Objectivity and the Embedded Reporter: An Examination of a Reporter's Ability to Remain Objective while Embedded with Military Troops

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OBJECTIVITY AND THE EMBEDDED REPORTER:
An Examination of a Reporter’s Ability to Remain Objective
While Embedded With Military Troops

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This thesis is submitted as partial fulfillment of graduate level degree requirements for the Masters of Arts in Corporate and Public Communications
Seton Hall University

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This thesis examines the program of embedding journalists into military units during the Second Gulf War to determine if journalists can provide an objective view of the war to the public back home. To fully understand the scope of embedding, this work first reviews the relationship between the media and the military by tracing the evolution of the American war correspondent starting with the U.S. Civil War through to the Second Gulf War.

As public opinion is often formed, at least in part, by news reports, whether print or broadcast, this thesis surveyed the public to see if they felt the news presented to them from embedded reporters was objective, and if it impacted their opinion. In addition to a survey of the general public, journalists, including two who were embedded, respond to questions about the media and embedded reports.

While the journalists interviewed felt that embedded reporters could remain objective, the embeds only saw a small piece of the overall war, so it is important for editors to present additional views and pieces. Additionally, it is necessary for the public to turn to a variety of news sources to see the entire picture of a major, multi-faceted news story, like a war.
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CHAPTER I

"Journalism is merely history's first draft."
- Geoffrey C. Ward

On March 20, 2003, the first day of coalition-led strikes against Iraq, the United States (U.S.) public could turn on the television, log-on to an online news site, listen to the radio, and soon after, pick up a newspaper or news magazine to find information about Gulf War 2 (GW2). Aside from the vast amount of news source options, this coverage had the potential to be extraordinary given the U.S. government's new program for working with journalists.

In an effort to give those at home an intimate view of the battlefield, the U.S. government placed credentialed journalists into military units through a program that became known as “embedding.” Rather than a system used in the past, like a press pool, this program was designed to give journalists an opportunity to have full access to the forward areas, military personnel and any other sources to assist in writing their pieces. This intimate access and exposure should have provided the readers at home a feeling like they were there.

At first it seemed almost shocking, the amount of access the government would offer to willing journalists, especially since the embedded program worked counter to the previous military/media policy of using press pools and allowing limited access to military battle zones following the U.S.'s direct military involvement in Vietnam in 1973. Moving from dependence on daily military briefings, these embedded reporters would have supreme access to the battlefield and the men and women serving there.
Embedded reporters could now serve as the “eyes-and-ears” of those back home to provide news consumers around the world with a better understanding as to what the U.S. was doing in Iraq. Ultimately, these news reports, with coverage from the battlefields furnished by embedded reporters, could shape public opinion of the war. As Col. Henry G. Summers Jr. wrote in his article “Western Media and Recent Wars” in *Military Review*, May 1986, “The primary link between the American people and the military is the press. The media are responsible for maintaining the connection between citizens and soldiers, especially during military operations” (Sharkey, 1991).

And to that end, a journalist’s report that could ultimately shape public opinion should be as objective as possible. Even the news network FOX News had the tagline “We Report You Decide” which speaks to the objectivity of a journalist’s news report. It is this objectivity that is at the heart of the debate surrounding the “embedding” of journalists with U.S. military troops during GW2. As altruistic as this government policy seemed on the surface, it is easy to be skeptical of this program, especially if you read the April 2, 2003 article in the LA Times entitled “America’s Eyes and Ears on the Fields of War” quoting 60 Minutes correspondent Andy Rooney. The article quotes Rooney in reference to embeds saying “a guy’s not going to write a lot of negative stories about guys you eat breakfast with” (Neuman).

So was this what brought the U.S. government to try embedding reporters in GW2?
Each war that includes U.S. involvement has offered its own way of getting U.S. journalists the story. When looking at the historical relationship between the media and the government, many often point to the Vietnam War as the pinnacle in reporting opportunities. As Jonathan Schell, a Vietnam War correspondent, said in Christian Appy’s book *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from all Sides,* “...if you had a press pass in Vietnam, it was a free travel ticket all over the country. You could hitchhike rides on helicopters and transport planes, wherever you wanted. It was a meal ticket. It was a hotel reservation” (2003).

The Vietnam War also was the first war to fully use all media options available at the time, most especially television. Every evening, the news included segments on the war as well as reports from the front. It is no wonder that this war is referred to as “the living room war.”

But the Vietnam War is often looked at as the tipping point in the strained relationship between the media and the military, for the “liberal media” reporting on the Vietnam War was said to have turned public opinion against the war. This is counter to a more recent U.S. military action, the first Gulf War, which because of 24-hour news outlets like CNN, this was war the 24/7 living room war. But the reporting was different, access was different – and even with the constant images of the war on TV people were not in the streets en mass protesting that war.
So, how does media access and final reporting compare, and how does military involvement in the process shape a journalist's report, which can affect public opinion.

This study will look at if and how embedded journalists can maintain objectivity, even as they are dependent upon the military for access, information and ultimately protection, while also investigating the history of how the military and the media have co-existed during wars from the American Civil War through to most recent GW2.

Research Question

Understanding that objective reporting is very important to provide the public with information that will be used to help form their opinion, can a reporter during a war remain objective if that reporter is "embedded" with his/her nation's troops?

Subsidiary Questions

In addition to looking at the primary question of objectivity while in a hostile environment and placed in the care of those a journalist is reporting on, this study will look to answer the following additional questions:

1. How does a reporter's story affect public opinion of the war?
2. How does embedding compare to other forms of war reporting?
3. In this “information age” how are people becoming educated about the war?
4. Did watching the war on TV affect a person's perception of the war?

5. Does embedding restrict the full view of the war since the reporter is operating in a microcosm of the entire war?

6. Does government assistance change the "story of war?"

Purpose of the Study

In 2001 the Committee of Concerned Journalists (CCJ), a consortium of reporters, editors, producers, publishers, owners and academics, distributed a survey and distilled comments from over 300 journalists into one common understanding: "The central purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with accurate and reliable information they need to function in a free society."

Additionally, CCJ listed nine core principles, identified by the surveyed journalists to be fundamental to the art of ethical journalism:

1. Journalism's first obligation is to the truth
2. Its first loyalty is to citizens.
3. Its essence is a discipline of verification.
4. Its practitioners must maintain an independence from those they cover
5. It must serve as an independent monitor of power.
6. It must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise.
7. It must strive to make the significant interesting and relevant.
8. It must keep the news comprehensive and proportional.
9. Its practitioners must be allowed to exercise their personal conscience.

The necessity for recognizing and following these principles takes on increased importance during various times in history, perhaps most importantly during times of national crisis – most especially wars. The reason being that the public wants to stay informed and be educated as to how they might be affected.
While allowing reporters access to the battlefield is not new, the program of embedding civilian reporters is a novel one, so an investigation into the initial reaction and effectiveness of embedding is necessary.

Additionally, embedded reporters were represented across all news communication mediums (TV, print/online and radio), so it is necessary to study how the various mediums presented the information that their embedded correspondents had unique access to, and how the public received this information as part of their forming of opinions.

Objectives

Through the use of previously published reports and well as independent interviews conducted with reporters and media experts, this study will first determine the objectivity of reporters on the battlefield. During the interviews, personal reporter bias and how it affects a news story will be examined.

In order to establish where we are now in war reporting, it is necessary to see where reporting has been. Within this study, an investigation of the evolution of the American war correspondent and the distribution of battle-front news from the American Civil War to the most current GW2 will be examined.

In addition to the evolution of the war correspondent, the relationship between the military and the media during wars will be studied to determine if there is truly objective reporting when the war correspondent is dependent upon the military for primary information. This will include a study of government
censorship, military briefings and press pools as part of the military/media relationship.

Finally, as the purpose of journalism is to inform the public, it is necessary to establish how the public responds to war news. With a proliferation of media sources, where are people going to get their news? And do they make one medium their primary news source, or instead seek out a variety of mediums to absorb all types of stories upon which to base their opinion?

Definition of Terms

While many of these definitions are a compilation of information as necessary to help understand various points of this paper, some definition of terms are taken from the *American Heritage Dictionary*, 2000 edition.

1. Embed: A media embed is defined as a media representative remaining with a (military) unit on an extended basis. This is per the Public Affairs Guidance on Embedded Media.

2. Fairness Doctrine: A rule adopted by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in 1949 that required broadcasters to address matters of public concern, while also equally presenting the counter viewpoint, or at least the opportunity there of.

3. First Amendment to the US Constitution: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of
the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a
redress of grievances."

4. Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle: Axiom of scientific experimentation
that states that the presence of the observer affects the results, however
subtly.

5. Left Wing: The liberal or radical faction of a group.

6. Perception Creation: What one presents as true becomes the accepted
belief of the truth.

7. Preconceived Notion: A previously formed opinion without adequate
evidence.

8. Reporter's Bias: Personal beliefs that are reflected in a report's piece,
whether knowingly or not.

9. Right Wing: The conservative or reactionary faction of a group.

10. Rules of Engagement: A directive issued by competent military authority
that delineates the limitations and circumstances under which forces will
initiate and prosecute combat engagement with other forces encountered.

11. Stockholm Syndrome: A phenomenon in which a hostage begins to
identify with and grow sympathetic to his or her captor.

12. Unilateral Reporter: A reporter operating with no military affiliation or ties.

13. Viewer Bias: How a person accepts a journalist's report based on
personal beliefs.
Limitations

Arguably, war reporting has been in existence in some form since history has been recorded, but this study is limited first to U.S.-led conflicts as the embedding program was offered by the U.S. government. As such, comparisons will best be made to U.S. government and media interactions during past conflicts.

Additionally, while there was certainly U.S. war reporting dating back to the Revolutionary War, this study starts with the American Civil War, since it was the first war with a substantial literature investigating what historians identify as modern day war correspondents.

Further, due to the extensive variety of media options available to the public, this study will only focus on television and newspaper (print and online) journalism.

Now, before we investigate the GW2’s reports, we need to look at those who laid the path for them, starting with the American Civil War.
While reporting from the battlefield was certainly not a modern invention, the Civil War was the first U.S. war that featured what can be called the modern day war correspondent. This distinction is made about the Civil War not because of reporters traveling out onto the battlefields, but because of the technology that sped the transportation of information. The use of the telegraph, also called "the lightning" by reporters, along with the use of faster printing presses and steam engine train travel all contributed to this information revolution (Perry, 2000). And as Philip Knightley has stated, the proliferation of telegraph lines and the ability to describe military actions as it was taking place "blurred the line between press reports and military intelligence" (1975). In fact, Knightley further notes that during the Civil War "for the first time in American history, it was possible for the public to read what happened yesterday rather than someone's opinion on what happened last week" (1975).

Additionally, the desire for battle news drove the industry and craft, while at the same time the public began to recognize the press as important (Baroody, 1998). A link can be seen between the Civil War and the beginnings of modern mass communication through news stories, in this case from a newspaper. These articles also started to define what the newspaper was supposed to do for the public. In September 1901, the New York Times looked back on fledgling communications during the Civil War and noted, "in New York newspapers gained their first realizing sense of two fundamental principles . . . the surpassing
value of individual, competitive, triumphant enterprise in getting early and exclusive news, and the possibility of building up large circulations by striving increasingly to meet a popular demand for prompt and adequate reports of day-to-day doing of mankind the world over" (Knightley, 1975).

Of course while news distribution may have been born during the Civil War, the newness of speedy delivery systems from the battlefront such as the telegraph, according to Perry, contributed to much misinformation as Civil War correspondents rushed to get their stories across the telegraph lines without checking to ensure the story was correct (2000). In Knightley’s (1975) book he included a quote printed in the *Chicago Daily Journal* from April 22, 1924, “Wilbur F. Story of the *Chicago Times* sent an order to one of his men (on the front) ‘telegraph fully all news you can get and when there is no news send rumors.'”

When these incorrect articles were published, it often made the correspondent a target for the military, which created distrust between these two groups.

General William Tecumseh Sherman particularly disliked correspondents who traveled with his troops. He is even cited telling his staff “it is impossible to carry on a war with free press” (Baroody, 1998). Following published articles rife with incorrect or sensitive information, Sherman blamed some of his loses on reporters and attempted to limit their access to information. In December 1862 he issued General Order Number 8 which stated “any person whatever, whether in the service of the United States or transports, found making reports for publication which might reach the enemy giving them information and comfort, will be arrested and treated as spies” (Perry, 2000).
Sherman took his distrust of journalists as far as having Thomas W. Knox of the New York Herald, tried by court martial as a spy for articles that Sherman said violated his General Order Number 8. While Knox was found guilty on some of the counts, he was reinstated as a war correspondent by President Abraham Lincoln, but denied access to Sherman’s troops per request to General Ulysses S. Grant. In a letter written to Grant by Sherman, he further derides the press:

Mr. Lincoln, of course, fears to incur the enmity of the Herald, but he must rule the Herald or the Herald will rule him; he can take his choice. . . . If the press be allowed to run riot, and write up and write down at their pleasure, there is an end to constitutional government in America, and anarchy must result. Even now the real people of our country begin to fear and tremble at it, and look to our armies as the anchor of safety, of order, submission to authority, bound together by a real government, and not by the clamor of a demoralized press and crowd of demagogues (Perry, 2000).

