ambush. I went over and talked to them because I wanted to find out [about that] one piece of the fight. I wanted to discuss with them who was he, what happened, how did he die, and so on. And they were awkwardly trying to figure out what to do to remember this guy, to have sort of a memorial service or whatever. And they didn't quite know what to do or how to put it together or anything. I listened to them and I talked to them for a while and then I said, "You know, well, I can go over and ask the chaplain to get together with you and try to do something." And so I did. I went over to the chaplain, and I told him about this. He didn't quite know what to do, and I said, "well could you just go over there and spend some time with these guys and pray with them, and you know, remember this guy?" And that wasn't my job. It might have been a decent thing to do with all that sort of stuff, but it wasn't my job.

Landers has noticed a "backlash" against embedded reporters after the invasion and the fall of Baghdad. His colleagues in the press have accused embedded reporters of being "in bed" with the military and allowing their neutrality to be compromised.

I talked about being overly concerned with the affairs of the battalion when I was getting mixed up with this memorial service. There were other reporters I heard talking about this in conferences and whatnot who were standing watch on behalf of the squads they were with, who were carrying ammunition cannons, who had side arms, and I find all of that way over the line.

Still, Landers emphasized the reality and complexity of the situation in which he and his

fellow embedded journalists were working.

> This was an emotionally intense experience for [the troops] and for the
> reporters they were with. It was hard to maintain a distance in the sense of not
> feeling like you were "of them" as well as "with them." I had to just constantly
> slap myself in the face and say, "It's not we, it's them."

While Landers could not wander outside of the Marines' jurisdiction to interview

Iraqis, he made the effort to talk with them whenever possible. The Marines did not

impose any restrictions on him and allowed him to work with their translator in

communicating with the Iraqis. The Marines wanted to know as much as he did.

> I tried very hard while I was with the Marines to talk to Iraqis that they came
> into contact with. I stayed close to the translator so he and I could ask questions
> in addition to whatever [Lt.] Col. Oehl wanted to know. . . . I have a very few
> words of Arabic I know, but was able to introduce myself and ask a few
> questions. The Marines who didn't have any Arabic . . . didn't want to stop me or
> anything: "just go ahead and see what you can learn." And then the translator
> and I would try, when I was able to be with him, would talk to them. How frank
> are they going to be when they are surrounded by the firepower of a Marine
> battalion? We did learn a fair amount from a number of them about their
> situation, their circumstances and whatnot that I tried to get into the stories. . . .
> [The Marines] were interested to hear what was going on. So essentially they
> would listen as I would listen to what the translator was saying. The Marines
> were anxious to make friends with the Iraqi civilians where they could. They had
> some humanitarian rations that they had brought along and tried to hand out.

The combat environment proved difficult to operate within as a journalist, and

not just because of crushed equipment. While censorship was not an issue, other

elements were, including the same light restrictions as described by Harris, and

technological difficulties of filing from the middle of a desert with little equipment.

> The only restrictions were lights out at dark. So we had to get a story written
> before it got dark so you could see what you were writing and then file it with
> dictation so that you still had enough light to read what you had written. That
> made it kind of tough sometimes, because . . . the Marines were going to be
> rolling all day and sometimes they wouldn't stop at all up during the first part of
> the war. So there really weren't any opportunities to file other than just to call on
> the phone and say as little or as much as you could. But there were no

restrictions on the copy at all. They had told us there are ground rules. You will not say where you are, you will not photograph prisoners and a few other things, but at least with me that wasn't an issue.

Filing by dictation was also a challenge, especially because of the eight- or nine-hour time difference. When Landers called the office in Texas, it would be very early in the morning in Dallas. He would usually have to dictate his story to someone in the *DMN* Web site office who would then hand off the copy to the foreign news desk. In an effort to get invasion stories back to the home front, Landers attempted to file daily. "I tried to file everyday. I must have come close to that. Some of it wasn't very intelligent at all."

Technology was not the only obstacle of reporting during combat. The living conditions were primitive.

We slept outdoors, when we got the chance to sleep at all. Or sitting in a Humvee, which is impossible. I slept in the dirt, gravel, farm field, on the hood of a tank, on the roof of a Humvee, and in the road between parked vehicles, which was crazy. But that's how the Marines were living and so that's how we lived. . . . I tried to shave every day with cold water, because a gas mask needs a clean face to get a good seal, and that was interesting. It's small potatoes really compared to what was going on, but it's just one of those things you thought about. [Lt.] Col. Oehl makes a terrific cup of coffee, so we would seek him out every morning. He had a big brass or copper pot that he had gotten in Turkey or something that he boiled water with, and plenty of Starbucks. But we ate MREs (meals ready-to-eat) and wore the same chemical warfare suits for nearly a month before they finally said "you can take those off now" without explanation. When I got out of there all the clothes I still had—I turned the chemical warfare suits back in—but all the clothes I still had plus that junked computer and whatnot, went in the trash. I didn't bring any of that home. It reeked of jet fuel from being in the exhaust of those Amtracks and tanks. We finally got to a place where we could take a shower when all the fighting was over with, and that was at a military camp at the Air Defense Academy, in fact, where before we arrived to set up it had been thoroughly looted. The faucet heads had all been stolen, so the pipes were just running water, flooding different areas of the camps and whatnot, but the Marines hooked up a hose and put a couple of bed frames together and mattresses and made a shower stall and hung a hose over it. And it was ice cold water. I had a shower there, most of the guys had a shower there. I think Cheryl got a shower inside one of the Amtracks, because you can set the nose of the thing up to do that . . . But I had to laugh because where the guys were all showering . . . there were a few tanks parked looking at the shower stall and everything. And you got guys that have just been spending a month in combat

. . . who are getting in this cold water and acting like little kids because it was so cold. And everybody was laughing and hooting at them and whatever.

The embed program provided military protection to Landers as well as inside

knowledge from the troops, key elements that are missing when working as a unilateral.

Well, about the only way to see a lot of what's going on in Iraq is to be embedded and to go out with these units, especially in areas like the Anbar province along the border of Syria and in a lot of neighborhoods in Baghdad. You as a reporter, an American reporter, just can't go there unless you've got the military as part of it. So I think we should be doing that, more of us should be doing that. If you can't afford the 1 1/2 million dollars a year for security for your reporters in Baghdad than the only way you're going to get there is embedded. I mean, there are a lot of smart people in the military, you know captains, and majors and colonels and senior NCOs who have a pretty keen appreciation for what's going on there right now. And they're definitely worth talking with to learn a lot about what's going on. You still need to talk to Iraqis as much as you can. . . . It's just that the embedded piece of it right now. . . . I don't think enough of us are taking advantage of it.

Landers also commented that the hazards of reporting from Iraq as a unilateral make it

difficult to report the stories. He said that being a war correspondent is much more

dangerous than it used to be. Although the Geneva Convention recognizes

correspondents as noncombatants and asserts that they should be treated as such, "it's

certainly not the way it's gone in this war. . . . It's a very important story for the United

States. It's a frustrating story to cover because it is so dangerous."

In 2004 Landers returned to Iraq for two weeks as a unilateral reporter to write

"another chapter in the story" about the situation there. It was dangerous to travel

around the country without the military's protection. Although the Marines may not

have had "all that great intelligence . . . about the security situation" when he was with

them in 2003, a year later working independently of the military he had no source of

military intelligence and no way to defend himself. At that time "the unilateral . . .

setting . . . was something of a vanishing opportunity. You could see that it was not

going to be long before people were not able to go out and go to villages on their own

and report and stuff like that. It's just too dangerous."

Landers is disappointed with the number of reporters currently embedded with

the military. As of March 2007, he speculated there were only eleven embeds in Iraq. "I

find that very sad." He emphasized that reporting from Iraq, either embedded or

unilaterally, requires spending a large chunk of time over there.

> You need to have a keen appreciation for how complicated it is that you
> don't get just by going over there for a few weeks and coming back out again. I
> think John Burns of *The New York Times* has done a terrific job. He's been there
> since the beginning. And hardly anybody else has been willing to invest four
> years in doing this.

He blames the lack of embedded reporters currently in theater not on the military but on

the media.

> Military will still facilitate embeds as much as they can. They are not in the
> business of arranging special transportation for us and that sort of thing. But they
> said, you know, if you want to do it, either report [to] Baghdad, or report [to]
> Kuwait, and we'll hook you up and have at it. . . . [The media is reluctant to do
> that now] partly because the story really isn't about the U.S. military right now.
> We are writing about if this is a civil war or not. I mean, you're writing about
> Iraqis, and the U.S. is sort of caught in the middle. Also, because doing embeds
> takes you away from doing the daily stories of the day from Baghdad. If you're
> with a Marine unit that is fixing up a school out there in the Anbar Province, and
> it's all a nice job and everything. And there's a car bomb in Baghdad that killed
> 70 people. Naturally, your editor is going to want the story about the car bomb.
> And so the few reporters who are there have to make this kind of decision. *The
> New York Times*, I was told when I was in New York a year or so ago, is
> spending one-and-a-half million dollars a year on security for their bureau in
> Baghdad. And there just aren't many newspapers that have those kinds of
> resources. We don't, and so to do something like that would be to put reporters in
> extraordinary risks. But that's part of it. And I also think frankly that the
> backlash is part of it as well. People don't think that an embedded account is
> necessarily going to be a full picture of what's going on, that would it be from the
> military's point of view, that kind of thing.

Overall, Landers felt that he "did a pretty good job" in telling the story as an

embedded reporter. He acknowledged that his reports and other embedded reports

provided a snap-shot of the war. "I told a little bit of this story that, to me, has a lot of resonance years later because of different things, like from liberators to mayors to civil responsibilities and whatnot…. No embed can get a full picture of what is going on."

Cheryl Diaz Meyer – The Dallas Morning News

The Dallas Morning News photographer Cheryl Diaz Meyer is no stranger to covering news surrounding post-9/11 War on Terror activities in the Middle East. Diaz Meyer traveled to Afghanistan in fall 2001 with a *DMN* writer to cover the fighting as Afghan cities fell from the Taliban's reign. She then embedded with the Marines for the invasion of Iraq in March and April 2003. She returned to Iraq as a unilateral in November 2003 and again in summer 2005. She has witnessed OIF from a multitude of perspectives. She and her colleague, David Leeson, won the 2004 Pulitzer Prize in Breaking News Photography for their coverage of the war in Iraq.

In 2003, as discussions about invading Iraq progressed on Capitol Hill, Diaz Meyer's husband confronted her with a professional decision she needed to consider: volunteering for the assignment.

> My husband said, "Cheryl, I don't know if you're interested in going again, but if you are . . . you might want to tell your boss." So I decided that I was indeed interested and, again, just said, "Look, I want to put my name in the hat if you decide you're going to send anyone." So they decided that they would, and they asked me to go.

DMN sent Diaz Meyer and other writers and photographers to Atlanta to attend hazardous-environment training where they learned about "terrorist organizations of the world, some first aid . . . driving techniques, things like that." Diaz Meyer made preparations in advance to be able to sustain herself in the case that the embed plan did not work well and she needed to remove herself from the embed assignment.

The company, *The Dallas Morning News,* purchased [gear] for me. So when I went I actually had a whole set of my own gear because I really didn't know how the embed was going to go. So I was prepared to dis-embed at any point. I had my own chemical suit, my own gas mask, my own boots, gloves, water purification system, food, anything that if I had to break away, that I could sort of jump ship. Because I thought if they would decide to censor us and we couldn't really do our work, then I was willing to make other plans.

On 30 January 2003, Diaz Meyer, who had been working as a photojournalist since 1994, boarded a plane destined for Kuwait. There she joined *DMN* writer Jim Landers, and they waited for their embed assignment. Diaz Meyer's observation about the military presence in Kuwait matched Byron Harris': war seemed imminent. "Once we got on the ground and started working, what I realized was that this could start at any point. It was really hard to get information about when the embed was going to happen." She and Landers used this time to prepare themselves for the conditions ahead of them.

As we were there, we were . . . learning a lot of things about [what] it would be important to do, to have, to get ready. For example, there was just little bits of equipment that would be good. We didn't know this. We should have little flashlights with red or blue lights, very minimal. Because if you're out in the dark, obviously you don't want to have this massive flashlight that [will] give away the location of your group. . . . We couldn't find it locally. So that was shipped to us. There was some issue . . . with my computer, which fortunately I discovered while still in Kuwait. So again, there were things my boss could send to me to help me . . . You really should have khakis, because it would match better, you would look like you were in the desert and standout less. And I don't recall if I had any with me or if I didn't have enough. But what I realized was I needed pants that were just a little more utilitarian than what I had brought. So I ended up having a couple of pants made with lots of pockets in them.

Finally on 13 March 2003, Diaz Meyer and Landers received word that they would both embed with the Marine's Second Tank Battalion. Diaz Meyer reiterated the situation that Landers described in which she swapped embed assignments with another photographer who had originally been assigned to the battalion. Diaz Meyer soon

learned of the significant position she would hold within this battalion, not just as a

reporter but as a female.

>I didn't really understand who was who and what was what. Like I didn't understand what role the Second Tank Battalion would even be playing. And as it turned out, it was going to be a fairly forward group in the invasion. And at one particular point I was checking in and there was a female captain in the Marines and she was the person who was, you know, [asking] "[who] are you with?" and checking us off, make sure we were present. And I said (in a questioning manner), "I'm with the Second Tank Battalion?" trying to get it all straight, because I couldn't [remember] regiment, battalion, division; it didn't make any sense to me. And she looked at me, and sort of a strange glint came into her eye: "Do you realize how forward you're going to be in battle?" And I said, "Uh, great, that'll be good for pictures," was my thinking. And she looked at me, and very clearly it was envy, and she said, "Well let me put it to you this way." She said, "If you were a female Marine, you would be making history, because there are no females on the front lines of battle." So that kind of put into perspective the role that I was going to be playing.

Her female presence would eventually add an unusual dynamic to the relationship

between press and military on the frontline as well as to the photographs she produced

while with the Marines.

>By the time that first week had . . . happened, I had a chance to . . . tour almost the entire area that my guys were in, so I had almost had an interaction with a lot of them and I was able to say, "Okay, do what you were doing and don't look at the camera. You know, be yourselves and just forget that I'm here." So by the time that the invasion began, they were doing their thing. I mean they didn't, you know, stare at the camera and ask "what are you doing?" But there were certainly some people that I had not had interactions with, so I was somewhat nervous, like at nighttime if I would go wandering around. They knew there was a woman embedded with their group, but at the same time, because I hadn't necessarily met them, I didn't know if they would recognize me, if they would think that I was not part of their group. So I tried not to get too much into wandering, especially at nighttime where they wouldn't be able to make out [who I was]. You know, just even my profile wouldn't fit what they were expecting . . . somebody long haired, walking around, . . . smallish frame in their midst. Because sometimes . . . you're just reacting. In dangerous situations

you see a figure and you think, "well, that's not one of us." And my biggest fear was friendly fire.

Because Diaz Meyer and the other reporters did not know which date the war would actually begin, they had to be ready to go at a moment's notice.

We were in the middle of the desert, and it was always sort of like stop and go, stop and go, and you never really knew when they would . . . say "Now we're going to leave." So at any moment you could be out shooting something, and your gear always had to be packed up because at any point they could say "we're leaving" and you would have to . . . gather all your stuff, get in the vehicle, tear down whatever it was, maybe you're sleeping stuff, and go. . . . So everybody was just sort of waiting on the word, so to speak.

