NEWSLETTER

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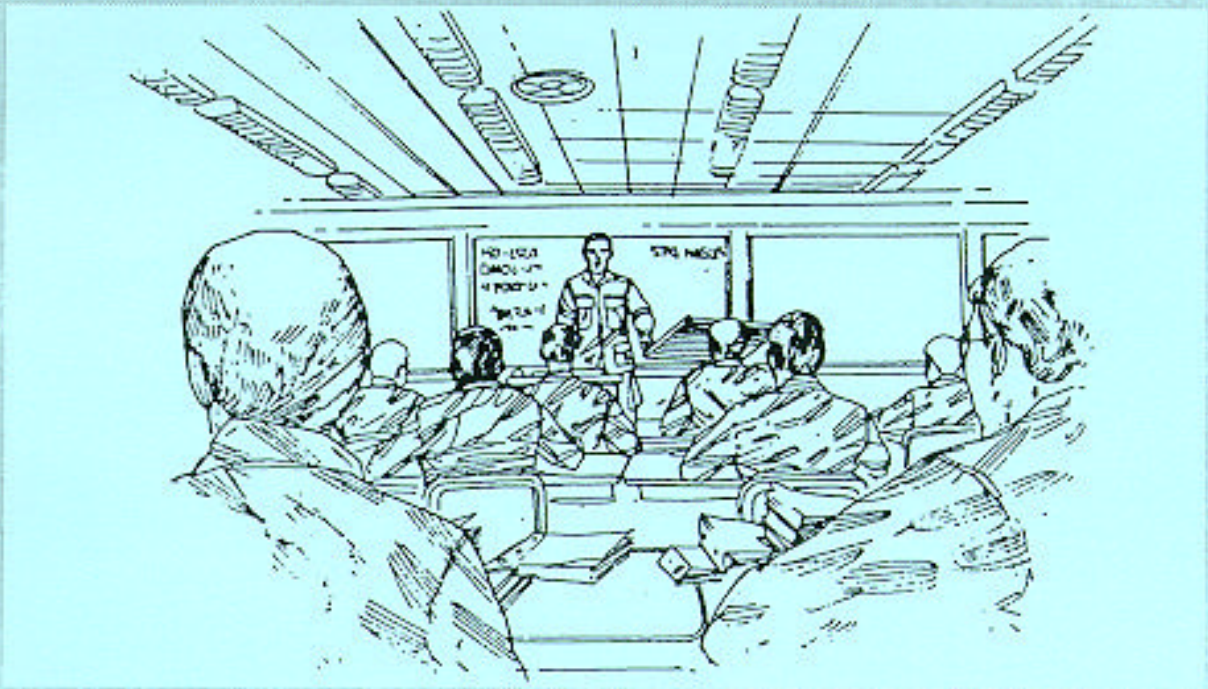
IN THE SPOTLIGHT



MEDIA AND THE TACTICAL COMMANDER

CENTER FOR ARMY LESSONS LEARNED (CALL)
U.S. ARMY COMBINED ARMS COMMAND (CAC)
FORT LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS 66027-7000

FOREWORD

This newsletter focuses on the effects of command information and public information during contingency operations. It is aimed at Total Army ground-level commanders and leaders, and avoids questions or problems best handled at DOD or Department of the Army level.

As we observed during Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, the media will be present on any future battlefields. We also became aware how the media play a major role in keeping soldiers and family members informed and, to a great extent, how the American and world public perceive the operation. In World War II, Korea and even Vietnam, news did not normally reach the public or the soldiers until it was at least 24 hours old. But today's technology allows the media a high degree of mobility and the ability to transmit their stories and images instantly. Technology also allows soldiers access to the media's products, right along with the rest of the world. Because of this technology, real-life media support and encounter training should be incorporated into battalion, brigade, division, and corps field training and command post exercises. Also, battlefield media play should become a routine part of the scenarios at the combat training centers.

This relatively new phenomenon is a double-edged sword: it can greatly enhance the mission or it can have the opposite effect. The challenge for Active Army, Army Reserve and National Guard commanders and leaders at all levels is to learn to deal with media and implement effective command information programs.

This newsletter is the result of Operation DESERT STORM after-action interviews conducted at Forts Bragg, Hood, Bliss, Stewart, Campbell and Benning, along with input from the Reserve Components. Nearly all of the commanders, leaders and soldiers quoted are combat arms. It was decided to lean heavily on quotations because the interviewees speak so eloquently and tell the story much better than could be done in a dry narrative. The quotations are taken from interview transcripts and edited only for brevity and clarity. They are, of course, perceptions of those interviewed. Whether correct or incorrect, these perceptions may offer commanders another perspective about the media and command information. Sometimes, perceptions of the troops and junior leaders can be just as important, if not more so, as perceptions from the command's perspective. In most cases, the published quotations are representative of several other similiar observations. Space prevents publishing all of them.

WILLIAM L. NASH
Brigadier General, USA
Deputy Commanding General for Training

IN THE SPOTLIGHT
MEDIA AND THE TACTICAL COMMANDER

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword

Section I - Command Information

Section II - Public Information (PI)

Section III - Community Relations

Section IV - Doctrine

Appendix A - References

Appendix B - When the Media Calls

Appendix C - Tips on Media Interviews

Appendix D - Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTP) for Commanders

Appendix E - Initiatives that Worked at Home Stations

Appendix F - Initiatives that Worked in Theater

Appendix G - Glossary

Appendix H - Chief of Staff of the Army Guidance

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Unless otherwise stated, whenever the masculine or feminine gender is used, both are intended.