But there were certainly some military officers who enjoyed having the correspondents there with them and who were especially pleased when they were mentioned in the articles. In fact Knightley (1975) notes that some correspondents were reported to have taken money from officers in exchange for “favorable mentions in their dispatches.”

This is not to say that correspondents were the only ones distributing misinformation. As the war dragged on and morale grew low among those enlisted and those reading dispatches back home, the military began a campaign to use the newsrooms to their advantage. Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton was reported to have changed casualty figures. “He altered an account of Grant’s failure at Peters burg, reducing the losses to about a third of their actual number. His department withheld news of the surrender of Harper’s Ferry for 24-hours.”
and changed '10,000 Union troops surrendered' first to '6,000' and in later
dispatches to '4,000'" (Knightley, 1975).

Overall though, the correspondents did see their job as not just reporting
the news, but also to "sustain both civilian and army morale." This was most
evident in the dispatches from Southern correspondents, who were mostly
military men serving in the field that volunteered to send letters or a telegram.
These Southern correspondents, "believed that loyalty to the cause of the South
came before any professional requirement of truth and objectivity" (Knightley,
1975).

But ultimately, the Civil War "did have the effect of making war
correspondents a separate section in the practice of journalism. It established a
new breed of reporters, and also a reader, to justify his expensive existence"
Knightley, 1975).

Spanish American War

The Spanish-American War was a small, but offers an important look at
how the media played a role in U.S. military action. In this brief war, it was
newspapers that drove interest in coverage. Two press magnets of the era,
William Randolph Hearst, head of the *New York Journal*, and Joseph Pulitzer,
chief of the *New York World*, competed for the most sensational reports to drive
coverage. As Lande (1996) notes, "The competition between the *World*, the
*Journal* and other papers became a war within a war." He adds, "Objectivity, an
An indispensable tool of a good reporter, was too often tossed aside during the Spanish-American War.

It was during the Spanish-American War that the famous correspondence between artist Frederic Remington and Hearst took place. Hearst had sent Remington to Cuba to sketch the insurgents. But nothing was going on so Remington wired Hearst who responded with "Please remain. You furnish the pictures and I will furnish the war" (Lande, 1996).

In looking back now, one can see that the Spanish-American War was certainly aided by the media as newspapers helped feed into the increased interest in the United States in world affairs. Lande (1996) notes, "the events leading up to the Spanish-American War were blown far out of proportion in the media. The press produced outrageous stories, and interventionists in Congress used them to support flamboyant oratory, calling upon the administration to get tough with the Spanish government."

The Great War

Over the years following the Civil War, newspapers and reporters refined their position in delivering news to the people. By the time the U.S. became involved in World War I (WWI), a preliminary system of what could be looked at as the precursor of embedding was already in place. President Theodore Roosevelt recognized the importance the media could have in framing public opinion, especially as the German military authorities were assisting journalists in an effort to garner sympathy from the reporters, which they understood could...
ultimately translate to public support. President Roosevelt sent a letter to British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey stating that "by not allowing correspondents into the field, Britain was hurting its case with the U.S. public, who were reading dispatches from the American reporters being assisted by German military authorities" (Baroody, 1998).

Even though the government had a system of allowing correspondents to report on the war, this certainly did not mean that the military provided full disclosure of the news from the front, even to those on the front. In fact, WWI is considered the first war that saw the organized, scientific use of propaganda, and as noted by Knightley (1975), the correspondents were the first victims of it. In the eyes of General Headquarters (GHQ) "the ideal correspondent would be one who wrote about what he had been told was true, or even what he thought to be true, but never what he knew to be true" (Knightley, 1975).

According to Baroody (1998), following President Roosevelt's discussion with Grey, "Six reporters were outfitted with officers' uniforms, orderlies, military escorts and means of transportation and permitted to report from the front. Their reports were pooled in that each of the six would report on a particular battle, and then share the information with colleagues. The articles were heavily censored to reflect an optimistic slant, with the result that soldiers going into the field to fight were shocked at the discrepancies between what appeared in the papers and the reality of the battlefield."

This censorship of articles was run through the press section of the Military Intelligence Service (Baroody, 1998), which censored massive amounts
of articles in an effort to control the messages getting back to the U.S. public. As 
Knightley (1975) states, “the real aims [of censorship] were first, to provide 
colorful stories of heroism and glory calculated to sustain enthusiasm for the war 
and ensure a supply of recruits for the front and second, to cover any mistakes 
the high command might make to preserve it from criticism in its conduct of the 
war, and safeguard the reputations of the generals.” The extent to which news 
was guarded and distributed was “the first time in American history, the 
government claimed a legal and moral right to exercise monopoly power over 
information on international affairs” (Carpenter, 1995).

In fact by 1918, censorship had reached such outrageous proportions that an article written about the French presenting U.S. troops with wine as a thank you was censored because “it suggests bibulous indulgence by American soldiers, which might offend temperance forces in the U.S.” (Knightly, 1975).

By the end of the war, the military had recognized how important the press was to providing news to those back home and had successfully learned how to use the press to their advantage. Following the conclusion of the war, Arthur Ponsonby noted in his 1928 work Falsehood in Wartime, “there was no more discreditable period in the history of journalism than in the four years of the Great War” (Knightley, 1975).

The War of the “Greatest Generation”

The next major military conflict for the U.S. was the Second World War (WWII). This war was certainly a unique situation because while hostilities had
been brewing in Europe over a number of years and had been long raging in Asia, the direct attack by the Japanese on the U.S. Navy base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii put a form of censorship immediately in place because the military and government believed that American could not handle the full extent of the news. As Knightley (1975) includes from J.A. Morris' book Deadline Every Minute "the cover-up began with an 'iron curtain' of censorship that cut off the United Press office in Honolulu from San Francisco in the middle of its first excited telephone report." News was actually not released again from the office for another four days following the attacks.

While information was censored throughout the war, as it had been during WWI, it was done though a new agency—the Office of Censorship. WWII also saw the development of the "Code of Wartime Practices" created by the director of the Office of Censorship Byron Price, which declared that information on troops, arms and military installations could not be released without authorization (Baroody, 1998).

In addition to traditional news articles falling under the restriction of the Office of Censorship, this office also censored the correspondence of military personnel such as private letters to family and friends back home that, "while containing no military information, painted a gloomy picture of the war" (Knightly, 1975).

With these practices in place, all reports from abroad were required to receive clearance from military officials. According to Baroody (1998) this became even more necessary because reporters had to be accredited to work in
the areas of combat, and this accreditation was conditional on their agreement in writing to provide all copy for military censorship.

An additional safeguard employed to curtail negative reports from the front had the army and navy holding news from the correspondents at the source by attempting to keep reporters from learning anything that the military did not want them to know (Knightley, 1975).

But in WWII, more so than any war prior or since, many of the correspondents not only abided by these rules, but also encouraged them for what they felt was part of the national interest.

Author John Steinbeck wrote in Once There was a War, “we were all part of the war effort. We went along with it, and not only that, we abetted it. Gradually, it became a part of us that the truth about anything was automatically secret and that to trifle with it was to interfere with the war effort. By this, I don’t mean that the correspondents were liars... Yes, we wrote only a part of the war, but at that time we believed, fervently believed, that it was the best thing to do” (Knightley, 1975).

One correspondent of the time, who wrote what many journalism historians look back on as the pinnacle of what a war correspondent should be was Ernie Pyle. But Pyle’s depiction of the war was certainly not all sunshine and heroics. As James Tobin wrote in his biography on Pyle, Ernie Pyle’s War: America’s Eyewitness to World War II (1997), “he offered readers a way of seeing the war that skirted despair and stopped short of horror. His published version of World War II had become the nation’s version.” Even with the
military's strict censorship guidelines, they also like having Ernie Pyle on their side because he painted a picture back home of "everyman triumphant."

Of course, once the war was done, correspondents could look back with clearer heads on what had been written under the veil of censorship and propaganda. As Charles Lynch, an accredited correspondent to the British army for Reuters, was quoted "It's humiliating to look back on what we wrote during the war. It was crap — and I don't exclude the Ernie Pyles or Alan Mooreheads. We were a propaganda arm of our governments. At the start the censors enforced that, by the end of the war we were our own censors. We were cheerleaders. Suppose that wasn't an alternative at the time. It was total war. But for God's sake, let's not glorify our role. It wasn't good journalism. It wasn't journalism at all" (Knightley, 1975).

Not Seen on M*A*S*H

As the U.S. entered the Korean War there was no censorship system in place, putting the field journalist in charge of his/her own voluntary censorship. According to Knightley (1975) eventually, General MacArthur's headquarters ended voluntary censorship and "imposed full military censorship on news messages, broadcasts, magazine articles and photographs from Korea; to limit criticism of the United Nations (U.N.) effort." Soon after this directive from MacArthur's office, correspondents in Korea were put under the complete jurisdiction of the army. Knightley (1975) wrote "from now on the war was going to be reported only the way the military wanted it to be,}"
Through the military’s efforts to censor and direct the reporting out of Korea, “not one major daily newspaper opposed the war, and even among left-wing journals the National Guardian was almost alone in its anti-war policy” (Knightley, 1975). One of the possible reasons for this was the sentimental movements towards patriotism in the country.

Towards the end of the war in 1952, Robert C. Miller of the United Press said at a conference of editors, “There are certain facts and stories from Korea that editors and publishers have printed which were pure fabrication . . . Many of us who sent the stories knew they were false, but we had to write them because they were official releases from responsible military headquarters and were released for publication even though the people responsible knew they were untrue” (Knightley, 1975).

The “Living Room War”

With exception to possibly the Civil War, there is no other war in modern U.S. history that has been as extensively studied and written about in historical and pop culture as the Vietnam War. Historically, the U.S. involvement in Vietnam was built over a long period of time, and the media, as with the military, also built up their interest and their correspondents in Vietnam. By 1962, permanent bureaus for the Associated Press (AP), United Press International (UPI) and the New York Times had been set up (Wyatt, 1993). While by the late 60’s, as Baroody (1998) notes the three big networks (ABC, NBC and CBS) had bureaus in Saigon, second in size only to their Washington, D.C. bureaus.
As previously noted, many think of the Vietnam War as most open with the media to a fault, but this was not always the case. Knightley (1975) wrote that "in the early years of the American involvement, the administration misled Washington correspondents to such an extent that many an editor, unable to reconcile what his man in Saigon was reporting with what his man in Washington told him, preferred to use the official version."

While full scale U.S. military combat forces were not sent over until 1965, as tensions were growing back in 1962 the commander of U.S. forces in South Vietnam, General Paul D. Harkins, publicly called for U.S. field officers to "be sincere and truthful with reporters and not to use 'security as an excuse' to avoid discussing unclassified matters. But at the same time, he pressured his advisers for impressive enemy body counts that he could present to the media, and rejected officers' pessimistic assessments of the capabilities of the South Vietnamese military and the progress of the war" (Sharkey, 1991).

The Gulf of Tonkin incident in August 1964 was the turning point in U.S. military presence in Vietnam, and in the relationship between the media and the military. While the U.S. government announced that two U.S. ships were attacked by the North Vietnamese without provocation, it was later marked by discrepancies to the official U.S. version of events. As a result, the media, who had reported the U.S. version of events, became extremely wary of government information. The government, including the State Department, USIA and the Pentagon, realized that it needed to re-establish trust with the media and appointed Barry Zorthian head of U.S. public affairs in Saigon. "Under Zorthian's
leadership, public affairs officers were encouraged to be more open with the press, and received more training about the situation in Southeast Asia before being sent overseas. Journalists were given more assistance with transportation to the field” (Sharkey, 1991).

But it would seem that this apparent military openness to the media was more for show in an attempt to garner media support for Vietnam, which could help establish public support. In 1965, Assistant Secretary of Defense Arthur Sylvester commented to Saigon correspondents that in time of war, journalists had an obligation to act as the “handmaiden” of government. “When reporters pressed him about the credibility of U.S. spokesmen, Sylvester said, ‘Look, if you think any American official is going to tell you the truth you’re stupid’” (Sharkey, 1991).

As the war dragged on with media and public support diminishing, the government and the military resorted to appeals towards the media. In November 1967, Vice President Hubert Humphrey said to correspondents in Chu Lai, “When you speak to the American people give the benefit of the doubt to our side . . . we’re in this together” (Knightley, 1975).

Even with these efforts, public support did falter, and while many point to television in general, there is one medium that really played a major role – television. The Vietnam War started as there was a seismic shift in the news, in 1963, television news expanded from 15 minutes to 30 minutes. Streitmatter noted in his book, Mightier than the Sword: How the News Media Have Shaped American History (1997), a quote from nationally syndicated columnist Bob
Greene "Forget the words that the network correspondents spoke. It was that video, night after night, that turned Americans against the Vietnam adventure. It was one thing for a newspaper man to describe, even in the most graphic terms, carnage that he had seen; it was quite another for a TV viewer to see the same carnage at dinnertime." But, this view of what was seen on TV might be a little extreme, as the networks did work to limit the blood and gore shown on television. The American public did get to see war close up though, but mostly "American troops walking through the bush; American troops exchanging fire with an unseen enemy; Americans waiting for something to happen" (Wyatt, 1993).