Diaz Meyer's recollection of the actual moment the Second Tank Battalion crossed the line into Iraq and the events that happened thereafter illustrated a multitude of factors that she had to deal with—the challenges of wearing armored equipment, exhaustion, and a barrage of intense emotions.

We left in the middle of the night. And I remember as we crossed into Iraq it was just a sky, like a sea of fireworks. . . . Of course it wasn't fireworks, this was all artillery and bullets and all kinds of stuff. This is the first time that I had put on all the gear, like the helmet and the flack jacket and the camo suit and the gas mask and the boots and the goggles . . . just all the paraphernalia that we had to have. Plus my camera equipment: two cameras and a camera bag. And I couldn't hardly keep my head up straight because the helmet was so heavy and my neck wouldn't support it. So we were going in, and you're never really getting a full night's rest at any point
. . . Once we got embedded you rarely got a full night's rest, because invariably in the middle of the night, they'd scream "gas, gas, gas!" And then you'd be up and about, and then you'd be up having to show that you had your gas mask on and checking in. So you're really always exhausted. There's this low level of adrenaline running through you, anxiety, and just already a lot of exhaustion. You know, your head is a little bemuddled because you're really not functioning on one hundred percent of what you should be. Anyway . . . at that point, here we were, I was in an AAV (Amphibious Assault Vehicle) and we're crossing into Iraq, and I'm horizontal. I'm laying on top of these bags and these MRE (meal ready-to-eat) boxes because I can't keep my head up. I'm literally . . . leaning my head against something, looking up at the sky and watching all this, knowing that really . . . I can't make a shot because it's just . . . too much stuff and there's movement and the ground is, you know, this is desert. We're not on a road. It's just desert so it's just sand dunes and whatever. Basically, the

wind has whipped the sand into that shape. You're just . . . rolling along. And it was very unheroic. . . . I mean the actual moment of invasion when we crossed that border, I was horizontal looking up at the sky going "Wow! Wow!" I've never seen so much fire in the air. And all the while in the distance you would see the oil wells burning. So there was this red glow in different patches on the horizon. And the next days were just sort of a series of stop-and-go where you would barely get enough sleep. It would be intermittent. You'd be driving at night. . . . The exhaustion was like . . . when you thought you were exhausted, then you were even more exhausted. And I remember one night we were actually under fire. We had gone this tremendously long day. And for a tank battalion this particular drive actually made history. . . . I don't even remember the number of miles that we covered, but we were on the road hours and hours and hours. And so it was actually like a historic march. And by the time we got there, I mean there were points where we were literally under fire, and I was so exhausted that I was leaning into the corner. During this particular point I was just in a HMMWV, an unprotected HMMWV, with my flack jacket, my helmet, hoping to God . . . we didn't land on a bomb or some explosive device. I couldn't even be bothered. It's like there was nothing in me to even . . . look around and see what's going on. It's like I couldn't keep my eyes open. I was hearing shots being fired at us, shots being fired back, and there I was, just like a rag doll lying there. Like I couldn't . . . like my body wouldn't do anything for me. I just lay in the corner you know, just trying to make it through.

Diaz Meyer recalled one specific episode during her embed time that demonstrated the dangerous environment in which she was working and the dynamics of her relationship with the Marines. It also reinforced the understanding she had of the situation; embedding with this unit for a substantial period of time enabled her to understand the context of what happens in war.

At one point when we finally arrived to our destination, I kind of shook myself out of it and started transmitting what I had shot that day, which wasn't anything terribly compelling at that point. [Then] . . . within fifty yards, this tremendous shooting started happening. I mean, just so loud that it just absolutely . . . knocked me off my feet. I was sitting there trying to transmit some images I had in my laptop, and I thought I was surrounded by all the Marines. And right literally fifty yards from me, if that, it was just pop, pop, pop, pop, pop. And there was a lot of screaming saying, "Where's the reporter? Where's the reporter?" And somebody came rushing at me and dragged me, well, threw me on the ground. And then there was sort of a lull in the shots because it was like: bap, bap, bap, bap, bap and then "where's the reporter?" and boom, somebody landed on top of me and threw me on the ground and threw their body on top of mine. I was like, "Oh, my God, what is going on?" And then there was a pause

and then a bap, bap, bap and then this person grabbed me by the cuff of my flak jacket and dragged me along the ground to the back of a HMMWV and loaded me up into this HMMWV. And as it turned out, one of the tankers was getting out of his tank, and because of this long drive the equipment, the screws, were loose. And you know this stuff has to be sort of maintained. He accidentally hit with his elbow his 50-caliber [machine gun], which happened to be pointed at the tanker next to him, and it shredded him. So that was our first casualty. It was a really horrible scene of friendly fire, and these were reservists, so they knew each other. They knew each other's families. They were from the same hometown. They had barbecues together. They had trained together for years. So needless to say it was just this really horrific, horrific moment for everyone. My not realizing that . . . I didn't realize what a 50-caliber machine gun was and so I wanted a photograph. I thought this is an important story: friendly fire. It happens, and this man's life was really valuable, and his story should be told. That's why I'm here. And the men refused, they wouldn't have it. And in the end I kind of look back, and I guess that was a kind of . . . [a] moment of, sort of, censorship. This is so personal for them that they would absolutely not allow me to photograph. Now that I know what happened in more detail and the condition that this man was in, I think I'm glad that I didn't see it.

The reason for protecting Diaz Meyer in this friendly-fire incident was not necessarily for censorship purposes but for her safety. According to Diaz Meyer, the Marines respected her as a journalist who was giving voice to their story and felt responsibility for her safety:

Nobody could have said to them, "Hey, you need to protect this journalist with your life." Nobody, I think, ever said anything like that to anybody. It was just a sense of I was their responsibility, and they felt a tremendous sense of duty to me because I was their voice to the world. Everything they did, you know, I mean every effort they made was shown worldwide by the images that were up on our Web site. And in fact I often heard from people around the world about the images we had up on our Web site. I think it was really just a gut reaction that the person wanted to make sure that nothing happened to me so much as to throw his own body over mine. He barely knew me. Barely knew me.

As mentioned earlier and somewhat demonstrated in the incident above, Diaz Meyer's feminine presence created an unusual dynamic within this battalion. She emphasized that the Marines treated her well during her embed with them and that her

professional relationship with them was positive, though some discounted her being

there, at first. Some even admitted that her company affected them and their behavior.

> It was me and a thousand guys. You know . . . I wasn't sure what to expect, and I was just really glad that Jim was with me. But in all honesty, the guys were so good to me. They really took it upon themselves to be hospitable and gracious and welcoming. Not all of them believed in the whole embed idea, so some of them were actually against it and they thought "what is a woman doing here?" But you know, somewhere along the way, I remember I was with a group of guys, and it had been sort of sprinkling and so we were under this tarp next to the Amphibious Assault Vehicle in our sleeping bags, side by side, sort of like a bunch of sardines. And you know as people do during slumber parties, you get to talking. And so one of the sergeants was saying, "You know Cheryl, . . . in the beginning I really didn't like the idea that you were with us, but I must admit that I'm really glad that you're here because not only do you tell the story of what we're doing to our family and friends and to the world at large, but you remind us to be civil and polite to each other. When things get really tough, we don't break down like we would. And so we can look each other in the eye the next day and work with each other respectfully." I thought that was really neat. You know, I thought that's really something that he would break out and say that. I was touched.

They were respectful of her personal hygiene needs and helped her out when they

could. A gunnery sergeant gave her a poncho to use for privacy since there were no

public restrooms available in the desert. After two weeks of constant travel, the unit

finally had a day to stop and re-group, which included showering. The Marines gave

Diaz Meyer a five-gallon jug of their drinking water and opened the large engine

compartment of the AAV where she could bathe privately, away from the Marines who

were showering in a different area. At various times throughout the invasion, she was

even able to persuade several Marines to braid her long hair so that it would fit under her

Kevlar helmet.

The lone female in a sea of a thousand men, Diaz Meyer had to be careful of the

friendships that she developed with the guys of the Second Tank Battalion.

In real honest terms, they really miss their women folk. . . . They really miss the normalcy of life that would have come with their families, their wives, their daughters, their sisters, and their mothers. And I represented all of that to them. And that's kind of a fine line to walk, because in that situation I felt that I couldn't get close to anybody. It's very different than . . . when David Leeson talks about the friendships that he made. I think there was a fraternity that he was able to share with the guys that he was with, but for me, I really had to keep a distance from the men that I was with. . . . I just thought it wise that . . . I just made sure that all my interactions were extremely professional. That there was never any question of, you know, friendliness. Because . . . you're dealing with . . . eighteen- to twenty-two-year-old guys often times, and . . . many of them . . . hadn't seen a woman in months And so you just had to keep a very professional distance and . . . I think that worked well, because in the end . . . people say, "what was the worst that you experienced?" And honestly, the one thing that one guy said to me was "you are a breath of fresh air today." That's the most familiar anybody ever [got]. That's practically poetry if you ask me.

She did notice a distinction in how she was received by the enlisted men

compared to the officers, though both groups were "always very polite."

Generally I think that the officers were more of a professional bunch . . . They were really generally politically correct and maybe they had also been a little more warned . . . because they have more information, they're more informed in general. So they have more to protect, right? So I think also they were a little more correct . . . around Jim and me. Whereas really the people who were, for example, the infantry, the grunts as you would call them, . . . they were always trying to squeeze some information out of me. They would ask "what are we doing next? What's going on?" It seemed like they knew only as far as that day's project or even that mission that was ahead of them. But in terms of my dealings, all of them were always very polite. I mean very, as I said, welcoming and courteous, gentlemanly. Now what they said behind my back I don't know. But to my face they were most definitely respectful.

Diaz Meyer felt that her gender proved to be beneficial to her work.

Actually I think that in fact there were strengths that I brought to it. I think there were times that if I had been a man [the Marines] would have reacted differently perhaps. Maybe there would have been more joking, more something. But at the same time I think I brought other things as a female that they felt perhaps more willing to share with me that . . . they might not have allowed a guy to see. You know, I made . . . certain kinds of pictures that were just different; that a male photojournalist wouldn't have made. Yeah, at one point I photographed a guy, one of the grunts on the ground, with a rose, and I don't know that they would have let a guy see that. And instead the banter was, oh, you know they're going to known as the Marine with the sensitive side, or

something like that. But because I was a woman it was OK. But if it was a guy they might have said, "oh my God what a sissy" or who knows what the bad term would have been, but I felt like they were willing to show a more tender side to themselves.

Just as Harris did, Diaz Meyer and Landers both had to deal with technical issues of reporting from the desert with equipment that malfunctioned. Luckily for them, they were able to depend on the Marines for assistance.

Jim and I were both equipped with satellite phones. His was a little more minimalist than mine because his needs were a little simpler. But having to transmit images—these are . . . large files that have to go up into the sky somewhere and hit a satellite and then be bounced . . . somewhere else to land back here at *The Dallas Morning News.* Yeah, these satellites are pretty schmancy nowadays and the one that I had . . . opened up in three leaves, which means that it had a lot of contact to the satellite. I remember one of the leaves broke off so I had to duct tape it on. And that was both my hand-held phone and that worked also as my satellite phone that would hook up into my computer. There was only enough power [available]. . . . There were times when I would be transmitting, I would prep the images and start transmitting them, and there would just be enough power that the last image would be sending as I watched it go to zero. And literally not even one minute. Probably like within five seconds after the last kilobyte was sent, my computer and my sat phone would die. So this was a project because . . . we had to charge all this equipment in the AAV and the AAV doesn't have sockets. You'd have to connect an adapter to the AAV battery. A couple of times we killed the battery. Killed the battery. Fortunately, we weren't in any kind of dire circumstance. Another AAV came, jumped our AAV and then, poof, we were off and running. But you know that was very testy. The guys kind of knew that after awhile, that happened I think maybe once, maybe twice at most. But they knew that if in the middle of the night we were charging all our gear, they'd have to start the AAV and run it like maybe every three hours or something like that. Otherwise the next morning it would be dead. So then once we learned that, we made sure to remind them: "hey, have you started the AAV in a while?" And they'd say, "Yeah, good idea, maybe we should." If they didn't . . . the thing died. . . . I'm trying to be a good guest, but it's like it's not my business to start an AAV because you are the one who's the driver or whatever. So at some point then they felt like "okay, she's not a nag. She's . . . trying to be a good guest." That I think was . . . one of the things I sort of tiptoed around was just trying to be a good guest in their space. These guys, they train all the time together, they know each other, they have their positions of where they're going to sleep in the hierarchy of who gets what space . . . And here we come, and even though the military says treat these people like majors, that was sort of the position we were all given. . . . Still, we were all out on the ground with the rest of the schmo's next to the AAV thinking, if this thing

starts up in the middle of the night and it jumps, you know it could land on my head.

Her work was partly guided by the topics of Landers' stories so that her photographs accompanied them, but the remainder of the time she searched for the action shot. Her awareness of the danger in which she could be placing the Marines of the Second Tank Battalion affected the decisions she made as a photojournalist.

Really most of the time I just tried to find out where the action was. You know, during the invasion, on any given time when you're invading . . . and [you're] in a tank battalion, you're basically driving. So you're not about to . . . stop . . . hold the convoy and then . . . get shots and then jump back on. Because my biggest fear was that if you break out of what they're doing, what if something happens and then you cause some grave incident to happen. I really, honestly, ethically struggled with [that] a lot. . . . I'd just stay in the AAV and if some of my guys got out, then that gave me permission to come out with them. But . . . just basically wherever I thought the action was, and if we were at a stopping point, then the story was just sort of . . . what we'd been doing at that point.

. . . [On] 4 April 2003, we were in the middle of a battle, and [Iraqi] people really didn't know how to react to the fact that there [were] military vehicles and all this fighting going on. And for whatever reason they would drive through the actual battalion. You know, you'd have tanks and AAVs and HMMWVs and all kinds of stuff barreling down the road. And then this [Iraqi] guy and his son, it was like they were just sort of dodging us. And they were kind of cruising through. Of course, the Marines didn't know what to make of that and they shot up the vehicle. Well the vehicle caught fire, and when they realized that it was really a civilian older gentleman with his son, the guys in my AAV got out to help. We happened to be the closest ones to this vehicle. So when they jumped out it was again my permission that I could also go out and photograph. And it was sort of a moment of reckoning for me because, I mean there was a battle going on and there was fire, shots being fired and realistically speaking this vehicle was well under fire. At any point it could have exploded. . . . But at that moment I thought that this is why I came to cover this war . . . to make these pictures. If this is not a picture to take then what would be? So I jumped out and I started recording. It was very brief. I mean the whole time the men were in the vehicle screaming "Get in the vehicle, Get in the vehicle now!" And this car is burning in front of you, ready to explode, and these Marines are pulling this old man out of this vehicle who has been shot. The tanks are rumbling in the nearby area. The ground is shaking. It's smoky from all the artillery from all the rounds of fire that have been shot off. You know, so all your senses are just in hyper-drive. Anyway, I made a few frames. They pulled the guy out. From my

understanding, they saved him. I got back in the vehicle and that ended up being the lead photo of our Pulitzer entry.[3]

Besides the established DoD ground rules and the scene after the friendly-fire incident when the Marine accidentally hit his weapon, Diaz Meyer said the Marines did not impose any additional restrictions on her and what she could photograph.