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SECTION I

COMMAND INFORMATION (CI)

The media aspects of military operations are important, will get national attention, and warrant your personal attention. **GEN Colin Powell, CJCS**
Message to Operation DESERT SHIELD Commanders, 1990

Make sure your subordinates are well briefed on the mission and their role in making a successful public affairs program work. **GEN Norman Schwarzkopf**
Message to Operation DESERT SHIELD Commanders, 1990

INTRODUCTION: CI is the two-way flow of information between commanders and soldiers. At one time, soldiers in combat depended on CI for most news and information. Commercial news was not available or untimely. Today, modern technology is such that deployed soldiers will seldom leave without access to civilian news. This places additional importance on good CI because soldiers can now turn to other sources for information. Leaders can turn civilian coverage into an extension of their CI programs by providing detail and perspective on the coverage. The best CI programs recognize that today's soldiers are sophisticated, intelligent and products of the Information Age.

TOPIC: **CI as a Function of Command.**

DISCUSSION: Soldiers want to know about the mission, their roles, how the mission is perceived at home and abroad, what other units are doing in support of the operation, and which teams won yesterday's games. Most importantly, soldiers want to know that their family members are being taken care of. CI answers these questions, while also providing timely training tips and safety reminders.

LESSON(S): Commanders and PAOs should develop detailed CI plans for contingency operations and training exercises. Commanders should stress to their staffs and subordinate commanders that CI deserves their support.

* Provide regular briefings to soldiers and family members

* Use bulletin boards.

* Request mobile Armed Forces Radio and Television Service. Don't assume it is en route; initiate the request through operational channels.

* Arrange, through PA channels, civilian media coverage of the unit.

* Encourage unit coverage in unit, local and national media.

* When unavailable through PA or operational channels, task the G-2/S-2 or G-3/S-3 to monitor news broadcasts and prepare news summaries for soldiers.

Getting information to the soldier was more important than food. How did it manifest itself? In morale! Battalion Commander

At critical times, I would have a command information get-together. A lot of times there would be a lot of discussion about world politics. It was amazing to see the troops' level of knowledge and interest in the details of world politics. Battalion Commander

Once we hit the sand, there was no emphasis on pushing information down to the soldiers. The best way to stop rumors is to give correct information. We teach that in leadership all the way up the chain. First Sergeant

Information from civilian sources was more correct than that of military channels. Sergeant

There were a couple of highways over there that were deadly, and [AFRTS radio] was very, very supportive of [broadcasting] safety information. Battalion Commander

Our biggest challenge is to figure out how "fortysomething" commanders can effectively communicate with "twentysomething" soldiers and their families, who have been raised on commercial news. MACOM Public Affairs Officer

It (information) made my stamina rise and more aware of the values, self-esteem and confidence in myself. Specialist

Our biggest concern was making sure that what got published was information and not misinformation. No place is without problems. The key thing is how you address those problems. Division Rear Detachment Commander

TOPIC: **Locally Produced Newspapers are an Effective Way to Produce CI.**

DISCUSSION: Although the products were not as sophisticated as those produced at corps and above, newspapers and newsletters produced at division level and below were well received by soldiers. The division products were unit specific, timely and easier to distribute. Forward-deployed soldiers and leaders said morale suffered when they had to depend on CI products produced in the rear. Corps and theater newspapers were not timely enough, were heavy on features and light on news, and could not focus on forward units.

LESSON(S): Commanders and leaders should ensure an effective CI system is implemented to keep all audiences informed. CI products include, but are not limited to:

* Unit newspapers, newsletters and fact sheets.

* CI briefings/discussions.

* Field-expedient bulletin boards and electronic bulletin boards.

* Support group newsletters and videos. Ensure all soldiers have access to CI products and that they are timely. Seek PAO/Unit PA Representative (UPAR) advice on the best method of informing intended audiences and distributing the products.

[The division's field newspaper] was very timely and the soldiers gobbled it up, they really did. The lower you get, the more of a need you have for a newsletter or bulletin. Get it out quickly and keep the troops informed. Battalion Commander

[One unit] had something that I saw. It came down in three or four typed pages stapled together. We [read] every word. Sergeant

We couldn't get enough copies of [the division's field newspaper]. We would put copies on bulletin boards. They were good. We needed to do that more often and print more copies. Battalion Commander

TOPIC: **Sharing CI Products between Theater and Home Station.**

DISCUSSION: Many Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM commanders developed innovative methods of sharing CI products produced in theater and at home station. The products enhanced morale at both ends. Some commanders and PAOs used the products to dispel rumors in theater and at home station.

LESSON(S): Commanders and PAOs should develop plans for sharing information products between deployed units and home station. There should be coordination to ensure products are shipped in a timely manner. The plan should be implemented not only during conflicts, but also when units deploy for training exercises or to respond to natural disasters.

When the spouses would come around to pick up their Leave and Earnings Statements (LESs), they could go into the [battalion] classroom with their kids and tape a message to their soldiers in Saudi. My wife would ship the tapes over with a soldier headed to Saudi. Our soldiers watched the tapes over and over again. Battalion Commander

We used soldiers who were returning from overseas to meet with family support groups. They would say, "I just came from there. What are your questions? What are the rumors you want to talk about?" They had credibility.

Division Rear Detachment Commander

The CG set up a system where the guys in the PAO would send back tapes to Fort Stewart...showing good soldiers doing great things, and they'd send them back to the family center that they had set up. They would always be playing the latest tapes...and they'd also play them on the post cable [TV]. Battalion Commander

In theater they had a newspaper, and they regularly sent copies back to us. I ran copies and provided them to command group wives. Reproducing them can be fairly expensive, but the copies got a lot of wear and tear being passed around. We took the family newsletters and sent those overseas.

Division Rear Detachment Commander

Family support groups needed an information pipeline, which they usually did not have, for receiving command information for official sources. PA Adviser

No, I don't think we had a system [for sharing CI products with home station]. It would have been a good idea; it just didn't occur to us. Battalion Commander

TOPIC: **Delayed CI Products.**

DISCUSSION: Many CI products failed to achieve maximum potential because they were often delayed or lost. Problems with clogged supply lines, slow mail and undependable unit distribution systems prevented timely dissemination of CI products.

LESSON(S): Commanders should ensure plans are in place to develop a dependable courier system.

- Treat CI products as official, high-priority correspondence.
- Train distribution point operators at all echelons and in the rear.
- Ensure equitable distribution of products, checking with subordinate leaders to ensure receipt.
- When possible, transmit products electronically.