This war also saw a shift in the role of the correspondent, one that creates the juxtaposition to Gulf War 2, correspondent as active participant. As Steinman noted in his book, "Instead of playing the traditional role of the observer, looking on from the outside, they (Vietnam correspondents) became a part of the story, skewing it from the inside" (2002).

During telecast reports on Vietnam, the correspondents in the field and those at home reporting the story became stars themselves. Peter Arnett, Dan Rather and Walter Cronkite were just some of the names synonymous with Vietnam media. When Walter Cronkite spoke in a 1968 nightly news broadcast that the U.S. would be unable to win the war in Vietnam, all listened. "Cronkite's assessment had unprecedented impact. For among the millions of rapt Americans who were glued to their TV sets that night was Lyndon B. Johnson. And when the program ended, Johnson said sadly, 'If I've lost Cronkite, I've lost the war.'" (Streitmatter, 1997).
Just as the U.S. effort in Vietnam diminished over time, coverage diminished through to the final U.S. evacuation from Saigon in April 1975. And the U.S. did not see any major war played out in newspapers or on television until the Gulf War. But that did not mean there was nothing to cover.

Grenada and Panama: Brief Invasions = Big Implications

1983 brought a new conflict to the U.S. military forces – Grenada. While build-up to the invasion and the actual invasion itself were short, the government and media interaction spoke volumes for military-media relations post-Vietnam.

The invasion of Grenada on October 25, 1983 actually went unreported until four hours after the invasion began. Even after the first public announcement, reporters were not allowed on the island for two and a half days (Baroody, 1998). Even the Washington Press Corps was not informed of the invasion, and were kept from the island for two days.

As Jacqueline E. Sharkey wrote in Under Fire U.S. Military Restrictions on the Media from Grenada to the Persian Gulf (1991), “During the planning [of the invasion of Grenada], Pentagon and White House officials agreed that the media would be excluded from the invasion, and that the White House press office would not be told about the operation in advance.” She further noted that, “The decision to ban the press reflected the abiding dislike that many military commanders had for the media in the wake of Vietnam, and their belief that if media access had been more tightly controlled, the coverage would have been more positive.”
Reporters were not only restricted from the island through government censure, but those who tried to get to the island via boat or plane were turned away, in some cases through force. Four reporters, who had been in nearby Barbados, did reach Grenada approximately seven hours after the invasion, but when they met up with U.S. Marines and asked if they could file their stories, they were taken aboard the Navy ship Guam and "were not allowed to file their stories or even communicate with their news organizations," (Sharkey, 1991).

Throughout the invasion, the government limited media access and while the media attempted to protest this treatment, ultimately, they did cover the government version of the story that was distributed by the White House and Defense Department, so they at least had something to report. "The front pages of establishment newspapers were filled with White House and military pronouncements about how well the invasion was going and how it occurred "just in time,"" (Sharkey, 1991).

Reporters were finally allowed onto the island, days after the invasion began. But by then, the invasion was nearly over and there was little news to report.

While the invasion of Grenada was a short mission, it sent chills among the media. John Chancellor commented on the NBC Nightly News on October 26, 1983. "The American Government is doing whatever it wants to do in Grenada without any representatives of the American public watching what it's doing." (Baroody, 1998).
Following Grenada, in August 1984, the Sidele Panel Report was released. This report reviewed Grenada and the press policy and "was endorsed by the press and the Pentagon, which promised to implement recommendations to initiate public affairs and operational planning simultaneously, to establish a national media pool" and other terms to ensure that the media were allowed a voice in military operations (Sharkey, 1991).

These policies were first put to the test in December, 20 1989 when the U.S. invaded Panama. While the letter of the recommendations were followed, the press pool was called up to cover the invasion, the spirit was lacking and the call was not expedited to ensure coverage from the moment of the invasion. "They (the press pool) arrived four hours after the military campaign had started, and were taken to a holding room at a U.S. military base where they were briefed on Panama's history further delaying their access to the military zone" (Baroody, 1998).

Even once the pool got to Panama, there were still problems, the fax to send stories malfunctioned, making stories unreadable, while calls to the Panama City media center were misdirected (Sharkey, 1991).

Following Panama, recommendations for military-media interaction included the use of military escorts for the media. The military said that this was more for accuracy purposes rather than protection. This, along with the additional proposed recommendations would be put to the test sooner than expected.
Unlike the previous two military actions in Grenada and Panama, the first Gulf War had a slow build-up. In fact, when U.S. troops first left for Saudi Arabia on August 7, 1990 there were no journalists with the troops because the Pentagon had not called up the press pool, and journalists who tried to get Saudi visas were unable to do so. When the media questioned the government, specifically Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, on why the pool wasn’t called to go to Saudi Arabia, he blamed the Saudis, noting that they did not want to admit U.S. media (Sharkey, 1991).

Eventually the pool and other reporters were allowed in Saudi Arabia. During this campaign, the Pentagon’s Joint Information Bureau (JIB) was created to take journalists requests for trips and interviews. Prior to major combat there was even a program in place called the Hometown Program, which was based on a program that began during Vietnam. A small number of reporters would be flown out for two-four day visits with local troops (Sharkey, 1991). Looking back, it could also be said that this was an experiment in embedding.

By the middle of December 1990, it looked as though war was the only option to force Iraqi troops out of Kuwait, so the government issued guidelines for the press pool should war break out. In addition to establishing three phases to the pool system it stated that “all pool material would undergo security review by military escorts in the field before being transmitted to Dhahran” and also called for the pool to remain with the military escort until released (Sharkey, 1991). Following much criticism for these recommendations, the guidelines were revised.
in January 1991, no longer telling reporters what they could cover and while the
review process would continue, pool reports and visuals would only be looked at
to determine that no security was compromised (Sharkey, 1991).

Once the war, dubbed Desert Storm, began on January 16, 1991 the
differences in how the different military division treated the media showed. The
Marines embraced the media to tell their story, while the army (which conducted
most of the campaigns) was very restrictive with the media. As Failka noted in
his book Hotel Warriors (1991), “Public affairs and working with the reporters was
very important to the Marines, they ‘decided early on that journalists were
inevitable and that, when properly handled, they helped develop strong public
support for the Marines’ mission.”

In Desert Storm, there were three groups of reporters: those in the pool
system, those not in the field who were stationed back in Dhahran (called Hotel
Warriors by many) and the unilateralists – reporters not assigned to any specific
troop or station. Unilaterals got many of their stories by befriending soldiers –
generally by offering hotel rooms to the soldiers for a hot shower and a phone
call home (Failka, 1991).

In fact, as Baroody notes “media representatives felt so strongly the need
for non-official sources of information about the war that a number of them struck
out into the desert without military escort at considerable risk. As the war wore
on, the public affairs system began to break down under the strain of hundreds of
reporters, with the ultimate result that neither the military nor the media met their
stated goals during the ground war.” (1998)
Hoskins commented on the comparison between Vietnam and Desert Storm in his book *Televising War From Vietnam to Iraq* (2004), writing "to draw a comparison with Vietnam, coverage of the Iraq War [Gulf War I] suffered from a saturation of sources and from being overfilmed, whereas the former was actually more staged than people remember because the network camera crews had to rely on the military to transport their heavy equipment and were censored by their relative immobility."

As the ground war offensive began on February 23, 1991, the press briefings were suspended until further notice. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney told reporters "Up to now we’ve been as forthcoming as possible about military operations, from this point forward, we must limit what we say," (Sharkey, 1991). This of course angered those reporters working with the military to report on the war, and opened the door for unilaterals to drive “news” of the war by using satellite phones and portable satellites to send their stories.

Within five days of the ground offensive, Iraq accepted U.S. terms to a ceasefire. Even then, some reporters who were part of the pool system still hadn’t been able to file their field stories — creating much anger at the end of the war, and bringing a call for further investigation into the working relationship between the media/military. As Zorthian told the National Press Club forum "the war has ended and 'the press lost,'" (Sharkey, 1991).
Gulf War 2

With ten years between the first and second Gulf War, and a proliferation of media outlets, how to work with the media became a major consideration. In what seemed like it would be an unprecedented partnership between the media and the military, the general public was introduced to the term “embedded reporter.”

With this access, the media responded by employing large amounts of resources to cover the war. Howard Kurtz reported in his April 28 Washington Post article “For Media After Iraq, A Case of Shell Shock” networks allocated more than 200 employees and millions of dollars to cover the war. Newspapers also placed many resources into the war effort with both staff and extra sections of the paper dedicated to coverage.

This process to become an embedded reporter (embeds) was more formal than most other wartime assignments, including the signing of a contract listing the rules reporters were to abide by. As Rule #4 notes: “The media employee agrees to: a. Participate in the embedding process and to follow the direction and orders of the Government related to such participation. The media employee further agrees to follow Government regulations. The media employee acknowledges that failure to follow any direction, order, regulation, or ground rule may result in the termination of the media employee’s participation in the embedding process.” (2003). Embedded reporter Scott Bernard Nelson said “As part of a first-ever war correspondents’ partnership between the Department of Defense and media organizations, we reporters signed a contract limiting what we would say and when we would say it. In return, for the duration of the conflict
the Pentagon let us eat, sleep, travel – and sometimes die – with the military forces we covered.” (2003).

At the height of the program, there were more than 600 journalists living, working and eating with his/her assigned unit. Reports filed from embedded reporters offered the public back home a view of what the troops in Iraq were going through on a daily basis, but it was only a slice of what was going on in the entire war. These reports made journalists a part of the action as they never had been before.

Even reporters saw themselves as part of the troop they were embedded with. Many reports from embeds would note that it was “our troop” or “we” when reporting on military operations. Those commenting on embed reports noticed that much of the coverage was positive towards the troops, and the reporters also said that it would be hard to write critical reports since “as ABC’s John Donvan put it, ‘they’re my protectors,’” (Kurtz, 2003).

While reporters were with military troops during direct campaigns, the audience at home did not see what many call the horrors of war. Marilyn Elias reported in USA Today, “Thanks to embedding restrictions, which give troop commanders great leeway in what can be reported, and an unspoken rule that negative stories might be viewed as unpatriotic, opponents say that what viewers have seen thus far is largely a sanitized war, despite some of the most vivid footage ever sent from the front lines in real time,” (2003).
It is this conflict of government control and personal emotion that draws the questions posed in Chapter Three – and ultimately looks at if the public at home was best served by coverage from these embedded reporters.
"Trying to determine what is going on in the world by reading newspapers is like trying to tell the time by watching the second hand of a clock."
-Ben Hecht

Description of the Survey

An integral part of this study was investigation of the public's perception of war coverage and the use of embedding civilian reporters with the U.S. troops during GW2. It was determined that the most effective way to measure this was through the use of a survey (see Appendix A). The survey was designed to assess what the general public thought of the media coverage during GW2, and ultimately how much impact the reporting seen on television and read in print and online newspapers had on perceptions of the war.

The survey was measured on a Likert scale using a five point system: a response of five expressed the participant's strong agreement with the statement; a response of four showed agreement with the statement; a response of three denoted a neutral feeling toward the statement; a response of two marked disagreement with the statement and a response of one expressed strong disagreement with the statement. Additionally, respondents were given space to provide their own thoughts on any of the questions.

Sample

The goal of the survey was to elicit responses from a random sampling of at least 100 participants who viewed or read any amount of television or print news in the U.S. during GW2. There were no pre-determinant qualifications to
take the survey. This survey was distributed among men and women in the Master's program at Seton Hall University, professionals who work in public relations and marketing, writers who are also members of an online community and members of the Rotary Society. There was also a wide range of ages within the sample population from 20s to 70s. The amount of time spent consuming news was also not a qualifier. Knowledge of or interest in the second Gulf War was also not a predetermining qualifier.

The final tally of random participants in the survey population reached the goal number of 100 responses. Within these 100 participants there was an almost even split between male and female respondents — with six declining to be identified. Additionally, within the sample population there was no dominant age or time spent consuming either print or television news.

Purpose of the Survey

In War and the Media (2003), Thussu writes, “images carry a greater influence in shaping opinion than words, especially in a world where, even in the twenty-first century, millions of people cannot read or write.” This statement is important to the analysis of the public's perception of reports from both embedded journalists and in general reports from anchors and/or unilateral reporters. It also offers a comment to the differentiation between embedded reporters who are submitting stories for print versus television, and their influence on public opinion of the war.
Survey Questions

The survey distributed to the sample population via email and hard copy included the following ten questions:

1. In general, reports from embedded reporters provided an impartial, insider's view of the Gulf War 2 (GW2).
2. The government should have the ability to limit access to certain combat areas, sources, etc. as it sees fit.
3. The technological advances in news distribution make access to war zones too easy and risk leaks for military plans and locations.
4. Reporters who were not embedded with troops provided a more objective view of the GW2 than embedded reporters.
5. Reporters were given too much access to military personnel and combat situations during the GW2.
6. Embedding reporters with troops provides images and stories that are too graphic or personal.
7. The government should restrict combat access for reporters who are not embedded with troops.
8. Stories from embedded reporters often put a "human face" on the conflict, which were compelling to watch.
9. Embedded reporters should first have a loyalty to the troop he/she is embedded with, second to reporting the news.
10. Reporting during conflicts should reflect and present issues as it relates to the United States.
In addition to these questions the survey included an area to offer any additional comments about news reporting as it relates to GW2, specifically regarding embedded reporters and their reporting. The survey also added a set of specific optional questions. The optional questions asked the respondents sex, age range, hours watching news per week and hours reading news per week.