I think the main understanding was that we didn't want to give away information that would indicate our location, specifically, and get us into trouble. That was kind of the main thing. Because . . . we're embedded, obviously we're all at risk. So anything that we do risks not just the lives of the men who are hosting us but our lives as well. . . .
. . . There was only, I think, a couple of times when they were dealing with prisoner detainees that I was told not to photograph. Other than that it was relatively open."

She noticed a correlation in Marines' ranks and who allowed her near detainees or other sensitive areas. It was the "higher up, like . . . the lieutenant colonel and the top . . . line of officers" who did not give her permission to accompany them to certain areas with detainees "because they . . . had more to answer to, and they had to really stick by that. Sometimes if you were dealing with sergeants and people of that level, . . . they really didn't mind you being there . . . , even if it did pertain to a situation that might otherwise you might be cut out of."

The embedding experience gave her a unique perspective. She had a deeper comprehension of the war she was covering and the dangers associated with it. As an embed, she was able to understand the context of the situations that coalition forces faced and the reasons behind their actions.

I think the embed gave us a real inside look at everything. . . .
. . . And the reality is that I think everything that I saw while I was embedded was done for a reason. You know, within context, you would understand why things happened. And that's a good perspective to have . . . I feel sad that the Vietnam veterans, even though there were embedded journalists with them, that

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[3]See Appendix B for photograph.

what they did was not, not everything they did was right. But without someone overseeing that who is a neutral party, there will never be any real clear understanding of the judgment and the decisions that these men and women are making out in the field. I mean so many times . . . I just said, "my God." You know, I experienced the same fear, the same terror, the same exhaustion that they did. So when an incident happened, I knew why it happened because I was reacting in the exact same way. I mean I remember one time . . . there was a minivan, and it ran a checkpoint near our camp and we had just had three rocket attacks in that camp that were so close it was simply chance that nobody was killed, sheer luck that nobody was injured. And this vehicle had women and children in it. It was straddling two other ammo vehicles that had also tried to run the checkpoint. [The Marines] shot this vehicle up. There were bodies all over the place. Women, children dead, bullets in their head, you name it. It was an ugly, nasty, miserable, wretched sight. But I tell you, after that third rocket attack, in my heart, I didn't care what these Marines did. I just, in my heart, kept saying to myself, it was like a monster, "Just please make it stop. I don't care who gets hurt, I don't care who gets killed, just please make it stop." It was that kind of terror you have in your heart, and then something like that happens. Can you blame them? No, they had to make a decision. And the worst thing is, then they have to live with it. And that to me is going to be one of our greatest casualties of this war. Men and women coming back with memories like that. Having to live with the things they had to do.

She believed that a benefit of the embed program was the context that it supplied

to reporters.

For me, I felt it was really beneficial because ultimately I was not censored much at all, and I was able to do most of the work that I felt was necessary there. But it's kind of . . . you cannot be everything if you're embedded or not embedded. If you're embedded, there are some drawbacks, and if you're not embedded there are some drawbacks. The drawback of not being embedded is that you're not with the action. When you're embedded you're there. As it happens you witness it, and there's nothing hidden about that. It's happening right in front of you. So that's a great benefit. And then I think honestly, I don't know if the military thought about this, like how . . . when you're embedded, just the fact that you have this common experience with the people that you're with that you understand exactly what's happening. You know what they're feeling because you felt it too. That's very powerful as opposed to me coming in for a day, dropping in. . . . And I'm fresh and I'm clean and I'm feeling good about life, and then I drop in on you, and I see you make a decision to shoot up a minibus. And I'm like "Whoa, you guys are crazy," right? Whereas instead, I had lived through the context of three rocket attacks before that happened. Experienced the fear that they had. Felt the earth rumble. Nearly lost it and then this incident happens. I know why it happened. So that's very powerful to have that. I think the context of being embedded is extremely important. When

you're not embedded you can say well, you know, you're not beholden to anyone, therefore you're gonna make the pictures that are necessary and look at it from a tough stance. I just cannot say that aside from the few instances when they were dealing with detainees . . . you know there were times when I was able to shoot detainees and I did do it. Only when I was told I could do it. But I believed in shooting that, too, because I feel that's very much a part of how they were being treated. I mean later now, we've learned of all the abuses. But along the way we wouldn't have known any of that if somebody hadn't been shooting it.

Despite her camaraderie with the Marines, Diaz Meyer never felt that her objectivity as a journalist was challenged. She reiterated that knowing the context of the Marines' actions and having the perspective of an American journalist influenced her work as well as the work of non-American journalists:

I told them from the beginning that I'm here to photograph the good, the bad, and the ugly. It's whatever I see. They didn't have any misconceptions [about] that, even though I'm an American journalist as opposed to a French or an Argentinean or something else. I mean, these are my guys, right? I mean they're fighting this war for my country. And I know that journalists from other countries were definitely more critical. I mean I actually was in the embed process with a woman who was from another country. . . . We ran into each other midway through the invasion, our groups kind of intersected for a day. And I was walking around and ran into her and said, "How are you?" And she said, "I'm fine. I have to tell you, when I went into this I was so ready to get someone. I wanted to find a story that was going to show how bad this war was." And she said that the irony is that these guys are so great and they're so kind, and she said that everything they do "I know why they do it." So she said, "You know I feel like I'm just a PR flack, running around telling all these wonderful stories about what these guys are doing because that's what I see." And I had to laugh because I said, "you know I have to admit it, I feel the same way, that most of the time that is what I'm doing." Had I seen it otherwise, I would have shot it otherwise. And there were things I did shoot that I know that the Marines didn't appreciate.

She recounted one incident in which several photographs upset a Marine and his family, though she stuck to her guns about her reasons for taking those shots. The battalion's families in North Carolina followed the news of their Marines through the *The Dallas Morning News*' Web site, where Landers' stories and Diaz Meyer's photographs were posted.

[A Marine's wife] was actually upset with some other images that I made, and she emailed me to tell me so. [He and I] actually . . . ended up having a discussion about it before I left because she was really, really, really, unhappy about the image that I took of a minibus of civilians that had been killed. I had contextualized it in the caption, you know, because as I said earlier, you know, the rocket attacks, the ammunition vehicles that this minibus was sandwiched by, all of that was the context to why this had happened. But when she saw it, she felt affronted. From her perspective she felt like, "Look, you don't get it. You don't understand how hard it is to be a wife over here. The people rallying against the war and I have to stand up because my husband is serving over there and you with your pictures just made this more difficult." So I wrote her a letter back saying, "you know, I understand where you're coming from. You couldn't have a bigger fan in me, of your husband and of these Marines. I mean I am a huge fan of theirs. These guys are great, they're generous, they're kind, they're hospitable, they're wonderful." And I said, "But I hope you understand that I am here to do a job and that I have to tell it in all of the different aspects of it and that I'm really sorry if I caused you any pain." And I told him that verbally. . . When I left, he said, "You know, I understand you had to do your job and that is exactly the democracy that we are fighting for."

 . . . It pains me that I caused pain to someone else through the work that I had to do. I wouldn't have done it any differently, but it still makes me sad.

Diaz Meyer shared Harris' view of the need to report the war in Iraq: to inform

the American public.

Why are images of war capturing important? I think ultimately making pictures of war is about informing the public. . . . We live in a democracy. War is paid for by our taxes and hence we should know what is happening. We should know what is happening to the men and women who are serving our country. We should know what's actually happening as the war offensive happens. When somebody says we are winning . . . are we really winning? If we're losing, are we really losing? It's just a way that I think we keep some of the democratic principles alive, and everything is aired so there aren't sort of areas of our government that are not beholden to the public.

Looking back on the work she produced as an embed, Diaz Meyer felt "satisfied"

with her performance. Her personal evaluation included how well she communicated

through her photography the actions of the Second Tank Battalion to the world.

I'm satisfied. I mean I look back on what I did, and I feel like I did what I could do within my abilities, within the strengths that I offered. Yeah, and you know . . . you could constantly second guess yourself and thought "I could have done this or I should have done that," but in reality you know things aren't what

they appear to be at the time, and you make your decisions based on that kind of information. So you cover what you think is the most important thing of the day or what needs to be told. We usually would send about fifteen images a day. And I think that as I look back on it, you know my images ran in a lot of newspapers around the country, including *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* and abroad. So I think that our coverage of the Second Tank Battalion was fruitful and important for the world to see, being that we were one of the leading groups during the invasion.

Part of her feeling of accomplishment stemmed from her commitment of taking into account the seriousness of the decisions that she was forced to make. In Iraq, Diaz Meyer struggled with the ethical implications of her work on a daily basis:

I really feel like every step of the way I always asked myself if this was worthwhile; if this was what I wanted to do. If something really bad happened, could I live with it? . . . You never would have wanted to cause the injury or death of someone. And I think because I did that, I look back on the whole thing with very little regret. I feel like I always tried to make my decision with brutal honesty with myself about what I could face and what I could live with. So whatever happened, I felt like I had a certain peace about it. And I think that has been probably one of the healthier things . . . that I did. But during the time it was happening I certainly struggled. I mean I remember calling my boss a number of times and saying, you know, "this happened, and this happened. . . . This happened today, and I wanted to do this, but what if this had happened?" I remember saying to him at the time, I said, "I wanted to do this, but I thought to myself, what if I caused the death of someone?" And he said "Cheryl, if you caused the death of someone you'd be fired." And I'm like, "Fired, who cares about fired. How do you live with it? That's my question, not fired." You know it was that sort of thing that I felt on any given day you could be faced with a question that the results of which could be so catastrophic that you had to make the right decision. There was no wrong. You must be right. And the weight of that, the weight of that to me was one of the hardest things about covering the war: knowing that you could not be wrong. You had to be right or else you could be dead or somebody else could be dead. . . .
. . . It is a lot of pressure . . . something people don't generally talk about . . .
. . . That moment where . . . the civilian had been fired on . . . I knew I needed to get out [and take photographs]. I knew I had to find the courage.
. . . You know you're making these decisions and there's no one day to think about. There's no one hour to think about it. It's literally a fraction of a second when you have to gauge everything that is around you. You have to go "Okay, how close are we to the burning vehicle? If I get out, am I going to risk anybody else's safety or is it only my own? If they're already out then they've already made the choice and it's not because of me that they're out there. So if something happens, if anybody gets shot, it's not my fault." . . . It's just literally

seconds where you gauge the situation and you go, "okay, I don't think I'm putting them at risk. Okay, am I going to put myself at risk? Yes. How much risk am I willing to take? If I end up paralyzed, dead, is that okay with me at this point? Can I accept that?" There are a lot of bitter people in the world who have lost a leg or an arm, . . . journalists who have been maimed. . . . I wanted to put myself in . . . emotionally the best possible place. . . . And so I always thought about, will I regret this? Am I making this decision with full awareness? I just never wanted to regret anything. That's why I always thought in my mind I don't want to regret anything. Just trying to make the right decision and come out of it alive and that I shouldn't get anybody injured or killed. Because otherwise I would have to live my whole life knowing something like that and that to me, I don't know how I would reconcile that. . . . So I'm really very cognizant of what I do, the decisions that I make, and the effects of those decisions. Because you know when you're with someone in a war all of it matters. They're entrusting themselves to you and you are entrusting yourself to them.

Military Personnel

Lt. Col. Jonathan Withington – U.S. Army

Lt. Col. Jonathan Withington began his Army career twenty years ago as an armor officer. Twelve years later, Withington switched to his current career area in public affairs, which led him to serve as the public affairs officer for the Fourth Infantry Division for the past three years. His assignment with the division came to a close in March 2007 when he was reassigned to the Pentagon.

During his leadership as the commanding public affairs officer of the division, 4ID deployed to Iraq for a year in late fall 2005. During his interview, Withington described how the media presence in Iraq has changed from the invasion of 2003 to the time he was there two and a half years later. After the invasion, western news organizations established bureaus in Baghdad, thus minimizing the number of reporters that they embedded with the Army. Partially because of that scenario as well as other reasons discussed in the next few pages, the concept of embedding changed from living

with the troops for weeks at a time to days at a time, though the Army would prefer

reporters and photographers remain with soldiers for a month or longer.

> There's probably twenty western bureaus in Baghdad that maintain a constant presence. The major newspapers, *The Washington Post*, *The [New York] Times*, th*e L.A. Times*, the *Chicago Trib[une]*, all the networks. The AP and the AFP and NPR was there with the radio. The BBC was there. So they had bureaus, and embedding was a misnomer at times because when people think about embedding, they think about 2003 when the 3rd Infantry Division had about 300 reporters in their formation. I mean, 300 is exaggerating, but there were reporters everywhere you looked. Every single company had a reporter it seemed. Now you have bureaus that are established in Baghdad. You have a lot of media that just come in for a short period of time. And the bureaus that are local in Baghdad, they just come out and do a story for a day and then go back. Sometimes they'll come out for a little longer. Some bureaus are better than others. And then you have folks that come from the states. They typically want to embed. But the folks that are in Baghdad all the time, they don't necessarily want to embed. And the embed used to be for a long period of time, that was the beauty of it. If you're giving yourself a month to embed with us, we're going to give you the keys to the kingdom. We're going to let you see everything. We're going to put our best foot forward and really give you all sorts of access. But now these people are coming in for just a morning to talk or do one interview. They already have their story. They're not coming to us to embed, [but] just to see and get the soldier story. Anymore it's all about putting their larger story together and they just want soldier view, soldier reaction or background information on a given event.

During his deployment, Withington still had some reporters from media outlets without

Baghdad bureaus who embedded with the Army. "We probably had a little more than

300 reporters come into our formation. Folks that stayed longer than one month, no

more than twenty, I would say."

Withington discussed some of the issues that the military and the press faced with

embedding in 2006 and still currently face. One of Withington's concerns is reporters'

lack of knowledge about the coalition force's operations or about details of the

insurgency when they travel to Iraq and embed for a short amount of time.

> The Baghdad media know exactly what is going on. They've been following it. I mean, Michael Ware, he's known for going on the insurgent's side, as well

as [for] his contacts with insurgency. Laura Logan, CBS, has many deep contacts in the Mehdi Army and down in Sadr City with Sadr himself. John Burns, *[The] New York Times*, has been there forever and knows and completely understands what's going on with the insurgency, with the sectarian violence. They know the military. They understand it. I think the reporters that parachute in, the talent, if you will, of Chris Cuomo from *Good Morning America*, showing up for two weeks to say, "Hey, I was in Iraq". He doesn't get it. Harry Smith shows up for a week, and he wants to go down on Haifa Street. I don't think he actually gets it. Martha Raddatz has spent enough time . . . I think the veteran reporters that have spent a lot of time in Iraq understand the tactical and strategic situation there and they understand the military and how it operates. Those that parachute in for short periods of time don't necessarily understand. Or the newcomers to reporting over there don't necessarily understand.

As Withington indicated, the military did acknowledge this situation and tried to

provide them with background information so that they would have a better

understanding of the context.

What we would try to do is give them a one-on-one briefing . . . [to] especially the reporters that were of note that didn't routinely work over there. We would often give them a briefing up front about what was going on before they would go down to one of the brigades.   And then the brigades would always give them a welcome briefing as to what was going on in their unit or what they were about to see. And that helped greatly, that helped a lot.