Newspapers were usually a week or two old, but they were better than nothing. They'd get passed around from soldier to soldier. We'd read them over and over. Magazines were like gold.
Specialist

How can command information be improved? Well, the obvious quick answer is newspaper availability. Battalion Commander

The division commander pushed and pushed and pushed [to get newspapers to the troops]. It would get better, but it was never as good as it should have been.
Battalion Commander

There should be additional funding set aside to purchase and mail local papers. You've got to have a better system than relying on Mrs. So-and-So to cut out news clippings and send them to her husband.
Division Rear Detachment Commander

Believe it or not, soldiers hardly ever read. They always want to be entertained with video and stuff. But in that [desert] environment, in combat, soldiers like to read newspapers. They like reading magazines. Battalion Commander

The local papers [had the most impact]. Soldiers are concerned about what's going on in their home town. First Sergeant

TOPIC: **Soldier Access to Civilian Electronic and Print Media Products.**

DISCUSSION: Soldiers will usually bring radios and TVs with them -- a fact that could boost or undermine CI efforts. In most areas of the world, soldiers will have access to military or civilian radio and, possibly, TV broadcasts. With palm-sized radios and TVs now available for under $100.00, soldiers will have them. During Operation DESERT STORM, soldiers purchased shortwave radios locally and family members shipped thousands more to the theater. Plugged in," as modern soldiers are, they are exposed to national and international news through civilian or military broadcasts. But the national and international media paint with a broad brush, and soldiers want to know how the news they hear affects them. Good CI programs take advantage of national and international news reports and augment them with localized news. They answer the tough questions, quell rumors, build morale and maintain confidence in leadership.

LESSON(S): Commanders should:

* Expect media reports to spawn issues and rumors.

* Query subordinate commanders and PAOs about issues or rumors that develop.

* Develop CI messages to inform soldiers and combat rumors.

* Seek advice from PAOs or Unit Public Affairs Representatives (UPARs) concerning the best methods of getting the command message to intended audiences.

* Brief soldiers on the sensitivity of some information (WIA or KIA, redeployment schedules, rumors).

* Commanders need to translate what national and international news mean to them.

[Radios] were never illegal or contraband. We were starving for news. BBC gave us the best....
Battalion Commander

Guys went out and bought shortwave radios off the Saudi economy. My S-2 bought one [which] became part of our intelligence. Radio had a lot of impact. I think that it reassured soldiers that there wasn't a company line, because anyone could have a shortwave radio.
Battalion Commander

The public was getting information, and we were being told OPSEC. Even the vast majority of information from the daily intel dumps came from BBC, VOA or the Arab news. The troops should know at least what the public knows. Information is power. When you can't get it, you get frustrated. First Sergeant

I heard one [newspaper] issue was confiscated. Why hide it? The soldier is going to find out anyway. Your wife would ask, "Did you see this? And she'd clip it out and send it to you."
First Sergeant

Being up front with the WHOLE command will make everyone feel needed, and our morale and cooperation will be high. [Otherwise] they will believe the chain of command is messed up and doesn't care for a PAWN in a game of chess!! Sergeant

We weren't allowed to have radios. Someone would get one somehow. Then we'd put them up and make a two-niner-two, and pick up BBC. They didn't want us to know what was going on.
Specialist

It would have been much nicer, more valuable, to have had [AFRTS radio] when we made the move 500 or 700 miles away. I mean, why not? We put men on the moon how many years ago? I think, it could have and should have been done. Brigade CSM

SECTION II

PUBLIC INFORMATION (PI)

INTRODUCTION: Civilian news coverage helped maintain soldier morale. Coverage was generally positive; the American people were behind the operation, and soldiers felt this impact. Soldiers also benefitted from media reports on the overall operational picture. It helped them keep their unit operations in perspective.

TOPIC: **Relationship between CI and PI.**

DISCUSSION: The media, phone calls and mail all serve as bridges between internal and external audiences. Information released to internal audiences will likely be picked up by the civilian media, and information released to the media will almost certainly be received by soldiers and family members. It is nearly impossible to separate the two audiences. Commanders and family support groups, for instance, now use several innovative techniques for keeping internal audiences informed, including newsletters, telephonic trees" and conference calls with their deployed soldiers. These techniques are to be encouraged, but commanders, family support group leaders and PAOs should be aware of some potential problems.

With each company, battalion and brigade releasing information to its own audiences, it's easy to imagine scenarios where information could reach the local media that would contradict what is being officially released. The chances for premature release of casualty information, and deployment or redeployment information, for example, are bound to increase. Rumors could run rampant. The family support groups are valuable additions to CI programs, but commanders should request PAO or unit public affairs representative (UPAR) assistance to advise the support groups.

LESSON(S): Commanders should:

* Follow Public Affairs Guidance (PAG) when discussing operational matters with family support groups.

* Provide PAOs with courtesy copies of unit CI products provided to support groups.

* Request training for soldiers and family members from PAOs dealing with:

    * How CI and PI can complement each other.

    * How to deal with the media.

    * Requesting assistance from PAOs to develop family support and soldier handbooks or handouts addressing the handling of "news" and interview requests during operations and exercises.

    * Ensuring that soldiers know and understand the information family members are provided.

When people don't have facts, they fill in what they surmise to be as close to the truth as possible. Or they put two or three letters together from two or three different units, and think they have the big picture. Then they share this big picture with everyone else.

Division Rear Detachment Commander

It seemed like any time something significant happened, we wouldn't get the paper for a while. It's like it would be intentional. The impression I got was they'd only let you read what they wanted you to read. Specialist

It seemed like a lot of times, the wives would find out something before we did...a guy would call home and his wife would tell him. Company Commander

TOPIC: **Local Media Provides a Morale Boost to the Soldier.**

DISCUSSION: It is impossible to overstate the importance of local civilian media coverage. PAOs, forward-deployed commanders and rear commanders agreed that bringing local media into the theater should be done at the first opportunity. Local reporting gave soldiers and family members the detail they said the national coverage lacked. It also helped offset the perception of imbalanced coverage among units. Local reporters may also have the advantage of being familiar with the unit and unit leaders.