Personal Interviews

The use of a survey provided the most timely and relevant way to study public opinion. While public perceptions are crucial to the analysis of media coverage during GW2 — it is also important to hear the opinion of journalists, both as observers of their peers and those who actually were embedded reporters.

In addition to the public perception survey of embedded reporting, this study also investigated impressions directly from the media through first person interviews by phone and/or email correspondence. This direct interview study was necessary and provided input and information directly from the journalism community regarding a reporter’s ability to remain objective.

Interviews were conducted with:

- David Shaw, Los Angeles Times, writer of the weekly “Media Matters” column
David Shaw was asked more general questions regarding the nature of reporting during the second Gulf War, since he was a media commentator for the Los Angeles Times. Questions posed to Shaw included:

1. In your April article ("Embedded Reporters Make for Good Journalism" April 6, 2003) on embedding you make a comparison of embedded reporters to any "beat" reporter. But while on a beat you rely on sources for a story – here an embed may rely on them to save their life. So you say that editors are there to sort it out. But since the editor isn't there, can the piece be impartial?

2. Is it important for the reporting to be impartial?

3. In your review of the media during major military action in GW2, did the reporting seem balanced?

4. You mention John McWethy's belief that winning a war is based on viewer perception. Do you think this moves media outlets to frame pieces a certain way a la Fox News style?

5. Do you view embedding as a success?
6. Do you think journalists should be nonpartisan observers and not get involved? Case in point, Ron Martz from the Atlanta Journal Constitution received criticism for helping wounded soldiers and civilians.

7. For the amount of access that embedded reporters got, do you think the government has a right to censor stories?

Ann Scott Tyson was chosen for an interview because during her five weeks in Iraq, she not only saw the horrors of war from a military perspective, but also saw what war could do to her colleagues—two embedded reporters that she shared a tent with were killed during the war, and upon her return flight home she was on the transport plane bringing the body of NBC correspondent David Bloom back to his family. Following her return home, Tyson was quoted in an Editor & Publisher article on embedded reporters facing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), “Out of Embed, But Facing Trauma” (2003).

Ron Martz was chosen for an interview because not only was he an embedded reporter, he was a former Marine who has been reporting foreign wars for thirty years. However, it may not be his graphic reports of GW2 that he will be remembered for, which received numerous “hate emails” from people who labeled him a “communist” and told him to watch FOX News to see what was really happening in the war. Rather, he will probably be remembered for twice stepping beyond the boundary of reporting the news to becoming part of it, once for helping an Iraqi civilian and another time for helping a wounded soldier.
The questions posed to Tyson and Martz were the same since they were both embedded reporters. Using the same questions enabled a direct comparison between two embedded reporters. Questions posed to Tyson and Martz included:

1. Can a reporter remain impartial while depending on the military officers for safety? And do you think this seriously impacts reporting in a negative way?
2. Even if a reporter is not impartial, can he/she still remain objective?
3. Can a reporter be the eyes and ears for the civilian public while embedded with military troops?
4. While embedded, were you ever asked to withhold information? Or did you self-censor yourself against any negative reporting?
5. Do you think that the embedding program was a success?

Additionally, a separate question was posed to Tyson: "What are your thoughts on reporters remaining impartial observers during the war - for example, Ron Martz from the Journal-Constitution received criticism for his part in aiding injured U.S. soldiers and an Iraqi citizen?"

Additional questions posed specifically to Martz included: "What are your thoughts on reporters remaining impartial observers during the war - especially in light of the criticism you received for aiding injured U.S. soldiers and an Iraqi citizen?"; "Were you surprised by the criticism?" and "What are your thoughts on the public's perception of the war - especially in light of the contrast between TV
Analyzing the Results of the Survey

In 2003 and 2004, 100 surveys with ten questions were distributed, the responses calculated and analyzed. Nearly all of the respondents answered all ten questions, and 37 of the 100 responses also included additional comments from respondents. From these responses, a chart of tabulations was created by calculating a percentage for each of the answers from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree) (see Appendix B).

Question One - In general, reports from embedded reporters provided an impartial, insider’s view of Gulf War 2 (GW2).

For this question, 5% (five respondents) strongly agreed that embedded reporters provided an impartial view of GW2, while 39% (39 respondents) agreed with this statement. Thirty-four percent (34 respondents) of those surveyed disagreed with question one and 6% (six respondents) strongly disagreed. Fifteen percent (15 respondents) were neutral. One participant did not answer this question.

Evaluation of this question shows that there was nearly an even split at 44% agreeing or strongly agreeing (44 respondents) with this statement and 40% (40 respondents) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that embedded reporters provided an impartial, insider’s view of GW2. As one respondent who disagreed with the statement added “I disagree mostly (with #1) because I don’t think...”
embedded reporters give an impartial view, especially on TV. For example, FOX is extremely conservative & over-the-top and have Geraldo as an embedded reporter!! You need sexy stories for TV and as we all know - editing is never impartial! Another, who strongly disagreed with the statement, said "The so-called 'embedded' reporters offered little in the way of objectivity and acted only as an extension of America's latest addiction—reality TV!"

Question Two - The government should have the ability to limit access to certain combat areas, sources, etc. as it sees fit.

The results for question two were as follows: 35% (35 respondents) strongly agree and 39% (39 respondents) agreed that the government should be able to limit access as it sees fit. Twelve percent (12 respondents) disagreed and 6% (six respondents) strongly disagreed with this statement. Another 8% (eight respondents) gave a neutral response to the question.

In an analysis of the responses, 74% (74 respondents) of those who participated agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the government should have the ability to limit access as it sees fit. As one respondent who strongly agreed with this statement noted, "I think it is unrealistic to expect our government to allow reporters unlimited access to combat areas." Another respondent who also strongly agreed that the government should limit access said, "War is hell - it is not something for public viewing 24 hours a day."
Question Three - Reporters who were not embedded with troops provided a more objective view of the GW2 than embedded reporters.

Reviewing the responses to question three shows that 2% (two respondents) strongly agreed with an additional 28% (28 respondents) agreeing with the statement. While 29% (29 respondents) disagreed and another 6% (six respondents) strongly disagreed that reporters who were not embedded provided a more objective view of GW2. Additionally 35% (35 respondents) were neutral in their response.

One respondent who strongly agreed that non-embedded reporters portrayed a more objective view of the war included the comment, "The press should roam at will and be responsible for the content of news."

The largest percentage of respondents were neutral to this statement showing that they were either unclear of embedded versus non-embedded, or were unclear on how to define objectivity.

Question Four - TV news was often the best source of information during GW2.

In evaluating this question, 9% (nine respondents) strongly agreed that TV was the best source of GW2 information, with another 25% (25 respondents) agreeing with this statement. Additionally, 29% (29 respondents) disagreed and 14% (14 respondents) strongly disagreed with the question. Twenty-two percent (22 respondents) gave a neutral response, and one person did not answer the question.
Forty-four percent (44 respondents) of those who answered this question did not think that television was the best source of information on GW2, with 34% agreeing or strongly agreeing that TV was in fact the best source of information (34 respondents).

As one participant who disagreed with question four added, “TV reports from the war were sanitized and part of Bush’s pro-war propaganda machine, which was cleverly disguised as an effort to provide access and free speech.”

Another person who disagreed with the statement noted, “I did not really follow the television coverage of the Gulf War. I prefer to get my news from the BBC, which I felt gave a much more complete picture of the conflict.”

Question Five - Newspapers (or online news) were often the best source of information during GW2.

Six percent (six respondents) strongly agreed that newspapers were the best source of information during GW2, and another 44% (44 respondents) agreed with this statement. Nineteen percent (19 respondents) disagreed with this statement and 4% (four respondents) strongly disagreed. Another 25% (25 respondents) were neutral to this statement. Two participants did not respond to this question.

Fifty percent (50 respondents) of those who answered this question stated that newspapers were the best source of information during GW2. A respondent who agreed with this statement noted that, “with newspapers you can go read
international papers and online sources to get more of a world view of what is happening.

Question Six - Embedding reporters with troops provides images and stories that are too graphic or personal.

In reviewing the responses, 2\% (two respondents) strongly agree and 18\% (18 respondents) agree that embedded reporters provided images and stories that are too graphic and personal. But 50\% (50 respondents) disagreed and 11\% (11 respondents) strongly disagreed with this question. Nineteen percent (19 respondents) were neutral.

Overall, nearly 61\% of the respondents (61 respondents) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the images were too personal. Of the 20\% (20 respondents) who believe that the images were too personal, one additionally said that, “Seeing the reporters in the field with our military is quite disturbing. How would I feel if I switched on the TV and saw my spouse, brother, sister, etc., fighting for our country? It would bother me. I wouldn’t want my last memory of them to be aired on the eleven o’clock news. We know what war is; there is no need to view it live. We as Americans need to be kept aware of what is going on, but actual footage is unsettling.”

Question Seven - The government should restrict combat access for reporters who are not embedded with troops.
Upon examining question seven, 14% (14 respondents) strongly agreed with the statement that the government should restrict combat access from non-embedded reporters, with another 35% (35 respondents) agreeing. Twenty-one percent (21 respondents) disagreed and 8% (eight respondents) strongly disagreed. Another 21% (21 respondents) were neutral on this statement.

For this question, 49% (49 respondents) agree that the government should restrict combat access for reporters who are not embedded with troops, but it is interesting to note that in response to question two, on limiting access to combat areas as it sees fit (with no distinction between embedded or unilateral reporters), 74% (74 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed.

Question Eight - Stories from embedded reporters often put a “human face” on the conflict, which were compelling to watch.

Twelve percent (12 respondents) strongly agreed and 54% (54 respondents) agreed that stories from embedded reporters put a “human face” on the conflict. Another 11% (11 respondents) disagree and 7% (seven respondents) strongly disagree that the pieces were compelling to watch. Sixteen percent (16 respondents) were neutral to the question.

In evaluating the responses, 66% percent of the participants (66 respondents) felt that stories from embedded reporters were compelling to watch because they put a “human face” on the conflict, with less than 20% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement.
One person who strongly disagreed with the question added additional comments, "While the personal stories do put a 'human face' on the war, I don't find that to be particularly laudable. I prefer a more in depth analysis/presentation of the politics behind the war—not a Hollywood production glorifying staged heroes (or heroines)."

Another respondent found the presence of embedded reporters comforting, "having embedded reporters with the troops helped me to understand more of what was going on. I had a very close friend in Iraq for 2 months, and an embedded reporter was with his troop—and with the ability to have photos up on a newspaper website and hear stories, more personal than just the facts of the war, I had a clearer picture of what was going on, how the troops were doing and could understand a little more the sacrifice those men and woman [sic] go through to support their country. Embedded reporters make the war a little more real, by being able to write directly from the front lines, and describe what is actually going on. Through embedded reporters, I was able to see pictures of my friend, and read a few articles that included him, and because of that I felt better."

Question Nine - My opinion of the GW2 was often influenced by the images and reports seen on TV.

In assessing this statement, 13% (13 respondents) strongly agreed and another 36% (36 respondents) agreed that his/her opinion was influenced by the GW2 images shown on television. Additionally, 23% (23 respondents) disagreed.
and 8% (eight respondents) strongly disagreed with the question — with 20% (20 respondents) neutral on the influence of TV. Nearly 50% percent of participants (49 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that his/her opinion was influenced by television images of GW2. One respondent who disagreed with this statement said that, “The mainstream media is way too liberal to accurately report anything relating to the military.” Another participant who also disagreed with the statement, but for different reasons noted, “Maybe this is an oversimplification, but all we say, hear and read must be examined very closely before we form our own individual opinion.”

Question Ten - Embedded reporters helped to be the “eyes and ears” of the public during the GW2.

From the total responses, 10% (10 respondents) strongly agreed that embedded reporters were the “eyes and ears” to the public during GW2, with 46% (46 respondents) agreeing. Additionally, 15% (15 respondents) disagreed and 4% (four respondents) strongly disagreed. Twenty-five percent (25 respondents) of those who responded were neutral on this question.

Over 50% of the respondents (56 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that embeds were the “eyes and ears.”

As one respondent said, “I agree that the embedded reporters helped to be the ‘eyes and ears’ but I don’t think that it was an impartial view. I feel there is a lot of American propaganda out there to help keep up the morale of the country and keep the prez [sic] in good favor.”
This survey was, in general, very well received, with only a few people declining to participate upon reading the survey (five potential respondents). These people declined because they believed they did know enough or did not follow the news enough to answer the questions. In addition to willingness to participate, the questions themselves generated a specific response, with nine of the ten questions reflecting more than ten percent above a neutral rating.

The only question that was under ten percent was question two—referring to the government’s ability to limit access to reporters as it sees fit. Within the open response section, many of the survey respondents (especially those who were in favor of the restriction) all noted that they believed restriction was necessary for the protection of U.S. military personnel.