While Withington and his PAO staff did provide key information to reporters

embedding with the troops, Withington recounted one occurrence where that information

and his warnings were not heeded by one particular reporter.

The morning that Bob Woodruff came to us, he was supposed to get an in-brief from me, and he was going to do an office call with our chief of staff. He was late getting up to Camp Liberty so I just met him at the airfield and gave him a short brief about what was going on and what he would see while he was up in Taji. And one of the things that I talked about with him and that we talk to all reporters about was safety and the danger that they were about to face. And I talked to him specifically about staying out of Iraqi vehicles. He asked me, "So, what kind of vehicles are these joint patrols going to be in?" I said, "Well they'll have Iraqi vehicles, MTLBs and BMPs, and the Americans will be in up-armored HMMWVs and possibly in their tanks and Bradleys. I said, "You'll probably be in the HMMWV the whole time." He said "What about the Iraqi vehicles?" I said, "No, you need to stay in the American HMMWV. He said, "Well, why is that?" I said, "Because the Iraqi vehicles don't offer the same level of protection

that the HMMWV offers you. Don't, Bob, don't get in the Iraqi vehicles. Please don't do it." [He said,] "Okay, okay." And we shook hands, and he went off and got in the helicopter and flew away. And the next day he was injured because he got in the MTLB, an Iraqi vehicle.

The combination of Woodruff's near-fatal injury on 29 January 2006 and the 29 May 2006 roadside bomb that killed two CBS crewmen and critically injured CBS correspondent Kimberly Dozier significantly affected the embed program and the willingness of media organizations to send their reporters to Iraq.

Right away everybody thought, "wow this is serious." . . . Woodruff was a guy that had been there several times. He'd embedded during the ground fight. So he wasn't as green as a lot of people who just sort of parachute in, the big talent that just sort of parachute in. But . . . I'm not going to speak for him, but he did what he did. The result of that, though, wasn't really felt until Dozier was hit. After the Kim Dozier incident, ABC, CBS and NBC all instituted policies where the bureau in Baghdad had to get permission from New York before they could embed with us. There had to be a specific story they were after. None of this long-term embedding. So it had to be for a specific reason for a specific period of time in a specific place. And they had to get permission from New York before they did it. *L.A. Times* stopped embedding. We never had another *L.A. Times* reporter after that embed with us. Louise Roug from *L.A. Times* was supposed to embed the very next day for a period of one week. She cancelled . . . because her publisher made her cancel. The *L.A. Times* only came out to the FOBs (Forward Operating Bases) to do a story. They would never go out on patrol after that. AP pulled their reporter in for a period of time because they were worried about embedding. I'm told, I read something recently where FOX News was not embedding with U.S. troops right now because of the danger. So it significantly reduced the amount of time they wanted to spend with us because they felt they would be targets if they were with us.

After that, Withington and his staff made an active effort to bring reporters back to the troops and embed with them.

We constantly had to call them and encourage them to come out and spend time with us. . . . NBC's Richard Engle did a great job. He'd come out and do soldier stories for a week at a time. FOX did for awhile, but [after] we returned [to Fort Hood] I read where the reporter interviewed for that one particular story said he was not riding in U.S. vehicles anymore. It was just a lot of work to get people out, and I'll tell you a big day for us was eleven reporters with us. The

other week I got an email from [the First Cavalry Division]^4 PAO that they had twenty-five in with them, and I think that's [due to] the renewed interest [in] the war . . . and the surge and all that sort of stuff. You know, you get more reporters when something big was happening. Sig Christenson of the *San Antonio Express* talks about . . . this . . . as the biggest story of our lifetime, and he's just appalled about how many reporters are embedding with the American forces. It becomes a liability. I mean the liability was incredible for these news organizations. They had to pay insurance, they had to pay salaries, they had to pay U.S. staff, Iraqi staff, security costs, building and lodging and transportation costs. It's astounding. So after Dozier was hit and Woodruff was hit, and the story was off the front pages until the election . . . in November, it significantly reduced the number of people we had coming out to see us and embed with us.

Withington touched on several issues that media face when it comes to covering the conflict in Iraq, either embedded or unilaterally. Danger and the costs associated with keeping reporters safe have played a major role in the press' decision to have journalists physically reporting from Iraq.

There's not as much flexibility in a lot of those bureaus in Iraq. . . . In their defense, the bureaus have downsized quite a bit. In 2006, when Iraq was falling off the front pages, it became a huge fiscal decision based on liability, cost for security, and the editorial risk that you take. All that combined . . . the investment was not necessarily worth having people over there in the eyes of many publishers. And so the bureaus flattened out quite a bit. It you only have one or two reporters you can't send one to embed for a long period of time, because who's going to watch, or who's going to stay back at the bureau in case something else breaks? . . . Somebody has to be back to watch the office or go live when they throw . . . [to] Baghdad from NBC. You know you got the guy in Washington and the guy in Baghdad. Well, who's going to be the guy in Baghdad if everybody is out and about? So they flattened that out. And there is also the liability issue about going out [into Baghdad]. After some folks got hurt, a number of bureaus changed their regulations on who could go, when they could go and how they got approval to go out.

He also acknowledged that a major downfall of the embed program is the imposition on media to obtain their own transportation to the war zone. The difficulties of getting into theater and the expenses associated with it have prevented those wanting to embed from being able to do it.

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^{4}First Cavalry Division deployed to Iraq in fall 2006 and was in Iraq when this interview occurred.

I will tell you it is difficult to get in. We have yet to crack the code . . . You're a reporter from Nowhere Daily Herald and you want to go to Iraq, well how do you get there? Do this, this, this and this and boom you're there: we don't do that. We don't . . . have flights that the media can jump on. It's a big expense to go from Central Texas to Baghdad. And Chris Heath [KWTX-TV, Waco, Texas] can talk ad nauseam about how it's on again, off again, just because of the cost. Mike Hedges for more than a year told me he's coming, he's coming, he's coming, and every time the *Houston Chronicle* backed out because of budget reasons. Sig Christenson, same deal, *San Antonio Express*. *The Dallas Morning News*' Doug Swanson [said] "we're sending somebody, we're sending somebody, we're sending somebody," [but then] budget doesn't accommodate. Well, if we can give them a ride over there, that would help, that would encourage it. But we just haven't streamlined how to get them over there yet. So people come on their own, as far as Kuwait, and then we get them into theater. That's a big expense flying to Kuwait or Jordan.

Withington noted that journalists who were fortunate to travel to Iraq and embed with Fourth Infantry Division soldiers had to uphold the restrictions that the military placed on media, though restrictions were really limited to reports that interfered with operational security.

. . . [Operational security included] things that would jeopardize the mission or jeopardize the soldiers [that] were sensitive [about] certain pieces of equipment. Our counter-IED is very sensitive, and so we didn't want any of that publicized. We had to refrain from reporters coming in and covering that unless we worked real closely on how they were going to cover it and in what context. We did some stuff with FOX. Courtney Kealy did some really good things in the buffalo, which is a mine-clearing piece of equipment. Ralph Peterson of the *New York Post* did some fantastic reporting with an engineer outfit and covered some of the unit doing counter-IED missions that focused more on the soldier than the equipment. So we had to protect a lot of tactics, techniques, procedure, . . . especially in the counter-IED role. Things that involved our use of UAVs, Unmanned Arial Vehicles, sometimes gets very sensitive. So there were some things that were off limits for the media. We didn't deny that they existed. We didn't hide it from them. There were just areas that we said up front, and we had an agreement, that those are off-limits. So other than that, there was not a whole lot of stuff that we were doing that was off-limits for the media to see. We would take them out on missions, and they would see everything. They'd see the mission playing. They'd see the actual mission. They saw death, they saw causalities. Part of the embedding rules stipulated how they could report names and the fact that they couldn't use names prior to notification of next of kin. And

so it played out pretty well. What they could cover and what they couldn't cover, and then locally the commander would have to add some additional things such as the counter-IED stuff.

There were a couple of instances that Withington said he had to address when reporters either violated those restrictions or tried to work around embed procedures:

> I got on to Anita Powell with *Stars and Stripes* when she was writing about our use of nonlethal bullets. She was talking specifically about tactics and techniques. Tom Lasseter from McClatchy, formerly Knight-Ridder, did something that he had done with other units, but we brought him and took a chance on him, and he did it to us. He'd write something scathing on his way out. Or write something that is very awkward on his way out. It wasn't that it was not favorable, but he left a bunch of bitterness in his wake and that was dealing with whether we were in a civil war or not in a civil war. That wasn't really an OPSEC thing. So I had one incident, and that was with the *Stars and Stripes*. The division to our north had more incidents. We didn't disembed anybody the whole time we were there. We brought everybody in, and we didn't kick anybody out. . . . I can think of one incident where a guy was a freelancer, and he covered . . . one unit, and he left that unit to go and try to get [another freelance] job covering . . . another unit. And he hadn't coordinated that. You're supposed to stay with the unit that you are embedded with. You work through public affairs to get to another unit, and that's fine if you want to jump units. It just has to be coordinated. But operational security, I never had anybody really violate anything. The closest thing was that *Stars and Stripes* discussion of the tactics, techniques, and procedures, the use of rubber bullets near Sadr City.

To address the situation, Withington contacted the *Stars and Stripes* reporter and also wrote a note to her editor.

Overall, Withington had a positive view of the embedded U.S. press and their coverage of the news in Iraq. He worked to build relationships with media representatives and noted the importance of cultivating rapport.

> They're Americans, and they don't want to jeopardize or put soldiers in harm's way any more than they already are. I really think that the reporters are really trying to do their job and to do it the best they can. And what I found is if you talk to them, you talk to them up front when they first come in so they know who they can talk to if there are issues. And there were always issues with embedded units: "I want to report on this, but they say I can't. I want to go here, but they're having trouble moving me from point A to point B." I mean there were all sorts of issues. But if they know who they can contact and they feel that

that person really cares about their existence, that person being Withington and his public affairs staff, then they know that they can call on us. Likewise, if there is an issue, I'm going to call them out on it. I'm going to call them when I don't like their story and I'm going to tell them it's bad, it's wrong, it's out of context, it's immature. I'm going to let them know. Poor journalism, I'm going to let them know. But if they write something well, I'm also going to let them know. I'm going to pat them on the back. But the bottom line is you've got to maintain communication with them. Your Rolodex is everything, and those relationships are key.

Withington noted that the problems he found with some stories may not have necessarily been the reporter's fault but instead editors may have altered the story.

The editorial content of the paper will sway what's actually printed. A reporter may write a story, and then when it goes to print it doesn't even look like their story. That's a fact. *L.A. Times* is a perfect example. And reporters would even say as much. [They'll say] "my editors did that" when I call and complain, "Why did you leave out X or Y?" "Well, that was an editorial decision by my editors. . . ."
. . . [Editors] will cut. They will condense at the expense of the actual facts of the story.

Withington emphasized the cooperative spirit among the press and military when covering a sensitive story. For him, open communication was key. He did not want to restrict reporters from covering the story, but he worked with them to make sure information that could jeopardize troop safety was not an issue. His recollection of a specific circumstance also indicated that the presence of embedded American media was beneficial for the Army; it allowed for a third-party perspective to counter Iraqi rumors.

In November [2006], we had a soldier who was taken away . . . abducted. He was immediately declared Duty Status -Whereabouts Unknown. The night that occurred . . . we had units in Baghdad on patrol that immediately transitioned to recovery operations looking for him. John Roberts from CNN was with one of them. Richard Engles from NBC was with another unit. And these units were going all over the place looking for this soldier. They set up checkpoints and roadblocks. They raided a number of places, even raided an Iraqi TV station and newspaper company. And Iraqis were going off about how we raided the newspaper office and destroyed it and treated the people poorly. John Roberts from CNN is going "I was there, none of that occurred." And the same was sort of happening with Engle. Also we were concerned because we didn't want them

putting out a bunch of information about this soldier. One, the family hadn't been notified, [and] two, we didn't want to talk openly about the focus of our search yet because we don't want the bad guys to know we think that we know where he is. And so I worked with Roberts and Engle that night about the amount of information they were going to put out in their stories. And it's all about relationships. If they didn't know me well enough to call me, or I didn't know them well enough to call them, we would have had some trouble because they may have reported something that was really incorrect or inappropriate. Instead, we came to a compromise about the information. They knew everything that was going on. It wasn't that they were never going to be able to report it, it's just that at that moment we didn't want them putting it out yet. They were both extremely professional about it and did very good jobs with the story.

Withington acknowledged that the military needs to maintain its transparency with the media and complimented efforts of the America press:

I think they're doing the best that they can, the western media. They report the good and the bad, and most of it is bad because security drives everything in that country, everything. And if security is bad then . . . the stories are [going to be] about that . . . and we've got to continue to be as transparent as possible about what we're doing over there. Our intentions, our goals, our objectives, and then our evaluations of those objectives. Because we have got to keep the trust, confidence of our own public . . . , and right now, we're doing a pretty good job of it. When something has occurred we say "we've screwed the pooch on this one" or any other misbehavior or miscalculations down range. So we just have to continue to be transparent and we have to continue to [have] . . . maximum disclosure and minimum delay with the media over there. Because they're not going away.

Sgt. 1st Class Guadalupe Stratman – U.S. Army

Sgt. 1st Class Guadalupe Stratman enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1992 as an administrative personnel clerk. Her interest in photography led her to Army public affairs as a military occupation. She spent several years writing for various post newspapers in the United States and in Germany. After a public affairs assignment in Washington, D.C., where she interacted with national media, she was re-stationed to Fort Hood, Texas, and assigned to the Fourth Sustainment Brigade of the Fourth Infantry Division.

In September 2005, Stratman deployed to Iraq for a year with the Fourth

Sustainment Brigade, serving as the brigade's public affairs officer. She and an E-5

sergeant were in charge of the public affairs "shop" for the unit, which was located in

Taji, about a forty-five-minute drive north of Baghdad. The brigade's mission was to

help "sustain the force of the Fourth Infantry Division" by providing them with supplies

and maintaining their vehicles by "upgrading their armor." The brigade was responsible

for delivering supplies—food, fuel, equipment, life-sustainment items—to all units

encompassing the area within two hours north of Baghdad and seven hours south of the

city. The brigade was made up of soldiers from Fort Hood, Texas, ; Fort Lewis,

Washington; Fort Sill, Oklahoma; National Guard units from Wisconsin, Reserve forces

from Puerto Rico, and U.S. forces in Germany.

Because of the nature of the Fourth Sustainment Brigade's mission, very few

journalists embedded with Stratman's unit during her year-long deployment.

"[Journalists] wanted to cover the action" and the brigade's mission was "not necessarily

the kicking-in doors that a lot of the news media [wanted to] cover." Stratman spent

much of her time writing stories about individuals in units in the brigade and sending

them to their home town areas and home posts. There were only two occasions when

media embedded with the brigade, and those embed interactions revealed various aspects

of the press-military relationship.

A female reporter, Gina Cavallaro, from the *Army Times* bi-weekly newspaper,

embedded with the U.S. Army for a month during spring of 2006. She spent four days

with the Fourth Sustainment Brigade around Eastertime during the last part of her time

in theater. Stratman explained the usual procedure that she followed when working with

the media: the higher-level public affairs office at 3rd Corps Support Command

(COSCOM), would contact Stratman about a specific journalist who was interested in

writing a story about the unit; Stratman would relay to the 3rd COSCOM PAO what

missions were currently occurring or would occur; the PAO would consult with the

journalist and find out which stories he or she was interested in, then contact Stratman

about the journalist's choice; and she would prepare the unit for those stories. Stratman

seemed bothered for two reasons that Cavallaro's arrival came with no pre-visit

consultation: Stratman was not fully prepared to assist Cavallaro, and she could not

make sure the soldiers were prepared for the press' presence.