Bringing local media into the theater also provided a tremendous boost to local community relations at home station. PAOs and rear detachment commanders said seeing local soldiers on TV and in the newspapers brought the operation home and led to tremendous support within the communities. One division issued "hip pocket" invitational orders to selected media representatives at home station to facilitate their deployment in the future.

LESSON(S): Limitations on local media hurt public affairs efforts at home. Key points to remember are: Local media must be sponsored by a unit.

* Media may fly aboard military aircraft without a PA escort.

* Unit PA products may be carried back to home station with the returning local media.

* Local media are less likely to complain about delays in obtaining release approval because they are guaranteed a local scoop.

* Identify a UPAR to produce in-house releases to augment media coverage and avoid the requirement for country clearances.

* PA annexes should include plans for bringing local media into theater as soon as possible.

* PAOs or UPARs should arrange to provide print and audio-visual releases to home stations and local media outlets.

The local reporters [had the greatest impact] because they were getting stuff that we knew was going to get back to the families. Company Commander

People turn more to the newspapers -- especially local newspapers -- to try to find out what is going on. I would have liked to have seen the military tailor their efforts more so that the hometown newspapers could get the kind of coverage that I think they needed.
Division Rear Detachment Commander

[The reporter with us] was a positive influence because he was able to send the tapes right back home to the local station. He showed a lot of the everyday scenes -- what we were living, what we were talking about. He conveyed those graphically back on TV.
Battalion Commander

The local papers [had the most impact]. Soldiers are concerned about what's going on in their hometown. First Sergeant

The local reporters [who went to theater] would come back and do briefings with family members. They would do briefings with schools...very helpful.
Battalion Commander

TOPIC: **Value of Accepting Media for Semi-permanent Attachment to Unit.**

DISCUSSION: Reporters who stayed with units for extended periods provided more accurate and balanced coverage than reporters who visited a unit for a day or two. The reporters, leaders and soldiers developed a sense of mutual trust. Commanders, leaders and soldiers who experienced such a relationship during Operation DESERT STORM had little but positive things to say about the experience.

LESSON(S): Most reporters will provide positive -- or at least balanced -- coverage when they are allowed to stay with a unit for extended periods of time. They are not a burden to the unit, and, in fact, have a positive effect on morale both in theater and at home station. Commanders and leaders should consider making room for reporters during future operations and exercises.

We had a TV crew on my aircraft crossing into Iraq. They were no hindrance. If anything, they helped us. My problem, being a Vietnam veteran, is that the theme for the story was always the reporter's hidden agenda. Here, it was positive; it was upbeat because these guys didn't have a hidden agenda. They were very professional; they were very, very proud to be with us; and they appreciated the assistance given. Guys like me will be more receptive to the media next time because of that. Brigade CSM

I'll tell you, get a lead on the press, take them with us, get them there up front. I don't think we have to violate the initial H-hour secrecy and all that, but the days of closing off the war zone to the press are over with. Brigade Commander

I had a reporter in my command track the whole war. That was a most positive experience. [Our soldiers] all know that we were part of history anyway, but they were part of written history [with] that two-page [Newsweek] spread. Very positive, I thought. Brigade Commander

Probably the nicest thing we had happen was a guy from the Atlanta Constitution was let in by division. I treated him like part of the unit. I gave him a cot next to me. I knew what type of person he was and gave him almost free rein. Battalion Commander

TOPIC: **Unescorted Media.**

DISCUSSION: Unescorted or unaccredited media representatives -- perhaps host-country or third-nation reporters -- can be expected on future battlefields. Some reporters balk at media pools and being escorted by public affairs officers or NCOs, preferring to strike out on their own. Public affairs doctrine says those reporters should not be granted access to anything not open to the public and should be referred to the nearest PAO for registration and accreditation. The goal is NOT to restrict media access but to ensure the representatives are legitimate reporters and to prevent them from interfering with operations. Accreditation and escorting are not done out of concern for the media's safety. The media have made it clear they know the risks of covering a war and that they do not want restrictions placed on their movement to protect them.

LESSON(S): Ensure leaders and soldiers are aware of the type, size and color of badge accredited media will be wearing. Develop a Standing Operating Procedure (SOP) to deal with unescorted, unaccredited media. PAOs should educate the media about the dangers of modern, fluid battlefields. Commanders and PAOs should also make pool procedures as painless as possible so that reporters are less likely to strike out on their own.

We were out there in the middle of nowhere with good intelligence that there was a possibility of Saddam attacking. Out of nowhere, a pool of four or five guys shows up -- no military escort -- wanting to know what we were doing. So I said, "I'll answer your questions, but not until you come up with a military representative that says you are who you say you are."

Battalion Commander

Our battalion chaplain was holding communion.... Up drives a car with four French reporters. They didn't speak English. I told them they could take pictures. Later, I wondered if I'd done the right thing. I suppose there is nothing I could have done. They were just traveling through the area.

Battalion Commander

In some cases [the media] sort of wandered on their own. One group got robbed by locals. Had we known they were in the area, we could have prevented it.

Battalion Commander

TOPIC: **Support for the Media.**

DISCUSSION: The media should be outfitted for the field at theater or corps level since subordinate units often cannot spare the supplies and assets. However, commanders and leaders at all levels should provide water, food and other sustenance if doing so would not detract from the mission.

LESSON(S): PA and operational planning should consider the need to support the media. Commanders should issue guidance outlining the extent of support to be provided. Under no circumstances should support detract from the mission, but that which would not detract should be provided.