Overall, the questions in many cases elicited a near three-way split of agreement, disagreement and neutrality. In analysis of the demographic information—there was not an overwhelming majority of responses by gender or from the time spent consuming any form of news during GW2 to further explain why the responses might have been as seen.

However, question five “Newspapers (or online news) were often the best source of information during GW2”; question eight “Stories from embedded reporters often put a “human face” on the conflict, which were compelling to watch”; and question ten “Embedded reporters helped to be the “eyes and ears”
of the public during the GW2" were all marked by over 50 percent agreement among respondents.

Of the 48 respondents who answered question five agree or strongly agree, only 27% (13 responses) read zero to three hours per week reading the newspaper during GW2. While of those who strongly agreed with question five read the newspaper at least three to five hours.

Of the 65 respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with question eight that embeds put a human face on the war, 34% (22 respondents) watch three hours or less of the television coverage per week. While 24 of those 65 respondents (37%) also read three hours of less of the newspaper during the GW2.

Those 35 respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with question number ten that embeds were the "eyes and ears" 57% (20 respondents) watched three hours or less of TV coverage and 60% (21 respondents) read three hours or less of the newspaper each week.

Of the total number of respondents who provided information on their television watching during GW2 (96 respondents), 39% watched three hours or less of TV coverage of the war. Within the newspaper category, of the total number of respondents who provided information in their newspaper reading during GW2 (95 respondents), 36% read the newspaper three hours or less.

Within the survey population, 34% (34 respondents) thought that TV was the best source of information for GW2 (question four) and 68% of these respondents (23 respondents) watched more than three hours of news coverage
during GW2. Additionally, 76% of those respondents (26 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that their opinion of the war was influenced by what was shown on TV. It is also interesting to note that of the 49% (49 respondents) who believed that their opinion was influenced by the TV, 90% (44 respondents) felt that the embedded reporter stories put a "human face" on the war and were compelling to watch.

As previously reported, 44% (44 respondents) thought that in general reports from embedded reporters were impartial. It is interesting to note that among this group, 59% (26 respondents) believed their opinion was influenced by the images and reports on TV, and 50% of this group (22 respondents) watched more than three hours of TV news a week.

Half of the survey population (50 respondents) believed that newspapers were the best source of information during the war. Even among this 50% group, 46% (23 respondents) believed their opinion was influenced by reports on TV.

While the majority of respondents did not watch an extensive amount of television or read many newspaper accounts of GW2, two age groups had a higher response rate for three to five hours of TV watching, instead of zero to three. Thirty-eight percent of those who were 41 to 50 and 51 to 60 years old watched three to five hours of TV coverage. It is interesting to note that among the 51 to 60 year old respondent group (of which there were 16 respondents) the second highest category in TV news watching was five to seven hours, with 31% in this category, zero to three hours was third with 19%.
Among the 21 to 30, 31 to 40 and 41 to 50 year old age groups all had the majority of their newspaper coverage of GW2 reading in the zero to three hours per week category (with 40 percent, 48 percent and 50 percent respectively). But 44% of those respondents 51 to 60 years old read three to five hours, with the second highest category at five to seven hours (25%). In those 61 or older, 25% responded that they read three to five hours and another 25% responded that they read five to seven hours of coverage per week (zero to three hours was tied for third with seven to nine hours at 19%).

These statistics match similar beliefs that those in the younger groupings of Americans, in this case 21 to 40 years old, consume less news—both television and newspaper, even during a major crisis like a war.
Personal Interviews

As noted in Chapter III, while public perceptions are crucial to the analysis of media coverage during GW2 – it is also important to ascertain the opinions of journalists, both as observers of their peers and those who actually were embedded reporters.

This study includes answers and comments from three experts in this field: David Shaw of the Los Angeles Times, Ann Scott Tyson of the Christian Science Monitor and Ron Martz of the Atlanta Journal Constitution.
David Shaw

The first interview was conducted with David Shaw, who wrote the "Media Matters" column for the LA Times in 2003 when this interview was conducted. In a review of newspaper articles on the process of embedding (which as soon as military action began, journalists stateside immediately began analyzing it for their own pieces) Shaw’s article provided a thought-provoking look at this process. In his piece that appeared on April 6, 2003 entitled "Embedded Reporters Make for Good Journalism," Shaw provided a striking analogy for embedded reporters – he compares them with any other beat reporter.

On a telephone interview conducted Wednesday, October 29, 2003, Shaw provided additional insight into his beliefs of embedded war coverage and journalistic impartiality.

In your April article ("Embedded Reporters Make for Good Journalism" April 6, 2003) on embedding you make a comparison of embedded reporters to any "beat" reporter. But while on a beat you rely on sources for a story – here an embed may rely on them to save their life. So you say that editors are there to sort it out. But since the editor isn’t there, can the piece be impartial?

Editors are almost never on the scene, and need their reporters to be the eyes and ears. Must weigh what information they receive from their reporters, as well as other services (like the wires, other released stories) to balance the story.

Is it important for the reporting to be impartial?

Reporters always depend on their sources for their stories.

Yes, I’m sure on a subconscious level reporters identify with their military sources.

War is of course an extreme situation, but is just another example of the problems that reporters face when relying on sources for their stories. You make up your mind about what you cover, and if there are any problems with your
sources you deal with it. It's always a danger but it's what reporters do. You need to decide what is important for your readers to know.

In your review of the media during major military action in GW2, did the reporting seem balanced?

Yes, it did seem balanced. There was a little too much on the individual military stories.

You mention John McWethy's belief that winning a war is based on viewer perception. Do you think this moves media outlets to frame pieces a certain way a la Fox News style?

It is a reporter's job to report anything fairly and accurately. You need to give them the facts.

Do you view embedding as a success?

I think embedding was successful. Any time you have more access to a story it's a success.

Do you think journalists should be nonpartisan observers and not get involved? Case in point, Ron Martz from the Atlanta Journal Constitution received criticism for helping wounded soldiers and civilians.

It depends on the circumstances, but if a soldier is standing next to you bleeding to death, you should help. But I would also hope that there are people there better trained at these sorts of things than me. But we are human beings before reporters. I mean, I certainly wouldn't be interviewing him instead of helping him.

For the amount of access that embedded reporters got, do you think the government has a right to censor stories?

The government should reserve the right to censor stories that immediately compromise safety. Battlefield reports before the battle is happening can jeopardize the mission – you don't want to do that.
Ann Scott Tyson was a reporter at the Christian Science Monitor, embedded with the Third Infantry Division for about five weeks from early March to mid-April 2003. As previously noted in Chapter III, during Tyson's five weeks in Iraq, she saw the horrors of war personally and professionally as two embedded reporters that she shared a tent with were killed during the war. Also, she shared her flight home with the body of NBC embedded correspondent David Bloom, who died following an aneurysm brought about by deep vein thrombosis (DVT).

Upon her return home, Tyson was quoted in an Editor & Publisher article on embedded reporters facing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), "Out of Embed, But Facing Trauma" (2003). As stated in the article, "I saw my share of gruesome things," said Tyson, who returned to her Maryland home April 10 after more than a month with the unit. "I did break down and cry several times because of the risk and trying to do my job all at once." After more than a week back home with her husband and four children, Tyson said the war remains very much in her mind.

Below are her email responses to questions posed to her about GW2, impartiality and a reporter's place in a war.

Can a reporter remain impartial while depending on the military officers for safety? And do you think this seriously impacts reporting in a negative way?

Yes, I never felt that depending on the military for safety constrained my reporting or stopped me from being impartial. I do not think this impacts reporting in a negative way, although I would stress that reporting as an embedded
reporter does limit the reporter to what he or she can see and learn from the sources at hand.

Even if a reporter is not impartial, can he/she still remain objective?

I think reporters can remain impartial and objective.

Can a reporter be the eyes and ears for the civilian public while embedded with military troops?

Yes, one set of eyes and ears covering one part of a conflict.

While embedded, were you ever asked to withhold information? Or did you self-censor yourself against any negative reporting?

All reporters signed a ground rules agreement that restricted reporting on certain types of information that could compromise operational security and put the lives of soldiers at risk. I abided by those ground rules. I used the same sense of judgment on what to report and what not to report that I use in any other situation. I reported what I felt was most newsworthy and insightful from what I could witness and the information I could gather.

What are your thoughts on reporters remaining impartial observers during the war - for example, Ron Martz from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution received criticism for his part in aiding injured U.S. soldiers and an Iraqi citizen?

I think that in any situation, whether at war or at home, reporters are also human beings and should behave ethically as any person would to help those in need. In other words, reporters have a life and role outside of their job as reporters, just like anyone else does.

Do you think that the embedding program was a success?

Yes, I think it allowed for fuller coverage of the war than would otherwise have been possible.
Ron Martz

Ron Martz is certainly no stranger to wars, or to being a war correspondent – he's a former Marine who has been reporting foreign wars for thirty years. During the GW2, Martz was embedded with the U.S. Army's Third Infantry Division, and sent his "War Dairies" to his paper, the Atlanta Journal Constitution.

But as noted in Chapter III, for Martz it will probably not be his graphic reports of GW2, for which he received numerous "hate emails" as people told him he was a communist and he should watch FOX News to see what was really happening in the war that he will be remembered for in the future. Rather, he may be better remembered for twice stepping beyond the boundary of reporting the news to becoming part of it, once for helping an Iraqi civilian and another time for helping a wounded soldier.

As perfectly summarized in Katovsky & Carlson's edited work Embedded: The Media at War in Iraq (2003), "Martz's actions bring to mind Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, a famous axiom of scientific experimentation that states that the presence of the observer affects the results, however subtly. Purists argue that journalists should strive for a godlike impartiality."

Here, Martz responds to questions via email about objectivity and the role a journalist should play in a war.

Can a reporter remain impartial while depending on the military officers for safety?

We're dealing with a somewhat new dynamic here with a new generation of reporters who were embedded with troops in Kuwait and Iraq. During World War
II, when Ernie Pyle and other correspondents were embedded with American troops, they were seen as part of the American war effort, sending stories and photos back to give the American public some sense of what was going on in the war. It often took weeks for their dispatches to get into print. The rules have changed. Now, it is considered a breach of journalistic ethics to be considered anything less than totally objective. But “objective” is a term I do not like to use in reference to journalism. I don’t believe there is any such thing as objectivity because we are all creatures of our background, our family, our education and our environment. Words mean different things to each of us. So what seems to be objective to me will not necessarily be objective to a reader because of his or her politics or education or background. He or she may read something into what I write that is not there. This happens frequently, especially when people come to a story with a particular political point of view that they are trying to support. So, what may seem as objective to me, is biased, anti-American, liberal or whatever other tag they want to put on it because I write something that is negative about what the troops are doing. By the same token, if I write something that is perceived as positive, I am perceived as a lackey of the Bush administration. Rather than “objective,” I prefer to use the “fairness” doctrine to what I report. Is it fair to all parties involved? Does it accurately and fairly report what I saw and heard? Is it fair to the reading public? I think the doctrine of fairness, rather than the doctrine of objectivity, is far more meaningful and relevant in journalism today.

There is no question that many embedded reporters developed a special bond with the troops with whom they were embedded. My father, a World War II combat veteran, told me many years ago that one of the strongest bonds men develop is when they have been in combat together. To be shot at, to see people around you seriously wounded, creates this special dynamic with soldiers and Marines that I mentioned earlier. But that is not to say we cannot be fair. The commander of the tank company with which I was embedded told me and the photographer from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution who was with me that he expected us to report on things they did wrong, but asked only that we be fair about it. And we did. We ran a story and a photo of one of the soldiers in this company who was attacked by a civilian while he was going to the bathroom. The civilian was shot and killed. Could it have been considered a war crime? Possibly, but I doubt it because of the circumstances we were in, taking mortar and sniper fire every few hours, at risk from suicide car bombers, and being ambushed by militia members riding in ambulances.

Embedded reporters each presented a very narrow view of the battlefield to their readers, listeners or watchers. That should have been clear to the public. If they used only one media source for their information on the war, they got a very distorted view of the battlefield. It was their responsibility, and the responsibility of our editors, to balance the coverage of the embeds with coverage from unilateralists and other sources to provide a more comprehensive view of what was going on in the war. A single embed such as myself, embedded in a tank...
company with only 78 soldiers, cannot hope to get an overall view of the war. can only report on what I see and hear in the very narrow vision I have of the battlefield. And people think that viewing is not impartial or fair, it is their responsibility to seek out other sources of news to balance that out.

And do you think this seriously impacts reporting in a negative way?

I don't think so at all. I think for the first time since Vietnam the American public got a chance for a very up-close and personal look at how our military operates and where all their tax dollars have been spent. Not since Vietnam have reporters had a chance to go on the front lines with American soldiers to see whether all the training and equipment we have purchased for them over the years has been worth it. I think this very up-close and personal view gave the American public a much better overall perspective of the war than we've had from any war since Vietnam. If people were willing to take the time and make the effort (and I am afraid many were not) to look at various sources of news, they were much better informed about American going to war than they have ever been. And, with a great deal more information, I think they were able to make better decisions about whether the whole thing was worth it.

Even if a reporter is not impartial, can he/she still remain objective?