> We were . . . on the tail end of her visit in Iraq . . . and I think that's [when] she got in touch with my brigade commander and . . . sent a few emails. [He] said, "She's coming and you're taking care of her." I said, "Got it. No problem, sir." But the thing is I had nothing for her to agree upon. There was no necessary agreement for her to do this story or that story. It was "let me see what you got." So when [she] did that, I felt a little unprepared . . . because I didn't know what she wanted, and I didn't know exactly how to help her. . . .
> . . . Like any good journalist does, if she saw something interesting, like when we were going from point A to point B or if we were in the dining facility, if she saw something interesting she went [to that person] and talked about it.
> . . . I thought that was fine, I had no problem with that. Granted, [she's] kind of hitting the person she's talking to with a curve ball. It's like, "Oh, you want to talk to me?" So there's no preparation . . . , or at least [no] . . . heads-up that "hey, this person is interested and would like to ask you a few questions or anything like that." I would feel more comfortable [if I was given a heads-up]. I don't like being hit with curve balls, so I'd rather have someone tell me to be expecting this. . . So at least I can say I know what to tell her. . . . I just might stumble on words and think "I could have told her about this or I could have told her that" . . .

Caught off-guard, soldiers that Cavallaro approached looked to Stratman for reassurance.

> At first [they were] like, "Are you sure it's okay?" . . . They'd turn to me and say, "is it OK if I talk?" I'd say, "Yeah it's okay if you talk. If you don't want to talk you don't have to talk, either." But normally it was simple things, like one person who was in the dining facility . . . one of the DFAC⁵ cooks. . . . He would

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⁵Dining Facility.

actually carve the fruits in different designs, . . . and they were really nice, as far as flowers, birds and all that stuff. So he just talked about that.

Cavallaro wrote a story on the efficient practices of the brigade in delivering needed supplies to the appropriate units. As someone who had worked as a journalist, Stratman felt she understood best how to aid the *Army Times* reporter in obtaining the sources that she needed, even though Stratman's view of what worked best differed from the brigade commander's thoughts on the subject.

> Our brigade commander . . . kept wanting her to interview a million people . . . like everyone [who was] . . . involved with it. What I see is the more stories that you . . . tell the journalists, the more confusing they can be. It's like . . . [they] need just . . . one point of contact to explain the overall process of the CRSP[6] yard and then . . . one person to tell what their particular job is at the CRSP yard, how they help do their part. I mean that's the way I write stories, so I was kind of [trying] help her, but my brigade commander wanted her to talk to everybody. I traveled around with her. . . .
> . . . She was very good as far as interacting with the soldiers. She did talk to about five different people about the overall concept of the CRSP yard. So I felt she was getting too much information . . . the way one person explains it is not quite the same [as another would]. . . . But for someone that knows nothing about the CRSP yard or how we deliver supplies throughout theater, I felt she was kind of confused, and we had to keep going back to the people that she interviewed. They were fine with that, so it was good that she did get her story.

A separate story written by the same journalist seemed to have repercussions for the unit and for Stratman as the public affairs officer, although she defended the journalist's actions and found the consequences to be no fault of the journalist.

> While she was there with us, the main story [she wrote about] was the CRSP yard, but she [also] wanted to see what else goes on, and she happened to notice our little calendar of events. . . . On the calendar of events it actually had salsa night [and] Tae Kwon Do classes, and . . . she wanted to see that. So we were pretty much out all night. It was a Saturday night. First around 5 o'clock we went to the gym, they were having Tae Kwon Do classes . . . We were there watching and this is what was kind of interesting to me. . . . I was always so busy with my job that I never went and saw all the different activities on the Camp Taji . . . I told her that "I don't know what we are going to see" [She] . . . took pictures of it, and what they used that for was that [the paper] would do . . .

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[6]Central Receiving and Shipping Point.

stand-alone photos around the Army. That's [what she was] grabbing that information for, and that was pretty harmless. And then we went to what was . . . salsa night, and one of the units . . . was a Puerto Rican reserve unit that . . . had just arrived there. They were pretty much having the time of their life. It was very crowded. It was a very small room . . . but it was packed. And people were dancing and all that. She even commented, "I thought maybe it would be just a couple of people here. This is like a really happening place," because everybody was there. It wasn't . . . just the Puerto Rican National Guard, it was . . . a lot of the different units there. What she used with that was that she wrote . . . a little block and her entry line to it was "War is hell, but not if you're at Camp Taji." And then . . . [with] the shot she used [for] that, she just went on to explain how people had fun at Camp Taji. She used a . . . far-away shot, but you could tell there were soldiers dancing and such. My unit's reaction to that was "Oh my gosh, what is she doing? Why are you letting her write about something like that?" My take as public affairs [is] saying "that's what we're doing." I mean, you're saying that we're just a robot soldier that we only work all the time. We do need to relax and have fun, and as long as we are not on duty, that's our time to do that. My leadership frowned on that greatly. That particular blog was not necessarily the direct leading up to it, [but] . . . eventually, like a month later, the salsa night was taken away. And everyone looked at me like "you did this." I was like, "No, no. . . . If people were doing what they're not supposed to be doing at that place, I can't control that. But it's like when they bring in the media, . . . they write what they see. Yes, I can control what they see by saying "no, you can't see that, let's go see this," but I didn't see anything wrong with it. I mean that was how soldiers had fun. It wasn't like an every night thing that we did . . . it was done twice a month. But then they said "nope, no more." Dance nights [were] what they took away. People in the unit looked at me and said "why, why, why?" I mean they literally blamed us for that. . . .

. . . Her story [about] . . . the CRSP yard wasn't printed until . . . a month later [after her visit]. So we couldn't see the . . . fruit of our labors as quickly. . . . [It] was a great story on the CRSP yard . . . , [but] everyone only remembers that they took away salsa night.

The incident with the salsa-night story exposed an interesting dynamic within the military organization: suspicion and mistrust of the Army public affairs office among other Army personnel. Though Stratman was a soldier, she felt that her fellow service members were still leery of her in the roles of Army journalist and public affairs officer.

What I . . . would see is it's hard for some soldiers to warm up to [a] journalist . . . Even for me, if I was to go out and do a story, it's like, "Oh, you're PAO. We can't talk to you," or something like that. I mean, because they would just be a little scared about what they're going to say. . . . And then after we . . . develop a little rapport, when they see that we're not there to get a bad story, that

we're there for their benefit and to write a great story, they have that little bit more of a rapport with you and they'll start talking more.

According to Stratman, there was also some confusion among Army personnel as to the rights and restrictions of embedded journalists. While it may have been approved for journalists to attend daily briefings, it was apparently not permissible for them to attend briefings in locations considered "secret," which came as a surprise to her commanding officer.

Our Brigade commander . . . offered to . . . allow her into the secret areas, "Why isn't she coming to our brief? Our daily update briefs?" I go, "Sir that's secret. You can't have a civilian at all in there." He goes, "But she's a journalist, she has a clearance to go in there." I said, "No sir, she cannot go into that room."

Stratman noticed that the *Army Times* reporter actively pursued selling her paper to the soldiers as well as interviewing them.

From what I could tell, it seemed like everyone she would talk to she would quickly get their mailing address because the *Army Times* would offer up to 6 months of the newspaper for free . . . trying to get people to order it. But it's like every single person we talked to she'd always say, "By the way, give me you're mailing address." I don't know if she followed through on all of those, but she talked to a lot of people that way.

The second wave of press to embed with the Fourth Sustainment Brigade was an independent film team, Ashwin Raman and Phil Sands, who came to film a documentary about supplies in Iraq for German television. Stratman was responsible for hosting the film team as well as a 3rd COSCOM mobile public affairs attachment that arrived at the same time as Raman and Sands. The public affairs attachment were "augmentees that were add-ons to [the 3rd COSCOM] public affairs shop. They were public-affairs trained, but they were just newly arrived to theater and this was . . . their first media engagement." Stratman ran into problems with both groups touring the brigade's location at the same time.

[Ashwin and Sands] said . . . "They (the public affairs attachment) get in our way, can you get them out of our way?" And I'm like, "OK, let me see what I can do." . . . The higher headquarters public affairs guys, they were new to the area so they didn't know anything, so I was actually having to escort them and escort the media as well, all at the same time. Because . . . they are my higher headquarters, I should be tailoring to them, as well. . . . And it just seemed very hard to do.

Stratman again defended the actions of the press. This time she stood up to her military superiors for the film team.

. . . One question Ashwin and Sands had asked one of the soldiers was, "So, how are you taking care of your soldiers, keeping them motivated . . . ?" And the sergeant went on to [explain] the different things he has set up. But then he mentioned one particular thing, that he has a soldier who is actually going through a divorce . . . Granted, that's just the nature of being in the military. Being away from your family . . . your spouse doesn't want to be away from you, doesn't like the lifestyle, so it does end up in a divorce. . . . I can't say that is a positive thing, but that's actually happening in the military. And he was explaining what he was doing for that soldier as far as . . . trying to make sure [his] finances and [his] lifestyle was going to be taken care of, even if [his] spouse was going to leave [him]. So he was kind of explaining that. He didn't see anything wrong with that . . . [but] higher-headquarters public affairs said, "Don't use that. That's not something you want." I was like, "That's called being human. It's like I can't say no [to the press], granted that's not something I would like to tell the world, but it's something that happens. It was an honest answer that he gave. I didn't see anything wrong with it, why can't he use it?" And it's just [the public affairs officer] was just so avid, "No, he can't use that." . . .
. . . Our higher headquarters said not to use that, but I think I told Ashwin and Sands that I didn't see anything wrong with it, because he was taking care of his soldier and that's part of being an NCO, too.

As it turned out, the public affairs officer that tried to restrict the use of that quote was a

National Guard member. According to Stratman, he had not adjusted to his role in

deployment as a PAO:

He was coming into theater for the 3rd COSCOM public affairs shop. He was a National Guard but his background was [as a] state patrol for . . . Alabama. . . . He seemed like he was putting on the hat of a state patrol [and] not a public affairs person. That's what I got from him. So it was like, "Yes,

we've got great stories to tell . . . Let the soldiers tell their story." So . . . that was like his little learning experience, and they (Ashwin and Sands) were able to use that story.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

Embedded Press

Harris stated in his interview that there are reasons why people act the way they do. This thesis on human life does not exclude journalists. It applies to them as it does to everyone else; we are all human beings with senses and emotions. Journalists' endured the basic truths of war when working as embedded war correspondents. While previous studies have examined embedded journalists' coverage of Operation Iraqi Freedom for bias, this study consulted several embedded journalists themselves to explore what really happened "over there" and how it may have affected their coverage. Several military members were also consulted for the study about their perspectives on embedded journalists' coverage.

In regard to research question one, the four embedded journalists in this study all judged their individual professional performances as "successful" and satisfactory. While they admitted their inability to provide a broad picture of the 2003 invasion in their reports, they felt that they accurately and objectively reported on the events that occurred directly in front of them. They voiced their awareness of the limitations of providing "the big picture" and did their best in providing factual "soda-straw" views of the war. Landers's concern for accuracy led him to asking the Marines' leadership to review a story.

Journalists' oral accounts revealed that they each had a favorable portrayal of the military—the second research question—especially when describing their interactions

with the specific Marines and sailors with whom they were embedded. Other than the ground rules to which the reporters had agreed, no additional restrictions were placed on them by their respective military units. Examples include Ryan's approach of a naval commander, concerned that a restriction should have been placed on any immediate announcements about bombs released on Iraq. Harris' one run-in with a fatigued Marine had been due to the Marine's misunderstanding of the ground rules, but Harris expressed an understanding of that particular situation and did not seem to allow that to taint his view of his overall relationship with the Marines.

Military units provided assistance to the journalists. The Navy supplied Ryan and other reporters with escorts to help them locate certain individuals on the ship. Pilots on the USS Constellation were willing to speak with him and other press representatives shortly after returning from missions. Harris, Landers and Diaz Meyer spoke of times when the Marines gave them technical assistance when equipment malfunctions prevented them from filing their stories. The Marines allowed Harris to use their satellite uplinks. One Marine sergeant even agreed to drive Harris to meet another Marine who was to deliver a satellite phone to him. Marines assisted Diaz Meyer and Landers by permitting them to recharge their equipment with their vehicles' power sources.

Research question three explored what factors might have influenced journalists' performance. Interviews revealed a variety of factors—directly admitted or indirectly implied—that affected their reports.

All of the journalists spoke of mutual respect, rapport and even friendships that developed between them and the military units. Ryan spoke of the "atta-boys" given

between USS Constellation sailors and the reporters living with them. Harris mentioned

his role as a "father-figure" to some of the Marines. Diaz Meyer was able to persuade

Marines to braid her hair. Each of them affirmed that the closeness they developed with

the service members even helped them gain access to certain information and to stories

that they would not have had if they had been working unilaterally. Ryan also reasoned

that boredom and the mundane lifestyle onboard a naval ship may have also played a

role in sailors' accessibility and willingness to speak with reporters.

While all acknowledged their amiability with service members, the journalists

claimed that it rarely contaminated their objectivity as reporters. Harris was aware of

one report in which his admiration for the Marines affected the emphasis he placed on a

particular story. Otherwise Harris and Landers felt their objectivity was mainly

challenged in personal, non-journalistic situations, like offering medicine to a sick

Marine or requesting the help of a chaplain for a group of grieving troops. Landers

actually considered his admiration for the Marines as a source of determination to work

even harder as a "neutral" in documenting the roadblock event as accurately as possible.

Although there were moments during his interview that Landers used the first-person

plural—"we"—to describe certain situations, it was unclear if he was interjecting

himself into the event because he was physically accompanying the Marines or if it was

because he felt like he was one of them. He mentioned that he had to consciously

remind himself during his embed that he was "with" them and not "of" them.

The element of gender became an influential factor for Diaz Meyer and her work.

Diaz Meyer speculated that her photography differed from male photojournalists' work

for two reasons: her ability to capture images of war on film from a woman's

perspective, and certain moments Marines allowed her to photograph because she was a woman. She doubted whether the Marines would have revealed their emotions and sensitive moments to a male photojournalist.

The gender element of Diaz Meyer's presence not only affected her work as a photographer but it influenced the Marines' behavior, as well. One confessed to her that they acted more respectfully toward one another than they otherwise would have because of her presence. Diaz Meyer described how her camaraderie with the Marines developed into their sense of responsibility for her. In some instances they went out of their way to attempt to provide some privacy to her in an otherwise non-private environment. One Marine's concern for her safety even led him to protect her from wild gunfire.

Technical difficulties abounded as the journalists attempted to file from aboard aircraft carriers and in the Iraqi desert. Ryan was susceptible to Navy blackouts that prevented him from sending emails and files back to the station. Security issues with flashlights and other visible light in the evening darkness restricted Harris, Landers and Diaz Meyer to work only during daylight hours. Landers' laptop computer was crushed the first night of the invasion, forcing him to resort to write with pen and paper and file by dictation. He acknowledged that this affected his writing style. While technologically advanced compared to those of prior wars, embedded journalists' equipment was not self-sufficient and depended on electricity and satellites. Electrical sources were at a minimum and were controlled by the nature of the fast-moving pace of the invasion. Marine convoys on the move could not stop just so the reporters with them could use their electricity and uplink to a satellite. Satellites sometimes failed. No electricity and failed satellites meant that some stories went un-filed.