I expect you to accommodate the press' needs as best you can without affecting your ability to carry out your warfighting mission.
GEN Norman Schwarzkopf
Message to Operation DESERT STORM Commanders, August 1990

I had some concerns, because they said we were going to have seven [media reps] for the whole corps. I couldn't really support more media than that. We were just coming in, and we didn't have enough tents, heaters and cots for ourselves.
Corps PAO

It is not fair to ask someone to come out and live with you, and play by your rules, and risk their lives, and then not fully support them. But this thing has to be top-driven.
Division PAO

The Army chief of staff, maybe as a result of a conversation with the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, told the division commanders that we could win every battle but lose the war if we did not include the media. The instructions to the division commanders were to support the media as much as possible.
Division PAO

We provided them [reporters] with housing, TA-50, flak jackets, sleeping bags, MREs and so on. They lived with us and they lived like us. They got dirty, took bird baths like us, and stayed with us until their mission was completed. They didn't go back to the hotel at night.
Commander, Public Affairs Detachment

TOPIC: **Soldier and Family Member Media Interviews.**

DISCUSSION: PAOs and unit leaders need to educate soldiers and family members about the role of the media. Soldiers and family members need to understand that the media represent the American public and are not the enemy. They need to understand their rights to talk or refuse to talk to the media. They also need to realize how talking to the media can support and contribute to the mission.

Many family members and soldiers suffer from what might be called "mediaphobia." By projecting confidence and commitment during interviews, they can help gain public support and tell the Army story. Most don't realize that they often have more credibility with the public than commanders and senior officials. On the other hand, they need to be aware of some dangers that might be associated with granting interview requests. Many don't stop to think, for example, how appearing on television or in the newspaper could identify them as targets for crank calls, pushy salesmen or even criminals. (See Appendix B.)

LESSON(S): For soldiers, media-encounter training should be incorporated into individual and collective training. Soldiers should be cautioned about having a phone book or postal listing that makes it obvious they are military. Handouts offering tips on how to deal with the press are available through public affairs channels. They should be provided to soldiers and family members.

We told the leaders and the soldiers to accentuate the positive, to stay away from operational matters, and to be very mindful of the impact the information they were giving the folks back home. You always get a guy who gripes, but in some ways that adds a little dose of realism. My guys were superb in their dealings with the press. Battalion Commander

We were told to tell [the media], "No comment." Sergeant

My family and the other families tended to be cautious around the media. I think that there was some good guidance put out to the families to be cautious. First, it identifies you as being a service family, which might not be something you want to advertise. You could open yourself up to a local burglar or something. Battalion Commander

You can trust soldiers; they are perceived, in fact, by both the public and the media as our most credible spokespersons. Corps PAO

The media would look through the phone book for names with [Army] ranks, then they would call those numbers for interviews. One of our wives worked at a local motel where a lot of the media were staying. When they found out she was a military wife with a deployed husband, they hounded her for interviews. She had to take off work for a week or two.
Division Rear Detachment Commander

TOPIC: Media Coverage of Attached and Operational Control (OPCON) Units.

DISCUSSION: Units that deploy to a theater of operations often lose their identity when attached to a higher headquarters. They probably have no PA assets to carry on their own command and public information missions. It is a challenge to ensure continued coverage and flow of information to these "isolated" or "forgotten" units.

LESSON(S): Commanders and PAOs should attempt to ensure balanced coverage. They should make a special effort to include attached units in their planning and operations. Such units require an even greater flow of information and should be considered for separate coverage whenever possible. A UPAR could provide continuity, no matter where a unit is deployed.

If you were to leave tips for battalion commanders on how to handle the media, one of them would be: Spread them around your units to give your soldiers equal balance. It will maintain their morale. Battalion Commander

In comparison with all the other units over there, you would hardly know we was there. Specialist

There were a lot of civilian media in our base camps.... But when you would pick up a copy of any news publication, [our unit] was not mentioned. It was as if we were never over there. That hurt morale. First Sergeant

When one company was "left out" of the media coverage and photo opportunities, I would get with the PAO and have them guide the media to that company the next time. The PAO would prebrief the media on what to look for, what to stay away from. Battalion Commander

The guys were getting a little grumpy and upset about everybody else grabbing the headlines. Battalion Commander

TOPIC: Media Coverage and the Information War.

DISCUSSION: Reporters and PAOs agree that the media should not be used for propaganda or deceiving the enemy. But, whether we like it or not, media reports will serve propaganda and, perhaps, disinformation purposes. Blame it on technology, which allows enemy and friendly forces and publics access to the same information simultaneously. It's naive to think the media coverage can't or won't be used for propaganda purposes.

LESSON(S): War is part of the political process and public opinion is a major battlefield. Information battles on that battlefield can influence or even determine the political consequences of war. While taking care not to manipulate or mislead the media, commanders should keep in mind that allowing access can aid the war effort. All soldiers must deal as openly with the media as OPSEC permits. Honesty remains the best policy.

You don't ever tell a soldier not to tell the truth. What you try to do is get the soldier to consider the full outcome of [his] statements on the folks back home, not to mention the impact that it might have when the enemy gets a hold of it. At higher levels, that was something that was really emphasized in the division. Battalion Commander

My battalion could strike 24 hours a day, and I had all of my aircraft available. Yes, there were small problems, but we could strike. In the situation we were in, that's the message that needed to be portrayed to the media, because even though the media's target audience was the American public, others were listening, too. I used that with my soldiers. I said, "I am going to give the media free rein, but I want you to be very careful about what you talk about. I want to portray this battalion and this division as one mean son-of-a-gun. And that message will get to Saddam and play with his mind." Battalion Commander

If [the media] weren't positive, we wanted to make them positive by showing them all the good things our soldiers were doing. I would just say, "Hey guys, we have the best soldiers in the world. Come talk to these kids and you'll be amazed." The average civilian's perception of about who is in the Army is that he is some bum who couldn't get a job at Burger King.
Battalion Commander

TOPIC: Impact of Civilian Media on Soldiers.

DISCUSSION: Although media coverage helped bolster morale, problems arose. Examples include the development of rumors and distrust of leaders when CI did not agree with media reports, and downturns in unit morale when some units were perceived as monopolizing the news.