This goes back to my rambling answer to your first question regarding objectivity and fairness. I don't think we can necessarily be objective all the time, but we can certainly be fair. And again, objectivity is often in the mind of the reader or viewer. What is objective to me when I write it may be totally biased to someone who reads it because of their own biases, whether political or social. All I can do is report and write about what I see and hear. I cannot make my stories so neutral that everyone will think they are "objective." Besides, how do you remain objective when a wounded soldier falls into your arms and you lay in the back of an armored personnel carrier with his blood all over you and he looks at you and says: "Hold my hand. It hurts." What do you say? Do you say "I'm sorry, I'm a journalist. I can't get involved. I have to be objective?" If you do, you have no heart and are not much of a human being. As I told an NPR reporter who asked me about this incident, "I would rather be known as a human being than a journalist." If you are totally objective on a battlefield, if you do not feel for the dead, and especially for the wounded, if you have no emotions about what you are seeing, you are not much of a human being. You may be an objective journalist, but if you are that kind of person, I would rather not know you or be around you.

Can a reporter be the eyes and ears for the civilian public while embedded with military troops?

I think that's exactly what we were in this war. As I mentioned, for the first time since Vietnam we were able to give the American public a very personal view of
Analyzing the Results of the Survey

In 2003 and 2004, 100 surveys with ten questions were distributed; the responses calculated and analyzed. Nearly all of the respondents answered all ten questions, and 37 of the 100 responses also included additional comments from respondents. From these responses, a chart of tabulations was created by calculating a percentage for each of the answers from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree) (see Appendix B).

Question One - In general, reports from embedded reporters provided an impartial, insider's view of Gulf War 2 (GW2).

For this question, 5% (five respondents) strongly agreed that embedded reporters provided an impartial view of GW2, while 39% (39 respondents) agreed with this statement. Thirty-four percent (34 respondents) of those surveyed disagreed with question one and 6% (six respondents) strongly disagreed. Fifteen percent (15 respondents) were neutral. One participant did not answer this question.

Evaluation of this question shows that there was nearly an even split at 44% agreeing or strongly agreeing (44 respondents) with this statement and 40% (40 respondents) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that embedded reporters provided an impartial, insider's view of GW2. As one respondent who disagreed with the statement added "I disagree mostly (with #1) because I don't think..."
embedded reporters give an impartial view, especially on TV. For example, FOX is extremely conservative & over-the-top and have Geraldo as an embedded reporter!! You need sexy stories for TV and as we all know – editing is never impartial!” Another, who strongly disagreed with the statement, said “The so-called ‘embedded’ reporters offered little in the way of objectivity and acted only as an extension of America’s latest addiction—reality TV!”

Question Two - The government should have the ability to limit access to certain combat areas, sources, etc. as it sees fit.

The results for question two were as follows: 35% (35 respondents) strongly agree and 39% (39 respondents) agreed that the government should be able to limit access as it sees fit. Twelve percent (12 respondents) disagreed and 6% (six respondents) strongly disagreed with this statement. Another 8% (eight respondents) gave a neutral response to the question.

In an analysis of the responses, 74% (74 respondents) of those who participated agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the government should have the ability to limit access as it sees fit. As one respondent who strongly agreed with this statement noted, “I think it is unrealistic to expect our government to allow reporters unlimited access to combat areas.” Another respondent who also strongly agreed that the government should limit access said, “War is hell - it is not something for public viewing 24 hours a day.”
Question Three - Reporters who were not embedded with troops provided a more objective view of the GW2 than embedded reporters.

Reviewing the responses to question three shows that 2% (two respondents) strongly agreed with an additional 28% (28 respondents) agreeing with the statement. While 29% (29 respondents) disagreed and another 6% (six respondents) strongly disagreed that reporters who were not embedded provided a more objective view of GW2. Additionally, 35% (35 respondents) were neutral in their response.

One respondent who strongly agreed that non-embedded reporters portrayed a more objective view of the war included the comment, "The press should roam at will and be responsible for the content of news."

The largest percentage of respondents were neutral to this statement showing that they were either unclear of embedded versus non-embedded, or were unclear on how to define objectivity.

Question Four - TV news was often the best source of information during GW2.

In evaluating this question, 9% (nine respondents) strongly agreed that TV was the best source of GW2 information, with another 25% (25 respondents) agreeing with this statement. Additionally, 29% (29 respondents) disagreed and 14% (14 respondents) strongly disagreed with the question. Twenty-two percent (22 respondents) gave a neutral response, and one person did not answer the question.
Forty-four percent (44 respondents) of those who answered this question did not think that television was the best source of information on GW2, with 34% agreeing or strongly agreeing that TV was in fact the best source of information (34 respondents).

As one participant who disagreed with question four added, “TV reports from the war were sanitized and part of Bush’s pro-war propaganda machine, which was cleverly disguised as an effort to provide access and free speech.”

Another person who disagreed with the statement noted, “I did not really follow the television coverage of the Gulf War. I prefer to get my news from the BBC, which I felt gave a much more complete picture of the conflict.”

Question Five - Newspapers (or online news) were often the best source of information during GW2.

Six percent (six respondents) strongly agreed that newspapers were the best source of information during GW2, and another 44% (44 respondents) agreed with this statement. Nineteen percent (19 respondents) disagreed with this statement and 4% (four respondents) strongly disagreed. Another 25% (25 respondents) were neutral to this statement. Two participants did not respond to this question.

Fifty percent (50 respondents) of those who answered this question stated that newspapers were the best source of information during GW2. A respondent who agreed with this statement noted that, “with newspapers you can go read
international papers and online sources to get more of a world view of what is happening."

Question Six - Embedding reporters with troops provides images and stories that are too graphic or personal.

In reviewing the responses, 2% (two respondents) strongly agree and 18% (18 respondents) agree that embedded reporters provided images and stories that are too graphic and personal. But 50% (50 respondents) disagreed and 11% (11 respondents) strongly disagreed with this question. Nineteen percent (19 respondents) were neutral.

Overall, nearly 61% of the respondents (61 respondents) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the images were too personal. Of the 20% (20 respondents) who believe that the images were too personal, one additionally said that, "Seeing the reporters in the field with our military is quite disturbing. How would I feel if I switched on the TV and saw my spouse, brother, sister, etc. fighting for our country? It would bother me. I wouldn't want my last memory of them to be aired on the eleven o'clock news. We know what war is; there is no need to view it live. We as Americans need to be kept aware of what is going on, but actual footage is unsettling."

Question Seven - The government should restrict combat access for reporters who are not embedded with troops.
Upon examining question seven, 14% (14 respondents) strongly agreed with the statement that the government should restrict combat access from non-embedded reporters, with another 35% (35 respondents) agreeing. Twenty-one percent (21 respondents) disagreed and 8% (eight respondents) strongly disagreed. Another 21% (21 respondents) were neutral on this statement.

For this question, 49% (49 respondents) agree that the government should restrict combat access for reporters who are not embedded with troops, but it is interesting to note that in response to question two, on limiting access to combat areas as it sees fit (with no distinction between embedded or unilateral reporters), 74% (74 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed.

Question Eight - Stories from embedded reporters often put a "human face" on the conflict, which were compelling to watch.

Twelve percent (12 respondents) strongly agreed and 54% (54 respondents) agreed that stories from embedded reporters put a "human face" on the conflict. Another 11% (11 respondents) disagree and 7% (seven respondents) strongly disagree that the pieces were compelling to watch.

Sixteen percent (16 respondents) were neutral to the question.

In evaluating the responses, 66% percent of the participants (66 respondents) felt that stories from embedded reporters were compelling to watch because they put a "human face" on the conflict, with less than 20% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement.
One person who strongly disagreed with the question added additional comments, “While the personal stories do put a ‘human face’ on the war, I don’t find that to be particularly laudable. I prefer a more in depth analysis/presentation of the politics behind the war—not a Hollywood production glorifying staged heroes (or heroines).”

Another respondent found the presence of embedded reporters comforting, “having embedded reporters with the troops helped me to understand more of what was going on. I had a very close friend in Iraq for 2 months, and an embedded reporter was with his troop—and with the ability to have photos up on a newspaper website and hear stories, more personal than just the facts of the war, I had a clearer picture of what was going on, how the troops were doing, and could understand a little more the sacrifice those men and woman [sic] go through to support their country. Embedded reporters make the war a little more real, by being able to write directly from the front lines, and describe what is actually going on. Through embedded reporters, I was able to see pictures of my friend, and read a few articles that included him, and because of that I felt better.”

Question Nine - My opinion of the GW2 was often influenced by the images and reports seen on TV.

In assessing this statement, 13% (13 respondents) strongly agreed and another 36% (36 respondents) agreed that his/her opinion was influenced by the GW2 images shown on television. Additionally, 23% (23 respondents) disagreed.
and 8% (eight respondents) strongly disagreed with the question—with 20% (20 respondents) neutral on the influence of TV.

Nearly 50% percent of participants (49 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that his/her opinion was influenced by television images of GW2. One respondent who disagreed with this statement said that, “The mainstream media is way too liberal to accurately report anything relating to the military.” Another participant who also disagreed with the statement, but for different reasons noted, “Maybe this is an oversimplification, but all we say, hear and read must be examined very closely before we form our own individual opinion.”

Question Ten - Embedded reporters helped to be the “eyes and ears” of the public during the GW2.

From the total responses, 10% (10 respondents) strongly agreed that embedded reporters were the “eyes and ears” to the public during GW2, with 46% (46 respondents) agreeing. Additionally, 15% (15 respondents) disagreed and 4% (four respondents) strongly disagreed. Twenty-five percent (25 respondents) of those who responded were neutral on this question.

Over 50% of the respondents (56 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that embeds were the “eyes and ears.”

As one respondent said, “I agree that the embedded reporters helped to be the ‘eyes and ears’ but I don’t think that it was an impartial view. I feel there is a lot of American propaganda out there to help keep up the morale of the country and keep the prez [sic] in good favor.”
This survey was, in general, was very well received, with only a few people declining to participate upon reading the survey (five potential respondents). These people declined because they believed they did not know enough or did not follow the news enough to answer the questions. In addition to willingness to participate, the questions themselves generated a specific response, with nine of the ten questions reflecting more than ten percent above a neutral rating.

The only question that was under ten percent was question two—referring to the government’s ability to limit access to reporters as it sees fit. Within the open response section, many of the survey respondents (especially those who were in favor of the restriction) all noted that they believed restriction was necessary for the protection of U.S. military personnel.

Overall, the questions in many cases elicited a near three-way split of agreement, disagreement and neutrality. In analysis of the demographic information—there was not an overwhelming majority of responses by gender or from the time spent consuming any form of news during GW2 to further explain why the responses might have been as seen.

However, question five “Newspapers (or online news) were often the best source of information during GW2”; question eight “Stories from embedded reporters often put a “human face” on the conflict, which were compelling to watch”; and question ten “Embedded reporters helped to be the “eyes and ears”
of the public during the GW2" were all marked by over 50 percent agreement among respondents.

Of the 48 respondents who answered question five agree or strongly agree, only 27% (13 responses) read zero to three hours per week reading the newspaper during GW2. While of those who strongly agreed with question five read the newspaper at least three to five hours.

Of the 65 respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with question eight that embeds put a human face on the war, 34% (22 respondents) watch three hours or less of the television coverage per week. While 24 of those 65 respondents (37%) also read three hours or less of the newspaper during the GW2.

Those 35 respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with question number ten that embeds were the "eyes and ears" 57% (20 respondents) watched three hours or less of TV coverage and 60% (21 respondents) read three hours or less of the newspaper each week.

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during GW2. Additionally, 76% of those respondents (26 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that their opinion of the war was influenced by what was shown on TV. It is also interesting to note that of the 49% (49 respondents) who believed that their opinion was influenced by the TV, 90% (44 respondents) felt that the embedded reporter stories put a "human face" on the war and were compelling to watch.

As previously reported, 44% (44 respondents) thought that in general reports from embedded reporters were impartial. It is interesting to note that among this group, 59% (26 respondents) believed their opinion was influenced by the images and reports on TV, and 50% of this group (22 respondents) watched more than three hours of TV news a week.

Half of the survey population (50 respondents) believed that newspapers were the best source of information during the war. Even among this 50% group, 46% (23 respondents) believed their opinion was influenced by reports on TV.

While the majority of respondents did not watch an extensive amount of television or read many newspaper accounts of GW2, two age groups had a higher response rate for three to five hours of TV watching, instead of zero to three. Thirty-eight percent of those who were 41 to 50 and 51 to 60 years old watched three to five hours of TV coverage. It is interesting to note that among the 51 to 60 year old respondent group (of which there were 16 respondents) the second highest category in TV news watching was five to seven hours, with 31% in this category, zero to three hours was third with 19%.
Among the 21 to 30, 31 to 40 and 41 to 50 year old age groups all had the majority of their newspaper coverage of GW2 reading in the zero to three hours per week category (with 40 percent, 48 percent and 50 percent respectively). But 44% of those respondents 51 to 60 years old read three to five hours, with the second highest category at five to seven hours (25%). In those 61 or older, 25% responded that they read three to five hours and another 25% responded that they read five to seven hours of coverage per week (zero to three hours was tied for third with seven to nine hours at 19%).