Embedded journalists' personal intrigue with the military and its efficient operations surfaced in interviews with the reporters in this study. Landers was impressed by the Marines' endurance to maintain the mission's rapid, ongoing movement on little or no sleep. The Marines' ability to remain emotionally distant until the appropriate grieving time amazed him. Ryan even admitted to doing a story about the fascinating aspect of feeding 5,500 sailors and Marines a day onboard the Constellation.

The emotional element of witnessing and enduring the realities of war—dangerous conditions, injuries, death, fatigue—affected all of the journalists in various ways. Realizations of the danger that they and their respective military units faced impacted their actions. Ryan admitted to practicing self-censorship by not reporting that attack missiles had been launched from the USS Higgins until he felt the time was appropriate. Diaz Meyer routinely evaluated the hazards she could possibly suffer or inflict upon others when debating whether to photograph certain scenes. She constantly worried about the repercussions of her actions and even consulted her boss for his guidance on the matter.

Witnessing the events of the invasion inside the U.S. military provided embedded journalists with a deeper understanding of particular events and a context of why the military reacted how it did. Diaz Meyer stressed the significance of knowing why the Marines did what they did and how that influenced her work. Had she not been embedded with them and comprehended the situation as fully as she did, she said she probably would have photographed it differently.

Several journalists voiced their sense of duty to inform the American public of the veracity of combat conditions that their American service members and the Iraqi civilians were enduring because of the war. Ryan, Harris and Diaz Meyer all spoke of the need for Americans to understand what really occurred during the war. The sailors and Marines with whom they embedded were also the friends and family members of Americans back home. The war was an expenditure of Americans' tax dollars. Because of these reasons, the reporters felt an obligation to make sure their audiences understood what was really going on in Iraq.

Their efforts to do so were still limited by news organizations' boundaries as to what they would and would not broadcast or print. Harris described his intent to show images of maimed bodies and destroyed homes in Iraq, although his photographer knew that the Dallas station would not actually air that footage, even if they filed it. Producers and editors had the final say as to what their audiences would see or read.

All of the factors described above impacted the embedded journalists in one way or another. Even in their desire to remain "neutral," it must be acknowledged that they were not robots but human beings with senses and emotions. Their humanity cannot and should not be isolated or ignored when studying their professional performance as embedded war correspondents.

Military Personnel

In response to the fourth research question addressing military personnel's reaction to embedded journalists' performance during Operation Iraqi Freedom, interviews with two public affairs officers indicated that there was an overall satisfaction with embedded reporters' coverage of OIF. As long as reporters practiced professional journalism in

reporting the facts, placing them within proper context, and respecting DoD restrictions, the public affairs officials were content with the reports they produced. Withington reiterated several times during his interview that Western media "are really trying to do their job . . . the best they can."

These case studies indicated that military public affairs officials were critical of embeds and their work in combat theater if they practiced what Withington termed "poor" or "immature" journalism, which included disrespecting restrictions, writing about sensitive operational security topics, wrongly presenting the facts, or taking them out of context. He was not fond of embedded journalists who "parachuted" into Iraq, especially for a short period of time, without a working knowledge of the military, its mission or operations in Iraq, or of the sectarian violence and insurgency in Iraq. Withington and his staff proactively addressed those situations and briefed journalists on the current conditions and what they would be observing.

It was actions such as those that illuminated the military's intention to actively engage and assist journalists embedded with troops, which pertains to the fifth research question of how military personnel judged their relationship with embedded reporters. Both Withington's and Stratman's descriptions of their interactions with the press indicated a high level of desire to accommodate the embedded journalists' needs and to cooperate with them in potentially vulnerable situations. Withington stressed the importance of the military maintaining open communication with the press and remaining as transparent as possible. His willingness to work with reporters on stories that bordered violating operational security served as prime examples of the military's cooperative spirit and its acknowledgement of the public's right to know. He was

dedicated to providing embedded journalists with "keys to the kingdom" and access to Army operations and soldiers while still protecting the operational security of its missions.

Stratman's actions reflected the same intention. Worried that the *Army Times* reporter might have been confused about the mission and procedures of the CRSP yard after multiple initial interviews with unit soldiers, Stratman arranged for follow-up interviews so that her story would be cohesive. She also arranged for her to attend off-duty soldier events, which eventually led to a personal backlash against Stratman when she was blamed for the cancellation of salsa night. Still, she defended that reporter's actions and the need for the press to see the reality of soldiers' lives in combat. Stratman also fought for the film crew's right to use footage of the sergeant airing the dirty laundry of his soldier's personal life because it was a truth of war.

The two Army public affairs officials interviewed by the researcher touched on a few factors that may have influenced embedded journalists' coverage, which related to the last research question. According to Stratman and Withington, there were a few instances in which the reporters' personal agendas and opinions factored into their actions, including Withington's accounts of a warning unheeded by Bob Woodruff and Tom Lasseter's decision to file a "scathing" report as he left his embed position. Stratman's interactions with the *Army Times* journalist revealed the reporter's personal interest in soldiers' lifestyles and personal entertainment.

According to Withington, two of the most significant factors to influence reporters' coverage were the dangerous conditions in Iraq and the costs associated with protecting journalists. Reporters' personal safety was the No. 1 concern for their parent news

organizations. Because of the danger in Iraq, as evidenced by the near-fatal incidents of Woodruff and Dozier, media corporations prevented their journalists from embedding with troops in 2006. Others prohibited their reporters from even leaving the states to travel to Iraq due to the risks and expenses of transporting them there. While these factors may not have shown up in actual reports written or aired by journalists, the effects were that stories were not produced because reporters were not present to write them.

Those that were fortunate to travel to Iraq and embed were impacted by restrictions placed on them by the military because of operational security. Withington's accounts illustrated the sensitiveness of certain stories and the Army's efforts to monitor what information was released to reporters about those items.

Several topics not directly pertaining to the last research question emerged in interviews with military personnel and are worthy of note. Stratman described two interesting dynamics within the military: a mistrust of Army journalists and public affairs officials among other soldiers, and confusion and misunderstanding of embed ground rules among public affairs officials. She said that she had personally encountered soldiers suspicious of her actions when working in the role of an Army reporter. She also described situations in which the Fourth Sustainment Brigade's commander was not aware of policies restricting journalists from entering rooms marked only for entry by individuals holding secret security clearance. A striking revelation came from her story of a National Guard public affairs officer who tried to control the press' use of a soldier's quotation, apparently unfamiliar with the "do's and don'ts" of public affairs practices. While these factors may have been isolated to these specific

events, there is always the possibility that they may have occurred in other situations

throughout the military and may have impacted embedded reporters' ability or inability

to cover a story and their desire to work from bureaus rather than from an embedded

status.

Another topic that emerged from the interview with Withington was information

about the evolution of the embed program and how the nature of embedding has changed

throughout OIF. He explained that embedding in 2006 was vastly different than

embedding in 2003, largely due to the establishment of Baghdad bureaus by Western

media, the expense of embedding, the increased violence in Iraq and risks to embedded

journalists. This evolution should be considered in future research, as discussed later in

this chapter.

Study Limitations and Suggestions for Additional Research

While this study intended to explore the personal experiences of embedded

reporters who have covered Operation Iraqi Freedom and the nature of the relationship

between embedded media and the military during this historic conflict, several

limitations prohibit it from producing comprehensive conclusions on this topic. An

obvious limitation is that the case studies in this research represent only a small sampling

of the hundreds of journalists who embedded with U.S. troops and of the thousands of

soldiers who had contact with embedded media. Interviews with more embedded

journalists and military personnel may produce varying conclusions.

Participation in this study was limited to embedded journalists and military

personnel who were located within a reasonable travel distance from the researcher.

Only journalists who worked within a two-hour radius of Waco, Texas, were contacted

and asked to participate. The journalists who agreed to be interviewed all happened to have been embedded with U.S. troops during the invasion of Iraq in 2003 with only Jim Landers having returned to Iraq for a short subsequent embed.

Military representatives needed to be located at a stateside military installment within the same travel radius. Fort Hood, Texas, proved to be the closest military installment with available military public affairs representatives that met the requirements of having deployed to Iraq and worked with embeds. The two service members who met these requirements and participated had been deployed with the Fourth Infantry Division, or units attached to it, during the division's rotation to Iraq from late 2005 to late 2006. This study was limited to comments from Army public affairs officials. Case studies of members of other military branches and also of other occupational areas within the military—not just those of public affairs offices—would provide for more breadth of military reactions to embedded press.

As Lt. Col. Jonathan Withington discussed, the nature of the embed program and media coverage of Operation Iraqi Freedom has fluctuated since the invasion in 2003. As the mission of coalition forces transformed from one of invasion to occupation, the press' presence and coverage of Iraq also changed. An embed's experience during the invasion of 2003 would not necessarily match that of an embed who was with the troops during the occupation phase of 2006. Thus, in this study there is an element of disconnect between the journalists' accounts of embedding in 2003 and the public affairs officers' accounts of working with embedded journalists in 2006.

A more complete picture of the dynamics between embeds and the military would be accomplished by interviewing journalists and military personnel who

interacted with one another during the same time period. For example, interviews with the Marines with whom Landers, Diaz Meyer and Harris embedded would provide a well-balanced account of what happened in March and April 2003 from both sides of the story. In addition, interviews with the *Army Times* reporter and Ashawin Raman and Phil Sands who worked with Stratman, as well as journalists whom Withington encountered, would allow for a more cohesive comparison between the two parties.

To further gain a more comprehensive understanding of the embed program and of the press-military relationship during OIF, future research should examine case studies of journalists and of military members who directly interacted with them during the various phases of Operation Iraqi Freedom. As of June 2007, the fifth phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom—OIF V, as designated by the U.S. military—was underway. Analysis of the individual phases of OIF through interviews with embeds and the military would provide a more solid comprehension of the embed program and of the press-military relationship.

Additionally, it would be beneficial to study the actual reports filed by the journalists in this study and compare them to their interviews. It would be interesting to see if report-interview evaluations supported journalists' claims of objectivity or if the influential factors that emerged in their interviews are obvious in their reports, and if so, how.

Referring back to General Eisenhower's quote, security will always stand between the press and the military in wartime operations. The last century has witnessed a variety of experiments in how the U.S. military has addressed the situation. Current strides to bring them closer together revolve around the embed program. Through this

program, journalists have had the opportunity to observe firsthand the invasion of Iraq and the U.S. military's subsequent occupation there. Americans have watched and read embedded journalists' news reports of OIF; they were and continue to be the public's eyes and ears during war. Their news stories are beneficial to the American public, but there are other important elements of war correspondence that are not communicated through filed reports. To be fair, embedded journalists' work should not be judged without taking those other aspects into consideration. While it is still fresh in their minds, we need to hear from them about what they saw, heard, smelled, touched and tasted of war and how this affected them professionally and personally. In addition, members of the military should also be given the opportunity to voice their views of the embed program and provide commentary on their interactions with embedded press. If Operation Iraqi Freedom truly is the story of this lifetime, then the micro-stories of the individuals—press and military—who participated in the creation of the larger story must be sought.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Public Affairs Guidance (PAG) on Embedding Media

101900Z FEB 03
FM SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//OASD-PA//
TO SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//CHAIRS//
AIG 8777
HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE//PA//
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE//ECPA//
JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//PA//
SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC//PA//
CJCS WASHINGTON DC//PA//
NSC WASHINGTON DC
WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM
INFO SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//OASD-PA/DPO//

UNCLAS

SUBJECT: PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE (PAG) ON EMBEDDING MEDIA
DURING POSSIBLE FUTURE OPERATIONS/DEPLOYMENTS IN THE U.S.
CENTRAL COMMANDS (CENTCOM) AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (AOR).

REFERENCES: REF. A. SECDEF MSG, DTG 172200Z JAN 03, SUBJ:
PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE (PAG) FOR MOVEMENT OF FORCES INTO THE
CENTCOM AOR FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE OPERATIONS.

1.   PURPOSE. THIS MESSAGE PROVIDES GUIDANCE, POLICIES AND
PROCEDURES ON EMBEDDING NEWS MEDIA DURING POSSIBLE FUTURE
OPERATIONS/DEPLOYMENTS IN THE CENTCOM AOR. IT CAN BE ADAPTED
FOR USE IN OTHER UNIFIED COMMAND AORS AS NECESSARY.

2.   POLICY.

2.A.   THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD) POLICY ON MEDIA
COVERAGE OF FUTURE MILITARY OPERATIONS IS THAT MEDIA WILL

HAVE LONG-TERM, MINIMALLY RESTRICTIVE ACCESS TO U.S. AIR, GROUND AND NAVAL FORCES THROUGH EMBEDDING. MEDIA COVERAGE OF ANY FUTURE OPERATION WILL, TO A LARGE EXTENT, SHAPE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT NOW AND IN THE YEARS AHEAD. THIS HOLDS TRUE FOR THE U.S. PUBLIC; THE PUBLIC IN ALLIED COUNTRIES WHOSE OPINION CAN AFFECT THE DURABILITY OF OUR COALITION; AND PUBLICS IN COUNTRIES WHERE WE CONDUCT OPERATIONS, WHOSE PERCEPTIONS OF US CAN AFFECT THE COST AND DURATION OF OUR INVOLVEMENT. OUR ULTIMATE STRATEGIC SUCCESS IN BRINGING PEACE AND SECURITY TO THIS REGION WILL COME IN OUR LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING OUR DEMOCRATIC IDEALS. WE NEED TO TELL THE FACTUAL STORY - GOOD OR BAD - BEFORE OTHERS SEED THE MEDIA WITH DISINFORMATION AND DISTORTIONS, AS THEY MOST CERTAINLY WILL CONTINUE TO DO. OUR PEOPLE IN THE FIELD NEED TO TELL OUR STORY – ONLY COMMANDERS CAN ENSURE THE MEDIA GET TO THE STORY ALONGSIDE THE TROOPS. WE MUST ORGANIZE FOR AND FACILITATE ACCESS OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA TO OUR FORCES, INCLUDING THOSE FORCES ENGAGED IN GROUND OPERATIONS, WITH THE GOAL OF DOING SO RIGHT FROM THE START. TO ACCOMPLISH THIS, WE WILL EMBED MEDIA WITH OUR UNITS. THESE EMBEDDED MEDIA WILL LIVE, WORK AND TRAVEL AS PART OF THE UNITS WITH WHICH THEY ARE EMBEDDED TO FACILITATE MAXIMUM, IN-DEPTH COVERAGE OF U.S. FORCES IN COMBAT AND RELATED OPERATIONS. COMMANDERS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICERS MUST WORK TOGETHER TO BALANCE THE NEED FOR MEDIA ACCESS WITH THE NEED FOR OPERATIONAL SECURITY.