LESSON(S): Educate subordinate leaders about the effects of media coverage during contingencies and the need for public affairs planning. Commanders should also consider allowing media access during deployments for training.

I feel when a soldier is well informed, he is more prepared for the next mission.
Staff Sergeant

Morale being adversely impacted back here had an impact on my soldiers' morale over there. They felt like the family members were down in the dumps, then they got down in the dumps.
Battalion Commander

We didn't have any restrictions on who could talk and who couldn't talk. We knew that the more media that showed up, the higher the morale of the soldiers. The soldiers understood that if the media was there then they had a chance to touch someone back in the states.
Battalion Commander

The civilian media was superb. The military needs to take notice of the free press. Miliary newspapers were too censored and altered. Specialist

How did the lack of information hurt? Start getting a little sullenness among everybody, to include myself. No fights or anything like that, but you could tell -- you could just feel it.
Battalion Commander

TOPIC: Effects of Civilian Media Coverage at Home Station.

DISCUSSION: Family members and nondeployed soldiers were greatly affected by news coverage, often creating problems for rear commanders and detracting from their credibility. Because the media's communications equipment exceeds the Army's in capability and because of perceived OPSEC and procedural difficulties, CI efforts at home stations were often undermined. The perception was that the commands did not keep their people informed either because they did not care, they were inept in their communication efforts or they were hiding something. Family members at home stations also complained that the national news media did not give them enough detail about their units and soldiers.

LESSON(S):

* Educate soldiers and family members about the unique role and effects of the media during contingencies.

* Coordinate for media coverage of the unit, especially by local, home-station media when possible.

* Use the family support center forum to correct perceptions about military censorship, overconcern for OPSEC, etc.

* Unit leaders and family support group leaders -- especially in the Reserve Components -- need to have a workable, tested internal communications plan that can reach everyone, no matter how widely dispersed the family members are.

Family members started blowing off the guys at home station and just watched CNN. My wife told me she learned more about where we were and what we were doing from CNN than she did through official channels. Brigade Commander

The information gap caused the old rumor mill to get cranked up. There was a variety of rumors that continually went through the family support groups. Company Commander

The lack of information was unbelievable. The rear detachment always said they knew how we felt. I didn't believe that was true. Family Member

The Army -- even its PA community -- still does not grasp that public opinion in fact is the battlefield. It is public opinion that determines who wins or loses the all-important political disputes which are what war is all about. Army Reserve PAO

We had never given much thought to how we would get the word out to everyone on a long-term basis. Several individuals organized telephone trees, which was great, but we seemed to have several trees going in opposite directions, often spreading rumors as opposed to facts from a central source. First Sergeant

The truth is that we find out more through the media. We've been given the impression that the Army cares about us as family members and will treat us as such, but then they don't. Family Member

SECTION III

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

TOPIC: **WIA, KIA and MIA Media Announcements.**

DISCUSSION: The primary next-of-kin and secondary next-of-kin (PNOK and SNOK) notification system used during Operation DESERT STORM was too centralized, and often ineffective.

LESSON(S): There should be a direct link between local casualty affairs and public affairs to ensure records are kept up to date on PNOK/SNOK home-of-record locations to facilitate timely media releases upon notification. This direct link with unit, casualty affairs, and public affairs will speed up the process, and foster increased credibility between media and local PAOs. It will also help prevent premature media disclosure.

One problem we experienced...[an injured soldier] was sent to the hospital ship Mercy, where CNN comes by and films him. His wife, walking through a mall in Temple, Texas, passes a TV store, which has what on? CNN. On a bank of 15-20 televisions, she sees her husband on the hospital ship Mercy, and she hasn't been notified! Now, that caused a stink.

Corps PAO

The biggest problem we had with the casualty reporting system was the fact that we had AT&T phones within one kilometer of our base camp. Any servicemember could go down to the phone and call back to a spouse and say, "Hey, Johnny So-and-So has had a heart attack." Despite our every effort to make sure that the commanders told their soldiers not to do that, it did happen.

Company Commander

Casualty notification was a major problem. This is an actual case: Sergeant J calls his wife and says, Sergeant S got hurt today. He's out on the hospital ship, and it looks like they are going to evacuate him back to Walter Reed." Sergeant J's wife calls Sergeant S's wife and says, Have you heard? Your husband's been hurt, and he'll probably be at Walter Reed tomorrow." Sergeant S's wife flies to Washington, goes to Walter Reed and starts looking for her husband. He's not there. This actually happened.

Division Rear Detachment PAO

TOPIC: 1-800 General Information Number to provide Status of Soldiers and verify Next-of-Kin Status.

DISCUSSION: The Army's 1-800 number received tens of thousands of calls asking for updated information on soldier location, injuries, redeployment and next-of-kin notification status. The centralized handling of calls limited the amount of information releasable to callers. Casualty information was not provided to the 1-800 number operation until PNOK notification was completed, and soldier deployment status was difficult to verify. Soldier, commander and "buddy" calls to family members regarding injuries not covered by the official notification system or before the system could be activated compounded family member anxiety. Family members calling the 1-800 number to verify or change primary or secondary NOK notification information on a soldier's DD Form 93 (Record of Emergency Data) were thwarted because the information was maintained at installation level and was protected by the Privacy Act. Compounding this were the number of family members anticipating a long deployment and relocating to live with relatives. At least one unit maintained its own 1-800 system with great success.

LESSON(S): Commanders must stress to soldiers the importance of keeping their DD Form 93 (Record of Emergency Data) current and keeping family members as informed as possible. During preparation for overseas movement (POM), soldiers should update their DD Form 93 with the address of where the spouse will be. If necessary, soldiers should grant family members power of attorney to change DD Form 93 information. CI channels can be used to inform soldiers and family members of the procedures. Soldiers must be advised that the good intentions of unofficial notification carry risks and are certain to increase anxiety among family members. The internal audience should be informed of the NOK notification system and the circumstances under which it exists.