These statistics match similar beliefs that those in the younger groupings of Americans, in this case 21 to 40 years old, consume less news – both television and newspaper, even during a major crisis like a war.
Personal Interviews

As noted in Chapter III, while public perceptions are crucial to the analysis of media coverage during GW2 — it is also important to ascertain the opinions of journalists, both as observers of their peers and those who actually were embedded reporters.

This study includes answers and comments from three experts in this field: David Shaw of the Los Angeles Times, Ann Scott Tyson of the Christian Science Monitor and Ron Martz of the Atlanta Journal Constitution.
David Shaw

The first interview was conducted with David Shaw, who wrote the "Media Matters" column for the LA Times in 2003 when this interview was conducted. In a review of newspaper articles on the process of embedding (which as soon as military action began, journalists stateside immediately began analyzing it for their own pieces) Shaw's article provided a thought-provoking look at this process. In his piece that appeared on April 6, 2003 entitled "Embedded Reporters Make for Good Journalism," Shaw provided a striking analogy for embedded reporters -- he compares them with any other beat reporter.

On a telephone interview conducted Wednesday, October 29, 2003, Shaw provided additional insight into his beliefs of embedded war coverage and journalistic impartiality.

In your April article ("Embedded Reporters Make for Good Journalism" April 6, 2003) on embedding you make a comparison of embedded reporters to any "beat" reporter. But while on a beat you rely on sources for a story -- here an embed may rely on them to save their life. So you say that editors are there to sort it out. But since the editor isn't there, can the piece be impartial?

Editors are almost never on the scene, and need their reporters to be the eyes and ears. Must weigh what information they receive from their reporters, as well as other services (like the wires, other released stories) to balance the story.

Is it important for the reporting to be impartial?

Reporters always depend on their sources for their stories.

Yes, I'm sure on a subconscious level reporters identify with their military sources.

War is of course an extreme situation, but is just another example of the problems that reporters face when relying on sources for their stories. You make up your mind about what you cover, and if there are any problems with your
sources you deal with it. It's always a danger but it's what reporters do. You need to decide what is important for your readers to know.

In your review of the media during major military action in GW2, did the reporting seem balanced?

Yes, it did seem balanced. There was a little too much on the individual military stories.

You mention John McWethy's belief that winning a war is based on viewer perception. Do you think this moves media outlets to frame pieces a certain way a la Fox News style?

It is a reporter's job to report anything fairly and accurately. You need to give them the facts.

Do you view embedding as a success?

I think embedding was successful. Any time you have more access to a story it's a success.

Do you think journalists should be nonpartisan observers and not get involved? Case in point, Ron Martz from the Atlanta Journal Constitution received criticism for helping wounded soldiers and civilians.

It depends on the circumstances, but if a soldier is standing next to you bleeding to death, you should help. But I would also hope that there are people there better trained at these sorts of things than me. But we are human beings before reporters. I mean, I certainly wouldn't be interviewing him instead of helping him.

For the amount of access that embedded reporters got, do you think the government has a right to censor stories?

The government should reserve the right to censor stories that immediately compromise safety. Battlefield reports before the battle is happening can jeopardize the mission -- you don't want to do that.
Ann Scott Tyson

Ann Scott Tyson was a reporter at the Christian Science Monitor, embedded with the Third Infantry Division for about five weeks from early March to mid-April 2003. As previously noted in Chapter III, during Tyson’s five weeks in Iraq, she saw the horrors of war personally and professionally as two embedded reporters that she shared a tent with were killed during the war. Also, she shared her flight home with the body of NBC embedded correspondent David Bloom, who died following an aneurysm brought about by deep vein thrombosis (DVT).

Upon her return home, Tyson was quoted in an Editor & Publisher article on embedded reporters facing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), “Out of Embed, But Facing Trauma” (2003). As stated in the article, “I saw my share of gruesome things,” said Tyson, who returned to her Maryland home April 10 after more than a month with the unit. “I did break down and cry several times because of the risk and trying to do my job all at once.” After more than a week back home with her husband and four children, Tyson said the war remains very much in her mind.

Below are her email responses to questions posed to her about GW2, impartiality and a reporter’s place in a war.

Can a reporter remain impartial while depending on the military officers for safety? And do you think this seriously impacts reporting in a negative way?

Yes, I never felt that depending on the military for safety constrained my reporting or stopped me from being impartial. I do not think this impacts reporting in a negative way, although I would stress that reporting as an embedded
reporter does limit the reporter to what he or she can see and learn from the sources at hand.

Even if a reporter is not impartial, can he/she still remain objective?

I think reporters can remain impartial and objective.

Can a reporter be the eyes and ears for the civilian public while embedded with military troops?

Yes, one set of eyes and ears covering one part of a conflict.

While embedded, were you ever asked to withhold information? Or did you self-censor yourself against any negative reporting?

All reporters signed a ground rules agreement that restricted reporting on certain types of information that could compromise operational security and put the lives of soldiers at risk. I abided by those ground rules. I used the same sense of judgment on what to report and what not to report that I use in any other situation. I reported what I felt was most newsworthy and insightful from what I could witness and the information I could gather.

What are your thoughts on reporters remaining impartial observers during the war - for example, Ron Martz from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution received criticism for his part in aiding injured U.S. soldiers and an Iraqi citizen?

I think that in any situation, whether at war or at home, reporters are also human beings and should behave ethically as any person would to help those in need. In other words, reporters have a life and role outside of their job as reporters, just like anyone else does.

Do you think that the embedding program was a success?

Yes, I think it allowed for fuller coverage of the war than would otherwise have been possible.
Ron Martz

Ron Martz is certainly no stranger to wars, or to being a war correspondent—he’s a former Marine who has been reporting foreign wars for thirty years. During the GW2, Martz was embedded with the U.S. Army’s Third Infantry Division, and sent his “War Dairies” to his paper, the Atlanta Journal Constitution.

But as noted in Chapter III, for Martz it will probably not be his graphic reports of GW2 for which he received numerous “hate emails” as people told him he was a communist and he should watch FOX News to see what was really happening in the war that he will be remembered for in the future. Rather, he may be better remembered for twice stepping beyond the boundary of reporting the news to becoming part of it, once for helping an Iraqi civilian and another time for helping a wounded soldier.

As perfectly summarized in Katovsky & Carlson’s edited work Embedded: The Media at War in Iraq (2003), “Martz’s actions bring to mind Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle, a famous axiom of scientific experimentation that states that the presence of the observer affects the results, however subtly. Purists argue that journalists should strive for a godlike impartiality.”

Here, Martz responds to questions via email about objectivity and the role a journalist should play in a war.

Can a reporter remain impartial while depending on the military officers for safety?

We’re dealing with a somewhat new dynamic here with a new generation of reporters who were embedded with troops in Kuwait and Iraq. During World War
II, when Ernie Pyle and other correspondents were embedded with American troops, they were seen as part of the American war effort, sending stories and photos back to give the American public some sense of what was going on in the war. It often took weeks for their dispatches to get into print. The rules have changed. Now, it is considered a breach of journalistic ethics to be considered anything less than totally objective. But "objective" is a term I do not like to use in reference to journalism. I don't believe there is any such thing as objectivity because we are all creatures of our background, our family, our education and our environment. Words mean different things to each of us. So what seems to be objective to me will not necessarily be objective to a reader because of his or her politics or education or background. He or she may read something into what I write that is not there. This happens frequently, especially when people come to a story with a particular political point of view that they are trying to support. So, what may seem as objective to me, is biased, anti-American, liberal or whatever other tag they want to put on it because I write something that is negative about what the troops are doing. By the same token, if I write something that is perceived as positive, I am perceived as a lackey of the Bush administration. Rather than "objective," I prefer to use the "fairness" doctrine to what I report. Is it fair to all parties involved? Does it accurately and fairly report what I saw and heard? Is it fair to the reading public? I think the doctrine of fairness, rather than the doctrine of objectivity, is far more meaningful and relevant in journalism today.

There is no question that many embedded reporters developed a special bond with the troops with whom they were embedded. My father, a World War II combat veteran, told me many years ago that one of the strongest bonds men develop is when they have been in combat together. To be shot at, to see people around you seriously wounded, creates this special dynamic with soldiers and Marines that I mentioned earlier. But that is not to say we cannot be fair. The commander of the tank company with which I was embedded told me and the photographer from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution who was with me that he expected us to report on things they did wrong, but asked only that we be fair about it. And we did. We ran a story and a photo of one of the soldiers in this company who was attacked by a civilian while he was going to the bathroom. The civilian was shot and killed. Could it have been considered a war crime? Possibly, but I doubt it because of the circumstances we were in, taking mortar and sniper fire every few hours, at risk from suicide car bombers, and being ambushed by militia members riding in ambulances.

Embedded reporters each presented a very narrow view of the battlefield to their readers, listeners or watchers. That should have been clear to the public. If they used only one media source for their information on the war, they got a very distorted view of the battlefield. It was their responsibility, and the responsibility of our editors, to balance the coverage of the embeds with coverage from unilateral and other sources to provide a more comprehensive view of what was going on in the war. A single embed such as myself, embedded in a tank...
company with only 78 soldiers, cannot hope to get an overall view of the war. can only report on what I see and hear in the very narrow vision I have of the battlefield. And if people think that view is not impartial or fair, it is their responsibility to seek out other sources of news to balance that out.

And do you think this seriously impacts reporting in a negative way?

I don't think so at all. I think for the first time since Vietnam the American public got a chance for a very up-close and personal look at how the American military operates and where all their tax dollars have been spent. Not since Vietnam have reporters had a chance to go on the front lines with American soldiers to see whether all the training and equipment we have purchased for them over the years has been worth it. I think this very up-close and personal view gave the American public a much better overall perspective of the war than we've had from any war since Vietnam. If people were willing to take the time and make the effort (and I am afraid many were not) to look at various sources of news, they were much better informed about American going to war than they have ever been. And, with a great deal more information, I think they were able to make better decisions about whether the whole thing was worth it.

Even if a reporter is not impartial, can he/she still remain objective?

This goes back to my rambling answer to your first question regarding objectivity and fairness. I don't think we can necessarily be objective all the time, but we can certainly be fair. And again, objectivity is often in the mind of the reader or viewer. What is objective to me when I write it may be totally biased to someone who reads it because of their own biases, whether political or social. All I can do is report and write about what I see and hear. I cannot make my stories so neutral that everyone will think they are "objective." Besides, how do you remain objective when a wounded soldier falls into your arms and you lay in the back of an armored personnel carrier with his blood all over you and he looks at you and says, "Hold my hand. It hurts." What do you say? Do you say "I'm sorry, I'm a journalist. I can't get involved. I have to be objective?" If you do, you have no heart and are not much of a human being. As I told an NPR reporter who asked me about this incident, "I would rather be known as a human being than a journalist." If you are totally objective on a battlefield, if you do not feel for the dead, and especially for the wounded, if you have no emotions about what you are seeing, you are not much of a human being. You may be an objective journalist, but if you are that kind of person, I would rather not know you or be around you.

Can a reporter be the eyes and ears for the civilian public while embedded with military troops?

I think that's exactly what we were in this war. As I mentioned, for the first time since Vietnam we were able to give the American public a very personal view of
what their sons and daughters in uniform were doing in a war zone, how they conducted themselves, what their feared, what they hoped for, and how they responded to very trying circumstances. If we did not do that, we failed in our jobs as journalists.

While embedded, were you ever asked to withhold information?

The only things I was asked not to report were exact locations of the unit I was with at any particular time and where we were going in the next few days. That held until we got to Baghdad then I was able to report live on CNN about being at the airport on April 5 and two days later when the unit I was with went into Baghdad to stay.

Or did you self-censor yourself against any negative reporting?

As I mentioned earlier, we reported on those few occasions when civilians were killed or wounded, usually when they were caught in crossfires or ran roadblocks at a time when the troops were especially jumpy about suicide car bombers. The only other times I had to be careful was when I was talking to younger troops who would complain a lot about everything. Usually it was just a means of blowing off steam. As a former Marine I recognized that sort of frustration and fear that prompted those outbursts. So I did not view everything they said as grist for the general public. I was judicious and how I quoted them. If they complained about something relevant, and it was germane to what was going on in the war, I quoted them. I quoted them frequently about the bad logistics, the lack of spare parts and water, the lousy intelligence, and the inability to get air support when they really needed it. I and the soldiers were criticized for being anti-American and anti-war for even making those criticisms public. So I don't feel that in any way I soft-pedaled any of those issues.

What are your thoughts on reporters remaining impartial observers during the war - especially in light of the criticism you received for aiding injured U.S. soldiers and an Iraqi citizen?

I had no second thoughts about helping the Iraqi civilian until after he had been taken to the aid station and put in the hands of the doctors. I figured I would get some criticism from those self-anointed ethicists who decide on what ethics in journalism are all about from the safety and sterility of their classrooms or offices. It's a different matter when you are faced with the situation of being an "objective journalist" or being a human being and providing help to your fellow man. I do not regret in the least getting involved. I could not have lived with myself if I did not. Someone asked me if I crossed over the line between observer and participant. If I did, I don't care, because I helped at least three people who were in need of help. I would rather feel good about helping them than worry about what the armchair ethicists [sic] have to say. If we listen to the ethicists and aspire to be truly impartial about everything, that means journalists should be...
totally neutral about everything. They should not vote or have any political viewpoints. They should not believe in God or practice any religion. They should not get married or have children. They, in essence, should be automatons, with no feelings, no beliefs, no desires and no hopes for the future. That would be a truly objective journalist. If I crossed the line, I did so willingly and have not regretted it one bit. But I want to know who drew the line and where is it? And is it the same line for everyone?