2.B.   MEDIA WILL BE EMBEDDED WITH UNIT PERSONNEL AT AIR AND GROUND FORCES BASES AND AFLOAT TO ENSURE A FULL UNDERSTANDING OF ALL OPERATIONS. MEDIA WILL BE GIVEN ACCESS TO OPERATIONAL COMBAT MISSIONS, INCLUDING MISSION PREPARATION AND DEBRIEFING, WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

2.C.   A MEDIA EMBED IS DEFINED AS A MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE REMAINING WITH A UNIT ON AN EXTENDED BASIS - PERHAPS A PERIOD OF WEEKS OR EVEN MONTHS. COMMANDERS WILL PROVIDE BILLETING, RATIONS AND MEDICAL ATTENTION, IF NEEDED, TO THE EMBEDDED MEDIA COMMENSURATE WITH THAT PROVIDED TO MEMBERS OF THE UNIT, AS WELL AS ACCESS TO MILITARY TRANSPORTATION AND

ASSISTANCE WITH COMMUNICATIONS FILING/TRANSMITTING MEDIA
PRODUCTS, IF REQUIRED.

2.C.1.   EMBEDDED MEDIA ARE NOT AUTHORIZED USE OF THEIR OWN
VEHICLES WHILE TRAVELING IN AN EMBEDDED STATUS.

2.C.2.   TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, SPACE ON MILITARY
TRANSPORTATION WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR MEDIA EQUIPMENT
NECESSARY TO COVER A PARTICULAR OPERATION. THE MEDIA IS
RESPONSIBLE FOR LOADING AND CARRYING THEIR OWN EQUIPMENT AT
ALL TIMES. USE OF PRIORITY INTER-THEATER AIRLIFT FOR EMBEDDED
MEDIA TO COVER STORIES, AS WELL AS TO FILE STORIES, IS HIGHLY
ENCOURAGED. SEATS ABOARD VEHICLES, AIRCRAFT AND NAVAL SHIPS
WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TOALLOW MAXIMUM COVERAGE OF U.S.
TROOPS IN THE FIELD.

2.C.3.   UNITS SHOULD PLAN LIFT AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT TO ASSIST
IN MOVING MEDIA PRODUCTS TO AND FROM THE BATTLEFIELD SO AS TO
TELL OUR STORY IN A TIMELY MANNER. IN THE EVENT OF COMMERCIAL
COMMUNICATIONS DIFFICULTIES, MEDIA ARE AUTHORIZED TO FILE
STORIES VIA EXPEDITIOUS MILITARY SIGNAL/COMMUNICATIONS
CAPABILITIES.

2.C.4.   NO COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT FOR USE BY MEDIA IN THE
CONDUCT OF THEIR DUTIES WILL BE SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITED.
HOWEVER, UNIT COMMANDERS MAY IMPOSE TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS
ON ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSIONS FOR OPERATIONAL SECURITY REASONS.
MEDIA WILL SEEK APPROVAL TO USE ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN A
COMBAT/HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT, UNLESS OTHERWISE DIRECTED BY THE
UNIT COMMANDER OR HIS/HER DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE. THE USE
OF COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT WILL BE DISCUSSED IN FULL WHEN
THE MEDIA ARRIVE AT THEIR ASSIGNED UNIT.

3.   PROCEDURES.

3.A. THE OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR
PUBLIC AFFAIRS (OASD(PA) IS THE CENTRAL AGENCY FOR MANAGING
AND VETTING MEDIA EMBEDS TO INCLUDE ALLOCATING EMBED SLOTS
TO MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS. EMBED AUTHORITY MAY BE DELEGATED TO

SUBORDINATE ELEMENTS AFTER THE COMMENCEMENT OF HOSTILITIES AND AT THE DISCRETION OF OASD(PA). EMBED OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE ASSIGNED TO MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS, NOT TO INDIVIDUAL REPORTERS. THE DECISION AS TO WHICH MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE WILL FILL ASSIGNED EMBED SLOTS WILL BE MADE BY THE DESIGNATED POC FOR EACH NEWS ORGANIZATION.

3.A.1.　　IAW REF. A, COMMANDERS OF UNITS IN RECEIPT OF A DEPLOYMENT ORDER MAY EMBED REGIONAL/LOCAL MEDIA DURING PREPARATIONS FOR DEPLOYMENT, DEPLOYMENT AND ARRIVAL IN THEATER UPON RECEIPT OF THEATER CLEARANCE FROM CENTCOM AND APPROVAL OF THE COMPONENT COMMAND. COMMANDERS WILL INFORM THESE MEDIA, PRIOR TO THE DEPLOYING EMBED, THAT OASD(PA) IS THE APPROVAL AUTHORITY FOR ALL COMBAT EMBEDS AND THAT THEIR PARTICULAR EMBED MAY END AFTER THE UNIT'S ARRIVAL IN THEATER. THE MEDIA ORGANIZATION MAY APPLY TO OASD(PA) FOR CONTINUED EMBEDDING, BUT THERE IS NO GUARANTEE AND THE MEDIA ORGANIZATION WILL HAVE TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR AND PAY FOR THE JOURNALISTS' RETURN TRIP.

3.B.　　WITHOUT MAKING COMMITMENTS TO MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS, DEPLOYING UNITS WILL IDENTIFY LOCAL MEDIA FOR POTENTIAL EMBEDS AND NOMINATE THEM THROUGH PA CHANNELS TO OASD(PA) (POC: MAJ TIM BLAIR, DSN 227-1253; COMM. 703-697-1253; EMAIL TIMOTHY.BLAIR@OSD.MIL). INFORMATION REQUIRED TO BE FORWARDED INCLUDES MEDIA ORGANIZATION, TYPE OF MEDIA AND CONTACT INFORMATION INCLUDING BUREAU CHIEF/MANAGING EDITOR/NEWS DIRECTOR'S NAME; OFFICE, HOME AND CELL PHONE NUMBERS; PAGER NUMBERS AND EMAIL ADDRESSES. SUBMISSIONS FOR EMBEDS WITH SPECIFIC UNITS SHOULD INCLUDE AN UNIT'S RECOMMENDATION AS TO WHETHER THE REQUEST SHOULD BE HONORED.

3.C.　　UNIT COMMANDERS SHOULD ALSO EXPRESS, THROUGH THEIR CHAIN OF COMMAND AND PA CHANNELS TO OASD(PA), THEIR DESIRE AND CAPABILITY TO SUPPORT ADDITIONAL MEDIA EMBEDS BEYOND THOSE ASSIGNED.

3.D.   FREELANCE MEDIA WILL BE AUTHORIZED TO EMBED IF THEY ARE SELECTED BY A NEWS ORGANIZATION AS THEIR EMBED REPRESENTATIVE.

3.E.   UNITS WILL BE AUTHORIZED DIRECT COORDINATION WITH MEDIA AFTER ASSIGNMENT AND APPROVAL BY OASD(PA).

3.E.1.   UNITS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THAT ALL EMBEDDED MEDIA AND THEIR NEWS ORGANIZATIONS HAVE SIGNED THE "RELEASE, INDEMNIFICATION, AND HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT AND AGREEMENT NOT TO SUE", FOUND AT HTTP://WWW.DEFENSELINK.MIL/NEWS/ FEB2003/D20030210EMBED.PDF. UNITS MUST MAINTAIN A COPY OF THIS AGREEMENT FOR ALL MEDIA EMBEDDED WITH THEIR UNIT.

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

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

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

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

3.J.   COMMANDERS WILL OBTAIN THEATER CLEARANCE FROM CENTCOM/PA FOR MEDIA EMBARKING ON MILITARY CONVEYANCE FOR PURPOSES OF EMBEDDING.

3.K.   UNITS HOSTING EMBEDDED MEDIA WILL ISSUE INVITATIONAL TRAVEL ORDERS, AND NUCLEAR, BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL (NBC) GEAR. SEE PARA. 5. FOR DETAILS ON WHICH ITEMS ARE ISSUED AND WHICH ITEMS THE MEDIA ARE RESPONSIBLE TO PROVIDE FOR THEMSELVES.

3.L.   MEDIA ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING THEIR OWN PASSPORTS AND VISAS.

3.M. MEDIA WILL AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE CENTCOM/OASD(PA) GROUND RULES STATED IN PARA. 4 OF THIS MESSAGE IN EXCHANGE FOR COMMAND/UNIT-PROVIDED SUPPORT AND ACCESS TO SERVICE MEMBERS, INFORMATION AND OTHER PREVIOUSLY-STATED PRIVILEGES. ANY VIOLATION OF THE GROUND RULES COULD RESULT IN TERMINATION OF THAT MEDIA'S EMBED OPPORTUNITY.

3.N.   DISPUTES/DIFFICULTIES. ISSUES, QUESTIONS, DIFFICULTIES OR DISPUTES ASSOCIATED WITH GROUND RULES OR OTHER ASPECTS OF EMBEDDING MEDIA THAT CANNOT BE RESOLVED AT THE UNIT LEVEL, OR THROUGH THE CHAIN OF COMMAND, WILL BE FORWARDED THROUGH PA CHANNELS FOR RESOLUTION. COMMANDERS WHO WISH TO TERMINATE AN EMBED FOR CAUSE MUST NOTIFY CENTCOM/PA PRIOR TO TERMINATION. IF A DISPUTE CANNOT BE RESOLVED AT A LOWER LEVEL, OASD(PA) WILL BE THE FINAL RESOLUTION AUTHORITY. IN ALL CASES, THIS SHOULD BE DONE AS EXPEDITIOUSLY AS POSSIBLE TO PRESERVE THE NEWS VALUE OF THE SITUATION.

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

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

3.Q. THE STANDARD FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION SHOULD BE TO ASK "WHY NOT RELEASE" VICE "WHY RELEASE." DECISIONS SHOULD BE MADE

ASAP, PREFERABLY IN MINUTES, NOT HOURS.

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

3.S. MEDIA WILL ONLY BE GRANTED ACCESS TO DETAINEES OR EPWS WITHIN THE PROVISIONS OF THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF 1949. SEE PARA. 4.G.17. FOR THE GROUND RULE.

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

3.U. CENTCOM/PA WILL ACCOUNT FOR EMBEDDED MEDIA DURING THE TIME THE MEDIA IS EMBEDDED IN THEATER. CENTCOM/PA WILL REPORT CHANGES IN EMBED STATUS TO OASD(PA) AS THEY OCCUR.

3.V. IF A MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE IS KILLED OR INJURED IN THE COURSE OF MILITARY OPERATIONS, THE UNIT WILL IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY OASD(PA), THROUGH PA CHANNELS. OASD(PA) WILL CONTACT THE RESPECTIVE MEDIA ORGANIZATION(S), WHICH WILL MAKE NEXT OF KIN NOTIFICATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE INDIVIDUAL'S WISHES.

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

3.W.1. DEPARTING MEDIA WILL BE DEBRIEFED ON OPERATIONAL SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS AS APPLICABLE TO ONGOING AND FUTURE OPERATIONS WHICH THEY MAY NOW HAVE INFORMATION CONCERNING.

4. GROUND RULES. FOR THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF U.S. FORCES AND EMBEDDED MEDIA, MEDIA WILL ADHERE TO ESTABLISHED GROUND RULES. GROUND RULES WILL BE AGREED TO IN ADVANCE AND SIGNED BY MEDIA PRIOR TO EMBEDDING. VIOLATION OF THE GROUND RULES

MAY RESULT IN THE IMMEDIATE TERMINATION OF THE EMBED AND REMOVAL FROM THE AOR. THESE GROUND RULES RECOGNIZE THE RIGHT OF THE MEDIA TO COVER MILITARY OPERATIONS AND ARE IN NO WAY INTENDED TO PREVENT RELEASE OF DEROGATORY, EMBARRASSING, NEGATIVE OR UNCOMPLIMENTARY INFORMATION. ANY MODIFICATION TO THE STANDARD GROUND RULES WILL BE FORWARDED THROUGH THE PA CHANNELS TO CENTCOM/PA FOR APPROVAL. STANDARD GROUND RULES ARE:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.F.12.   OPERATION CODE NAMES.

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

4.F.14.   SERVICE MEMBERS' NAMES AND HOME TOWNS WITH THE

INDIVIDUALS' CONSENT.

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.G.6.   INFORMATION REGARDING FUTURE OPERATIONS.

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

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

4.G.9.   RULES OF ENGAGEMENT.

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

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

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

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

4.G.14.   INFORMATION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF ENEMY ELECTRONIC WARFARE.

4.G.15.   INFORMATION IDENTIFYING POSTPONED OR CANCELED OPERATIONS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.H.3.   MEDIA VISITS TO MEDICAL FACILITIES WILL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH APPLICABLE REGULATIONS, STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES, OPERATIONS ORDERS AND INSTRUCTIONS BY ATTENDING PHYSICIANS. IF APPROVED, SERVICE OR MEDICAL FACILITY PERSONNEL MUST ESCORT MEDIA AT ALL TIMES.

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.   IMMUNIZATIONS AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE GEAR.

5.A. MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD ENSURE THAT MEDIA ARE PROPERLY IMMUNIZED BEFORE EMBEDDING WITH UNITS. THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL (CDC)-RECOMMENDED IMMUNIZATIONS FOR DEPLOYMENT TO THE MIDDLE EAST INCLUDE HEPATITIS A; HEPATITIS B; RABIES; TETANUSDIPHTHERIA; AND TYPHOID. THE CDC RECOMMENDS MENINGOCOCCAL IMMUNIZATIONS FOR VISITORS TO MECCA. IF TRAVELING TO CERTAIN AREAS IN THE CENTCOM AOR, THE CDC RECOMMENDS TAKING PRESCRIPTION ANTIMALARIAL DRUGS. ANTHRAX AND SMALLPOX VACCINES WILL BE PROVIDED TO THE MEDIA AT NO EXPENSE TO THE GOVERNMENT (THE MEDIA OUTLET WILL BEAR THE EXPENSE). FOR MORE HEALTH INFORMATION FOR TRAVELERS TO THE MIDDLE EAST, GO TO THE CDC WEB SITE AT HTTP://WWW.CDC.GOV/TRAVEL/MIDEAST.HTM.

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

5.C. EMBEDDED MEDIA ARE AUTHORIZED AND REQUIRED TO BE PROVIDED WITH, ON A TEMPORARY LOAN BASIS, NUCLEAR, BIOLOGICAL,

CHEMICAL (NBC) PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT BY THE UNIT WITH WHICH THEY ARE EMBEDDED. UNIT PERSONNEL WILL PROVIDE BASIC INSTRUCTION IN THE PROPER WEAR, USE, AND MAINTENANCE OF THE EQUIPMENT. UPON TERMINATION OF THE EMBED, INITIATED BY EITHER PARTY, THE NBC EQUIPMENT SHALL BE RETURNED TO THE EMBEDDING UNIT. IF SUFFICIENT NBC PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR EMBEDDED MEDIA, COMMANDERS MAY PURCHASE ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT, WITH FUNDS NORMALLY AVAILABLE FOR THAT PURPOSE, AND LOAN IT TO EMBEDDED MEDIA IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS PARAGRAPH.