Family members were uninformed of where and how to go to change primary and secondary NOK addresses. Many spouses moved in with their families or their in-laws, but were unable to change their address with the Army because only the soldier could change his DD 93. Family members were frantic about not being notified if something happened.

Pentagon 1-800 Staffer

The single most important thing we did was to establish 1-800 phone lines for family members to call about loved ones. We had very strict procedures, because of the Privacy Act questions. We announced ahead of time to people: "When you call, we're going to ask you to provide (the soldier's) social security number." We were very sensitive to media disclosures and the like.

Division G-1 Officer

At Fort Lewis, a toll-free telephone line was dedicated to providing information on returning units, including flight arrival times as soon as they were releaseable. The number was disseminated to the media, who helped get the informatin to the widely dispersed families.

U.S. Army Reserve PA Adviser

SECTION IV
DOCTRINE

TOPIC: **Media Access to Enemy Prisoners of War (EPWs).**

DISCUSSION: Military Police (MP) and other soldiers had legal questions about allowing media access to EPW processing centers. Most OPLANs do not address the question, as it relates to the Geneva Conventions and AR 360-50. Essentially, the Geneva Conventions prohibit photos and videotapes of EPWs that could be construed as propaganda. In light of instant global communications, almost any coverage of EPWs could be used as propaganda.

LESSON(S): Determine guidance in coordination with the MP School and DOD JAG for incorporation into all appropriate doctrine and training. Ensure public affairs guidance on the subject is clear in future exercises and operations and ensure media ground rules clearly establish guidelines. PAOs should stand ready to revoke credentials when ground rules are violated.

Initially, on 12 January, we were told no photographs of EPWs. Then you had the battle at Khafji, and they started showing pictures of EPWs. Once the other media sees that, hell, they're going to do the same thing. The ground rule was clear to begin with, but it went downhill after that. It was a tough one -- a hard nut to crack.

Corps PAO

TOPIC: **Planning for Public Affairs during the Operation.**

DISCUSSION: The after-action reports of several units included a lesson-learned bullet calling for better PA planning. Commanders said the lack of planning led to: imbalanced coverage, which hurt soldier morale, and CI failing to keep pace with civilian news reports, which helped foster rumors and detracted from leader credibility. Rear detachment leaders said divisions and installations were ill-equipped to handle the media assault at home station, especially after most PA assets had deployed.

LESSON(S): Provide guidance to commanders and PAOs on the need for planning, with specific recommendations on what to include in the plans and how to develop them. Incorporate PA play into command and field exercises (CPXs and FTXs) at all levels, and re-energize plans training for PAOs at the Defense Information School.

We need to have a plan; we need to be ready to do it tomorrow. Just like you have a war plan, you have to have a public affairs plan. Battalion Commander

You may have noticed in [the unit's G-3] after-action critique, one of the things we need to do a better job of is planning for PAO coverage. I'll tell you, it's one of those things that we never thought about. Division Rear Detachment Commander

Each unit should have a command information plan. Let's face it, the rear detachment commander is not a recognized position. So it's going to be somebody else who'll come winging in at the last minute, they're going to hang this mantle on him and say, "You're responsible for it." And there ought to be something he can go to that says "Command Information Program;" these are the things you should do. Rear Detachment Commander

TOPIC: **Media Training for Leaders**

DISCUSSION: Some Officer Basic and Advanced courses now offer media training, and FY 92 CGSC curriculum provides students media training. CGSC graduates from 1991 and earlier received little, if any, such instruction. It is not offered in NCOES.

LESSON(S): Real-life media support and encounter training should be incorporated into battalion, brigade, division and corps field training and command post exercises (FTXs and CPXs). Also, battlefield media play should become a routine part of the scenarios at the combat training centers.

We need our battalion and brigade commanders, executive officers and command sergeants major to gain experience in answering questions from the media about combat operations. Let's set up media training. . . to be integrated into scenarios at our combat training centers.

GEN Carl E. Vuono,
Former Army Chief of Staff,
1990

APPENDIX A
REFERENCES

ARMY REGULATIONS

340-17 Release of Information and Records from Army Files

340-21 The Army Privacy Program

360-5 Public Information

360-7 Army Broadcasting Service (Armed Forces Radio and Television Service)

360-61 Community Relations

360-81 Command Information Program

380-5 Department of the Army Information Security Program

530-1 Operations Security (OPSEC)

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APPENDIX B

WHEN THE MEDIA CALLS...

Family members can expect interview requests from national or local media during contingencies. The following tips are suggested for use as a handout by family support groups and similar organizations.

Know your rights. It's your choice whether or not to speak to reporters. If you choose to speak, you may stop at any time.

Know the role of the media; they do a job vital for democracy. It is **NOT** harassment if they call your home or stop you at the supermarket asking for an interview. It **IS** harassment if they infringe on your privacy or persist after being told "no."

Know with whom you are talking. Before answering questions, get the reporter's name, organization and phone number. Do this especially if you are going to decline the request. It will discourage the reporter from persisting.

Know who will hear you. Family members may have information that would be useful to an enemy. Thanks to technology, the enemy can have access to what you say as soon as you say it. On the other hand, if you are enthusiastic about your spouse's mission, your response can build morale and help show American resolve.

Know your limits. Talk only about what you know first-hand. It's OK to answer with, I don't know." It is never a good idea to speculate.

Know what to keep to yourself. If your spouse calls or writes with news about casualties, where the unit is or when it might redeploy, keep such information to yourself. Don't even share it with other family members. Deployments spawn rumors, and some of what you hear could be wrong, sensitive or subject to change.

Finally, remember that appearing on television or being written about in a newspaper article could identify you as a target for unscrupulous salesmen, crank calls or, worse, a burglary or rape. Be especially cautious if your phone listing includes your spouse's rank and your address.

Your family support group leader's phone number is _____.

For additional help or guidance, your Public Affairs Office's phone number is_____.