Were you surprised by the criticism?

I was not surprised by the criticism itself, but I was a bit taken aback by how mean-spirited it was. I think e-mail has greatly reduced the civility with which we communicate. Many of the e-mails were incredibly mean-spirited. Criticism is a part of the business. It goes with the territory. But personal attacks in lieu of substantive arguments are terribly disappointing to me. It demonstrates to me that people have come to think of name calling as a substitute for reasoned, rational arguments and I think our society is the poorer for it. Just look at Bill O'Reilly and the popularity of his show. From what little I have seen of his work, there is very little rational thinking or arguing going on there; just a lot of yelling and name-calling. Much of the criticism I received fit that category. So, in that respect, it was disappointing.

What are your thoughts on the public's perception of the war - especially in light of the contrast between TV images and what was reported in the paper?

There is not a whole lot I can do about how the public perceives the war. I can only report and write about what I see and hear. How they translate that is up to them. But I think that the majority of the American public got their news about the war from TV is terribly disappointing. Our paper did a survey to figure out what was that was that the three reasons people gave for watching TV were: (1) TV provided the most up-to-date source of information; (2) TV was the most engaging; and (3) TV provided the most complete source of information. The first two I can see. But No. 3 baffles me. I think in part people relied more on TV than on newspapers or magazines is because TV is a medium for sloths. It takes no effort to turn on the TV and have everything presented to you. To pick up a newspaper or magazine actually takes effort. Not only do you have to turn the pages, you have to read and think. TV seldom makes you think. If TV is the medium of choice for news consumers in this country, we are in sad shape for TV presents a very narrow view of world events. All you have to do is look at TV's fascination of Laci Peterson and Ben and J-Lo. It's entertainment, more than news, and requires little effort. If the American public relied almost exclusively on TV for their coverage of the war, they missed much of the context and have a very distorted view of what happened.

Do you think that the embedding program was a success?
I think it worked well for the media and the Pentagon. It allowed the Pentagon to tell its side of the story through their troops in the field. And it allowed embedded journalists to tell the stories of young men and women in uniform and present a view of warfare that the public has not seen since Vietnam. But, again, news from embedded journalists should not be the sole source of news for news consumers. Unilaterals and others should be read or listened to for a more comprehensive view of the war. Embedded journalists provided one view of the war. It is incumbent on news consumers to seek out those other views.

While even the responses from the journalists provided different perspectives on the embedding experiment, there were some points that each touched upon. One of the most striking was that whether or not a reporter could remain impartial and/or objective those back home were only seeing a small piece of the entire war. As Martz said "If they (those at home) only used one media source for their information on the war, they got a very distorted view of the battlefield." Also, both Martz and Shaw note that it is the editor’s responsibility to present an overall balanced perspective. Martz also stressed that it is the responsibility of the public to seek other sources in order to get a full view of the war.

Neither Tyson or Martz felt that constrained in their reporting since they depended on the troops they were embedded with for their safety.

Martz also brought up an interesting point that most Americans get their news from television. He notes a survey done by the Atlanta Journal Constitution that respondents thought "TV provided the most complete source of information." While 44 percent of those respondents in my survey did not think that television was the best source, only half of the survey respondents thought that newspapers were the best source of information about the war.
"You can never get all the facts from just one newspaper, and unless you have all the facts, you cannot make proper judgments about what is going on."

-Harry S. Truman

This study was designed to investigate the objectivity of embedded reporters. In the survey section, respondents were asked if they believed reporters presented an impartial view of GW2. Within context of the general news consuming public, this word was purposefully used because of its strength. It was important to see if those who the news was meant for (the general news consuming audience) perceived any bias, as this might also sway their own opinion on the war. Impartial speaks to reporters just reporting the information as news, not editorializing, not offering a point-of-view or perceived personal opinion and not appearing to have stake in the story that is being reported. As the survey showed, among the 99 respondents who answered this question (question one) it was nearly an even split between those who thought the reporters were impartial (44%) and those who disagreed (40%).

Objectivity however speaks more to a reporter providing balance within their report, even if the reporter has a personal stake in the story (such as personal dependence for safety from those s/he is reporting on). So, the question of objectivity was posed in the personal interviews with the reporters (David Shaw, Ann Scott Tyson and Ron Martz) in addition to asking about impartiality. Tyson was very emphatic that a reporter could remain impartial, while Shaw and Martz approached this term more cautiously. Both noted that on
some level reporters bring their background and personal beliefs with them. Martz even makes a special point of noting that the reporters would not be human if they didn't do this.

As Martz said "Now it is considered a breach of journalistic ethics to be considered anything less than totally objective. But 'objective' is a term I do not like to use in reference to journalism. I don't believe there is any such thing as objectivity because we are all creatures of our background, our family, our education and our environment."

So this brought in new terms used by Martz and Shaw – "fair" (Martz) and "balanced" (Shaw). But these terms are representative of the entire story, in this case related to the war, that is presented by a news organization, not just to the embedded reporter's own story. Although a point may be drawn that "fair" can also be used to describe an embedded reporter's story, as Martz said his aim in his news items was to "accurately and fairly report what I saw and heard."

These reporter interviews did not specifically point to objectivity in reporting, even among the embeds (Shaw was the only one who definitively said it was possible). Additionally, with the split public opinion on impartiality as well as previous quotes about "bonding" with the soldiers – objective reporting from embedded reporters does not seem possible. Once the embedded reporter integrated her/himself into the story ("we did XYZ today") it did not become a news report of the war, it became a personal diary. This is not to say that it is wrong to do this, but it is misleading to present it as news.
Scott and Martz each noted that their reports as embeds only showed a small piece of the war. Military actions were not carried out by only one unit which all the embeds were with, but rather there were different campaigns among the various branches of the military in different parts of the country.

All three reporters agreed that the editors are the ones who need to sort out the story for the public. An editor should be able to look at the reports with a more objective eye because not only is the editor separated from the story, located safely back in the newsroom, but the editor has access to all the reports from the war zone to place that embedded reporter's story in the proper context. This system should provide checks-and-balances to be sure the public is provided with an objective story.

Additionally, with all the media forms available to the public, the point can be made that the public can turn to multiple sources for the news to get as many views as possible, and then make an informed decision. Martz made an excellent point "If the American public relied almost exclusively on TV for their coverage of the war, they missed much of the context and have a very distorted view of what happened." As the survey showed, more than one-third of the respondents (34%) thought that TV was the best source of information during the war.

It is also interesting to note that nearly 50% of the survey respondents felt their opinion of the war was influenced by the images on TV, even if only 34% thought it was the "best" source of information. Among those 34% who thought TV was the best source a much higher 76% agreed that their opinion was
influenced by the news and images shown on TV, much higher than the total survey percentage.

Images are extremely powerful, seeing more of the day-to-day “horrors of war” during the Vietnam War helped sway public opinion against the war. During the GW2, seeing reporters right along side the troops in a relatively safe position presenting a “clean” version of the war helped to make the idea of war palatable. As the survey results showed, of the 49% who thought their opinions were influenced by the news and images on TV, 90% of them also felt that the stories from embedded reporters often put a “human face” on the conflict.

Upon reviewing the government policy towards the media over more than 100 years of U.S. conflicts, it becomes easy to discern why the government experimented with embedding. With a strained relationship over these past 100+ years, this program, on the surface, appeared as if it would smooth over the tension. But as this study shows, if the reporters can not be fully objective and the public is unduly influenced by what is seen on TV, the government can gain a sympathetic audience by embedding a reporter with the troops. As Martz put it, he felt embedding was a success for the media, but also for the Pentagon because “it allowed the Pentagon to tell its side of the story through their troops in the field.”

As previously reported, nearly 70% of the survey respondents felt that reports from embeds put a “human face” on the war that was compelling to watch. This statistic helps further explain why the government would use a program such as embedding rather than a press pool or simply offering media
credentials for the war zone, given the previous strained relationship between the military and the media. People respond to images—and TV is one of the greatest disseminators of images to the public. Getting reporters to bond with a unit and report on the human-side of the troops every night on TV further shapes the story of the war toward public support.

An embedded reporter could only present the story of the war with the troops/he was with. There was no ability for embedded reporters to conduct additional investigative reports to put their story into the context of the overall war. This also helped the government shape the story of the conflict because many news outlets were not able or willing to support a staff of unilateral correspondents in addition to the embeds and those covering the government’s daily briefings. So, if an editor wanted to provide coverage of the rest of the war, much of the additional context of the conflict would instead have to come from those government briefings.

This is what made embedding so unique compared to other methods of reporting on the war, in this and any previous wars. For their duration of time in Iraq the embedded reporters knew only their one circumscribed story. There was no opportunity to do additional field or background research, or to decide to cover the briefings for a few days, etc. Embedded reporters did not have the freedom to do this without losing their placement within their assigned unit. Unilaterals on the other hand could go seek out their own stories, constrained only by access to information and personal safety.
This fact leads to a new area for further study, an investigation into the amount of time per broadcast and column inch in the newspaper that report on major combat in GW2 from the embedded reporters' pieces. Additionally, this number should be compared with the total amount of time / space that is dedicated to total GW2 coverage. This comparison would show the influence that an embedded reporter has over the public in shaping the opinion of the country and the potential influence the government had in that message.

Independent of the type of reporting – embed, unilateral, etc. – there is a change in where people are getting their news. Within the survey population, 31% were 30-years-old or younger. In this group, 30% thought that TV was the best source of information. Also, as was previously reported in Chapter IV, 40% of those 30-years-old and younger read the newspaper (or online news) less than three hours per week. But this is not limited to newspapers as within this same group, 60% watched less than three hours of TV news per week.

From these findings, another area that requires further study is news consumption among those 30 and younger. This study did not specifically look to investigate internet news versus traditional media (print newspapers and broadcast television), but current social trends would suggest that the 60% who read more than three hours of news a week were most likely getting this news from the internet.

A great deal of effort is currently spent debating the use of the internet for news (no matter what the age of the population). As this study showed, one-third of the sample population believed TV was the best source of information, and
nearly half of all surveyed felt they were influenced by images and news on TV. The internet provides the best of both worlds - depending more on a newspaper-style lengthy report that can be supplemented with television-style images and clips. Studying the usefulness of this, may create an ultimate style of news distribution appealing to the widest variety of audience.

This could also lead into studying how many sources people use to gather news about a certain topic. In this information age, are people still using the recent traditional mediums of print or broadcast – or do people sprinkle in some online blogs with their daily *New York Times*.

Finally, the last area of future investigation directed from this is a study of the definition of news. Is this definition changing as the mediums for the message are changing? As previously noted, once the embedded reporter made her/himself part of the action, news reports took on a “personal journal” style. Is this news (as in the argument of whether a blog is or isn’t news)? It appears that there is room for this personal journal reporting as more media outlets emerge – as long as it is labeled what it is, a personal story, not news.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Distributed Survey

This survey is a vital part of research being conducted for a Master’s thesis project from a student at Seton Hall University. The purpose of this research is to gauge the public's perception and response to embedding troops with American units in the Gulf War 2 (as it is often referred).

All survey results will be kept confidential.

If you would like to review the final survey results and conclusions of this research, please contact tturse@erols.com to receive a copy.

Thank you for your time. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Regards,
Tamara Z. Turse

Definition of an Embedded Reporter
Per the Public Affairs Guidance on Embedded Media: A media embed is a media representative remaining with a (military) unit on an extended basis.

During the Gulf War 2 (as it is commonly referred) over 700 reporters were embedded with military troops to provide “on the scene” reporting of the war efforts in Iraq.
Part I. Survey
Based on the scale below, please circle the answer that most closely represents your opinion.

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>In general, reports from embedded reporters provided an impartial, insider’s view of the Gulf War 2 (GW2).</td>
<td>SA</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>The government should have the ability to limit access to certain combat areas, sources, etc as it sees fit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Reporters who were not embedded with troops provided a more objective view of the GW2 than embedded reporters.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>TV news was often the best source of information during GW2.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Newspapers (or online news) were often the best source of information during GW2.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Embedding reporters with troops provides images and stories that are too graphic or personal.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>The government should restrict combat access for reporters who are not embedded with troops.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Stories from embedded reporters often put a “human face” on the conflict, which were compelling to watch.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>My opinion of the GW2 was often influenced by the images and reports seen on TV.</td>
<td>SA</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Embedded reporters helped to be the “eyes and ears” of the public during the GW2.</td>
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Part II. Optional Questions
Please answer any of the questions below.

### Gender:
- Male
- Female

### Age:
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61 or above

### Hours per week watching news:
- 0 – 3
- 3 – 5
- 5 – 7
- 7 – 9
- 9 or more

### Hours per week reading the newspaper (or online news):
- 0 – 3
- 3 – 5
- 5 – 7
- 7 – 9
- 9 or more
### Survey Results

#### APPENDIX B

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