6.   SECURITY

6.A. MEDIA PRODUCTS WILL NOT BE SUBJECT TO SECURITY REVIEW OR CENSORSHIP EXCEPT AS INDICATED IN PARA. 6.A.1. SECURITY AT THE SOURCE WILL BE THE RULE. U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL SHALL PROTECT CLASSIFIED INFORMATION FROM UNAUTHORIZED OR INADVERTENT DISCLOSURE. MEDIA PROVIDED ACCESS TO SENSITIVE INFORMATION, INFORMATION WHICH IS NOT CLASSIFIED BUT WHICH MAY BE OF OPERATIONAL VALUE TO AN ADVERSARY OR WHEN COMBINED WITH OTHER UNCLASSIFIED INFORMATION MAY REVEAL CLASSIFIED INFORMATION, WILL BE INFORMED IN ADVANCE BY THE UNIT COMMANDER OR HIS/HER DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OR DISCLOSURE OF SUCH INFORMATION. WHEN IN DOUBT, MEDIA WILL CONSULT WITH THE UNIT COMMANDER OR HIS/HER DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE.

6.A.1.   THE NATURE OF THE EMBEDDING PROCESS MAY INVOLVE OBSERVATION OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION, INCLUDING TROOP MOVEMENTS, BATTLE PREPARATIONS, MATERIEL CAPABILITIES AND VULNERABILITIES AND OTHER INFORMATION AS LISTED IN PARA. 4.G. WHEN A COMMANDER OR HIS/HER DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE HAS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT A MEDIA MEMBER WILL HAVE ACCESS TO THIS TYPE OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION, PRIOR TO ALLOWING SUCH ACCESS, HE/SHE WILL TAKE PRUDENT PRECAUTIONS TO ENSURE THE SECURITY OF THAT INFORMATION. THE PRIMARY SAFEGUARD WILL BE TO BRIEF MEDIA IN ADVANCE ABOUT WHAT INFORMATION IS SENSITIVE AND WHAT THE PARAMETERS ARE FOR COVERING THIS TYPE OF INFORMATION. IF MEDIA ARE INADVERTENTLY EXPOSED TO SENSITIVE
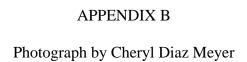
INFORMATION THEY SHOULD BE BRIEFED AFTER EXPOSURE ON WHAT
INFORMATION THEY SHOULD AVOID COVERING. IN INSTANCES WHERE A
UNIT COMMANDER OR THE DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE DETERMINES
THAT COVERAGE OF A STORY WILL INVOLVE EXPOSURE TO SENSITIVE
INFORMATION BEYOND THE SCOPE OF WHAT MAY BE PROTECTED BY
PREBRIEFING OR DEBRIEFING, BUT COVERAGE OF WHICH IS IN THE BEST
INTERESTS OF THE DOD, THE COMMANDER MAY OFFER ACCESS IF THE
REPORTER AGREES TO A SECURITY REVIEW OF THEIR COVERAGE.
AGREEMENT TO SECURITY REVIEW IN EXCHANGE FOR THIS TYPE OF
ACCESS MUST BE STRICTLY VOLUNTARY AND IF THE REPORTER DOES
NOT AGREE, THEN ACCESS MAY NOT BE GRANTED. IF A SECURITY
REVIEW IS AGREED TO, IT WILL NOT INVOLVE ANY EDITORIAL CHANGES;
IT WILL BE CONDUCTED SOLELY TO ENSURE THAT NO SENSITIVE OR
CLASSIFIED INFORMATION IS INCLUDED IN THE PRODUCT. IF SUCH
INFORMATION IS FOUND, THE MEDIA WILL BE ASKED TO REMOVE THAT
INFORMATION FROM THE PRODUCT AND/OR EMBARGO THE PRODUCT
UNTIL SUCH INFORMATION IS NO LONGER CLASSIFIED OR SENSITIVE.
REVIEWS ARE TO BE DONE AS SOON AS PRACTICAL SO AS NOT TO
INTERRUPT COMBAT OPERATIONS NOR DELAY REPORTING. IF THERE ARE
DISPUTES RESULTING FROM THE SECURITY REVIEW PROCESS THEY MAY
BE APPEALED THROUGH THE CHAIN OF COMMAND, OR THROUGH PA
CHANNELS TO OASD/PA. THIS PARAGRAPH DOES NOT AUTHORIZE
COMMANDERS TO ALLOW MEDIA ACCESS TO CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.

6.A.2.   MEDIA PRODUCTS WILL NOT BE CONFISCATED OR OTHERWISE
IMPOUNDED. IF IT IS BELIEVED THAT CLASSIFIED INFORMATION HAS
BEEN COMPROMISED AND THE MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE REFUSES TO
REMOVE THAT INFORMATION NOTIFY THE CPIC AND/OR OASD/PA AS
SOON AS POSSIBLE SO THE ISSUE MAY BE ADDRESSED WITH THE MEDIA
ORGANIZATION'S MANAGEMENT.

7.   MISCELLANEOUS/COORDINATING INSTRUCTIONS:

7.A. OASD(PA) IS THE INITIAL EMBED AUTHORITY. EMBEDDING
PROCEDURES AND ASSIGNMENT AUTHORITY MAY BE TRANSFERRED TO
CENTCOM PA AT A LATER DATE. THIS AUTHORITY MAY BE FURTHER
DELEGATED AT CENTCOM'S DISCRETION.

7.B. THIS GUIDANCE AUTHORIZES BLANKET APPROVAL FOR NON-LOCAL AND LOCAL MEDIA TRAVEL ABOARD DOD AIRLIFT FOR ALL EMBEDDED MEDIA ON A NO-COST, SPACE AVAILABLE BASIS. NO ADDITIONAL COSTS SHALL BE INCURRED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE IAW DODI 5410.15, PARA 3.4.

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

8.   OASD(PA) POC FOR EMBEDDING MEDIA IS MAJ TIM BLAIR, DSN 227-1253, CMCL 703-697-1253, EMAIL TIMOTHY.BLAIR@OSD.MIL.

APPENDIX B

Photograph by Cheryl Diaz Meyer

Risking their lives to save another, Lt. Jeffrey Goodman and Lance Cpl. Jorge Sanchez

of the 2nd Tank Battalion drag a wounded civilian to safety after he was caught in the

midst of battle on the road to Baghdad. (Photo by Cheryl Diaz Meyer) © 2003 The

Dallas Morning News. Photo courtesy of Cheryl Diaz Meyer.

APPENDIX C

Professional Biographies

Byron Harris

Byron Harris is a senior reporter at Channel 8. During his thirty years with Belo

Corp., which owns WFAA-TV, he has served as a news manager at WFAA-TV, senior

producer for *Prime Time Texas*, and assistant news

director at KHOU-TV in Houston.

Harris has won several awards as a broadcast

journalist, including two Alfred I. duPont-Columbia

University Awards, the Ohio State Award, the National

Press Club Award for Consumer Reporting, a Sigma Delta

Chi Bronze Award, an Aviation and Space Writers

national award, and the Gerald Loeb Award for Business

Photo courtesy of Byron Harris.

Reporting.

He has received twelve Katie Awards from the Dallas Press Club and five

Headliner Awards from the Headliners Foundation in Austin.

He has been a contributor to *Nightline* and the *Nightly Business Report*. In

addition to his TV work, he has written for *The Wall Street Journal*, *Texas Monthly*, and

Air & Space magazine.

Harris received a B.A. in English and sociology from the University of Michigan

and a M.A. in journalism from Northwestern University.

Jim Ryan

Jim Ryan has held one full-time job in his life – as a reporter/anchor for WBAP and ABC News Radio.

In his twenty-four-year career, Ryan has covered thousands of stories of local,

Jim Ryan working aboard the USS Constellation.
Photo courtesy of Jim Ryan.

national and international interest. He was embedded with the U.S. Navy in the spring of 2003 and watched as some of the opening salvos of Operation Iraqi Freedom were fired from a destroyer in the Persian Gulf. He covered the fury of the most destructive storm in American

history as Katrina crashed ashore in Louisiana.

Ryan is a two-time recipient of the Radio and Television News Directors Association's prestigious Edward R. Murrow Award. He also has received top national honors from Sigma Delta Chi, the Society of Professional Journalists and was recently named Best Radio Reporter by the Headliners Club of Austin. Ryan has received numerous awards and commendations from the Houston Press Club, the Texas Associated Press Broadcasters and from the Press Club of Dallas.

Jim married former WBAP reporter Beth Godell in 1988. They have two children -- Rebecca and James.

Jim Ryan in the hangar of the USS Constellation.
Photo courtesy of Jim Ryan.

Jim Landers

Jim Landers writes about international affairs and economics from the Washington Bureau of *The Dallas Morning News*. He has a weekly business column, and travels the world to report stories of interest to readers of the Belo Corporation's newspapers – *The Dallas Morning News*, the *Providence Journal* of Rhode Island, the *Press-Enterprise* of Riverside, California, and *Al Dia*, Belo's Spanish-language daily in Dallas. He also films features for dallasnews.com.

Photo courtesy of Jim Landers.

Landers joined *The Dallas Morning News* as a Washington correspondent in 1981, covering energy issues and international affairs, with an emphasis on the Middle East. His responsibilities broadened to cover economics and trade in the mid-1980s.

In 1988, Mr. Landers moved to Dallas to become international editor of *The Dallas Morning News*. He supervised international coverage when the paper's project on "Hidden Wars" was a finalist for the 1990 Pulitzer Prize for explanatory journalism. He supervised and helped write the paper's "Violence Against Women: A Question of Human Rights" series that won the 1994 Pulitzer Prize for international reporting.

Landers returned to the Washington Bureau in 1994 to cover Asian affairs. In 1996, he became deputy Washington bureau chief and news editor, and held that position until 1998, when he moved back to reporting on technology, trade and other international issues.

In 2003, he was embedded with the Second Tank Battalion of the U.S. Marines at the onset of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was named Star Reporter of the Year in Texas for his coverage of that conflict.

Landers was born on February 11, 1951, in San Francisco. He graduated from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) in 1974 with a degree in English, with honors. He has worked for *The Washington Post*, the *Trenton Times* and the *Richmond Mercury*, and was a freelance writer based in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in 1974.

From 1978 through 1980, Landers was an editor and correspondent in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, with the Arab News newspaper and Saudi Business magazine.

Landers is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Train Collectors Association. He and his family live in Centreville, Virginia.

Jim Landers, Master Gunnery Sgt. Frank Cordero, and CBS Radio correspondent Rob Milford in Baghdad, April 2003. Photo courtesy of Jim Landers.

Cheryl Diaz Meyer

Cheryl Diaz Meyer won the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News Photography with fellow staff photographer David Leeson for their body of work depicting the invasion and aftermath of the war in Iraq. Her work was also awarded the Visa D'Or Daily Press Award 2003 at Visa Pour L'Image in Perpignan, France. She has been a senior staff photographer for *The Dallas Morning News* since 2000.

Diaz Meyer covered the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq as an embedded journalist attached to the Second Tank Battalion of the First Marine Division. After the fall of Baghdad, she unilaterally covered the aftermath of the war. She later returned to Iraq in July 2005 to tell stories of daily life in Basra.

Photo courtesy of Cheryl Diaz Meyer.

Shortly after 9/11, Diaz Meyer traveled to Afghanistan to photograph the war on terrorism and its effect on the people trying to free themselves from the oppressive Taliban regime. Her work on the subject was honored with the John Faber Award from the Overseas Press Club.

She has traveled to the Philippines and Indonesia to photograph the effects of violent Muslim and Christian extremism, and to Guatemala to document a country healing from thirty-six years of civil strife. She has also photographed stories in China, the Czech Republic, Mexico, Slovakia and Russia.

Diaz Meyer's photographs have been published in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *Newsweek* and *Der Spiegel* magazines. Her work has also appeared in the books *Desert Diaries* by Corbis, *The War in Iraq* by Life, and on CNN, MSNBC, ABC News and CSPAN. She has

written articles for *The Dallas Morning News* and Harvard University's *Nieman Reports*, and a chapter in the textbook *Digital Journalism: Emerging Media and the Changing Horizons of Journalism*.

Diaz Meyer was born and raised in the Philippines and immigrated with her family to Minnesota in 1981. She attended the University of Minnesota in Duluth where she graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in German in 1990. Later she attended Western Kentucky University where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Photojournalism in 1994. She worked as a photography intern at several newspapers including *The Washington Post*.

Diaz Meyer began her career as a staff photographer at the *Star Tribune* in Minneapolis, Minn. in 1994. Having lived in a variety of countries during her youth, Diaz Meyer is able to communicate in Filipino (Tagalog and Bikol), German, French and, if necessary, Spanish.

Lt. Col. Jonathan Withington

Lt. Col. Jonathan Withington was commissioned as an Armor 2nd Lieutenant from Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) in 1986. He has served in command and staff positions from platoon through corps-level.

After completing officer basic course at Fort Knox, Ky., he was assigned to his first duty station at Camp Casey, Korea. There he served as a tank platoon leader and support platoon leader from 1987 to 1989. From Korea, he transferred to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., where he served as an observer/controller (O/C) for Operations Group. From 1989 to 1992, he was a tank platoon and support platoon O/C, training rotational units from across the Army in high intensity operations. In 1992,

Withington attended the Armor Officer Advanced Course at Fort Knox and remained there after being selected as a senior class advisor for an Officer Basic Course class. In 1993, he departed for Frankfurt, Germany, where he served as an exercise planner in the office of the G3, V Corps. In 1994 he transferred to Fourth Battalion, Sixty-seventh Armor (4-67 AR) in Friedberg where he was initially assigned as the S3 Air before taking command of C Company. He commanded C Company from 1994 to 1996. Withington deployed his company to Bosnia in 1996 as part of the Implementation Force in support of Operation Joint Endeavor. During that deployment, he participated in the implementation of the zone of separation between factions, enforced the military aspects of the Dayton Peace Accords and conducted stability and support operations. From 1997-1999, Withington served as an armor company trainer and battalion executive officer for the Active Component-Reserve Component training support brigade at Fort Bragg, N.C.

In 1999 he attended the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) course at the Defense Information School at Fort Meade, Md. Following his initial public affairs training, he was assigned to U.S. Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg. There, he served as the PAO for Special Forces Command from 1999-2001. He was responsible for the command information, public information, media relations and community relations for the command. During the assignment, he deployed in support of various exercises and contingency operations in the Pacific and to the West African nations of Senegal and Nigeria. From 2004-2007, Withington served as the PAO for the Fourth Infantry Division (4ID) at Fort Hood, Tex. During that time, the 4ID deployed for combat operations in Iraq from 2005-2006 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom

forming the nucleus of Multi-National Division-Baghdad (MND-B). Withington served as the PAO for MND-B. He was responsible for command information, strategic communications and media relations.

His military education includes the Armor Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, Command and General Staff College and the Public Affairs Officer Course. His civilian education includes a B.S. degree in political science from East Carolina University and a Master of Mass Communication degree from the University of South Carolina.

After March 2007, Withington will be assigned as defense press officer in the Office of the Secretary of Defense-Public Affairs.

Sgt. 1st Class Guadalupe Stratman

Sgt. 1st Class Guadalupe Stratman's career in the U.S. Army began in 1992 as an administrative personnel clerk. She worked in that position for three years then changed to the public affairs field. For her first three years in a public affairs role, she wrote stories for the post newspaper. She then moved to an Army post in Germany where she worked with civilian community and media. From Germany she went to Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., and worked at the post newspaper. Her next assignment was working with the National Guard and Reserves in Washington, D.C., where she had more interaction with national news media organizations. From that duty station Stratman was transferred to Fort Hood, Tex., to work in the public affairs office of the Fourth Sustainment Brigade. She deployed to Iraq with the brigade in September 2005 and returned to Fort Hood in September 2006.

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