APPENDIX C

TIPS ON MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Advances in communications technology and the nature of low- and mid-intensity conflict mean that any soldier can be approached in combat by members of the news media. Leaders at all levels should train their subordinates so they know how to respond to questions from reporters, without detracting from the mission or violating OPSEC. Here is a set of five do's and don'ts that apply whenever soldiers come in contact with the news media:

Know the role and purpose of the American press: Reporters do a vital job in a democracy by keeping the public, your friends and family, and other soldiers informed. Your interaction with the media can be a morale booster and actually enhance the mission.

Do Not jeopardize your life or your mission by trying to accommodate the media or protect them. They know and have assumed the risk of covering combat operations. Do not take chances just because the cameras are rolling."

Know to whom you are talking: When approached by a reporter, ensure he is wearing a press badge issued through your chain of command, or that he is accompanied by a PAO representative.

Do Not detain unregistered or unescorted media representatives yourself. Instead, refer them to the PAO and promptly report them to your supervisor.

Know who will hear you: What you say and how you say it can be in enemy hands within minutes. Your friends and family -- and the American public -- will be influenced by what you say and how you say it. Confidence and upbeat attitudes impress the public and the enemy with your sense of resolve.

Do Not violate OPSEC by talking about tactical plans, your unit's strength and supply levels, or losses. Do not provide the enemy with propaganda material by grumbling and thoughtless complaining.

Know your rights: You may talk with the news media without fear of repercussion or punishment. You may also decline to talk, and you may end an interview at any time.

Do Not take time out for an interview when it would interfere with the mission. Don't answer inappropriate questions, and don't hesitate to request that the tape recorder or camera be turned off when you feel it necessary.

Know your limits: Stick to subjects within your own area of responsibility and personal knowledge. If you do not have the answer to a question, say so.

Do Not try to answer questions above your level. Do not speculate, repeat rumors, or discuss information about casualties. Do not say or do anything that would violate operational security and aid the enemy.

APPENDIX D

TACTICS, TECHNIQUES, AND PROCEDURES (TTP) FOR COMMANDERS

Tell your soldiers that news media will show up in your area, and train your soldiers how to handle unaccredited media.

Let your soldiers talk to the media when the mission permits. Brief them in advance about what to avoid talking about, if anything.

Provide accredited media with transportation and other support when possible. It will pay off in coverage about your people and their accomplishments.

Provide media escorts when possible. This nets you a degree of influence over the coverage and helps ensure accuracy.

Maintain a professional attitude during interviews, even when the media seems aggressive. Reasoned responses will help you stay in control of the interview.

Plan for early deployment and late redeployment of PAO personnel and assets.

Implement public affairs plans during deployments for training.

Allow media access during training exercises.

Invite home station media into theater when possible.

Develop plans outlining the extent of logistical support to be provided civilian media.

Ensure balanced media coverage of all assigned or attached units. Don't send the media to the same battalion or company all the time, and don't overlook attached units.

Coordinate for Reserve Components augmentation during contingencies.

Deploy PAO personnel forward with the resources and mission to provide timely CI products.

Establish media centers at home stations under PAO control.

Don't stage events or activities for the media. The media should be passive onlookers to normal activities.

Don't assume that all media people are anti-military.

Don't assume that all reporters are after the same "big" story. Hometown media, especially, are hungry for slice-of-life features about ordinary soldiers and their routine activities.

Don't let your soldiers become servants of the media. Soldiers are neither required to -- nor should they -- carry equipment or run errands, even for the best-known accredited news correspondents.

Don't lose your temper when reporters ask questions you consider stupid. Such questions are usually rooted in ignorance, rather than in malice.

Don't allow media routine access to family assistance centers or casualty assistance centers at home stations.

APPENDIX E

INITIATIVES THAT WORKED AT HOME STATIONS

Set up conference calls between the theater and the home station so commanders and unit leaders can talk to local media and family support group leaders at home station.

Send videotapes of family support group activities, such as picnics or parties, to the deployed soldiers.

Send copies of family support group newsletters to the soldiers. Include local newspaper clippings of deployed units.

Show videotapes from the theater at support group meetings and in family assistance centers.

Use returning and deploying soldiers as couriers for videotapes and other command information products.

Have soldiers returning on emergency leave or for PCS brief support groups and civic organizations at home station.

Set up 1-800 numbers and action lines for family assistance.

Set up "desert fax" services for families and soldiers to exchange messages.

Attach a PA representative to a deploying unit that does not have organic PA assets.

Have TASC capture activities, such as deployment, mobilization, training, family support, Reserve Components, support groups, homecomings, etc., on video and film.

APPENDIX F

INITIATIVES THAT WORKED IN THEATER

Send videotapes back to home station showing the unit's operational area. The tapes included personal messages from soldiers to their families.

Electronically publish daily news summaries over tactical computer bulletin board.

Allow local media from home station into the theater to cover the unit.

Build field-expedient bulletin boards in high-traffic areas such as mess tents and shower points.

Allow reporters to spend several days or weeks with a unit, even during the ground war.

Use shortwave radios to glean news items, then publishing them in printed or electronic newsletters.

APPENDIX G

GLOSSARY

ALLIED PRESS INFORMATION CENTER (APIC): News media center set up during combined operations. APICs are staffed by public affairs personnel from the forces of the countries participating in the combined operations.

ARMED FORCES RADIO AND TELEVISION SERVICE (AFRTS): The organization through which DOD provides U.S. forces and their families overseas with radio and television news, entertainment and CI.

ARMY-FUNDED (AF) NEWSPAPER: A CI newspaper published with appropriated funds. Unit newspapers almost always are produced as AF newspapers.

AUDIENCE: "Audience" and "public" are used interchangeably. Both terms refer to the target group at which an item of communication is directed.

BROADCAST PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT (BPAD): A mobile public affairs detachment capable of providing the radio programming of AFRTS to deployed troops.

CIVILIAN ENTERPRISE (CE) NEWSPAPERS: CI newspapers published under a contract with a civilian publisher. Under the contract the publisher sells advertisements and is granted limited exclusivity in distributing to post barracks and family housing areas. The newspapers are published at no cost to the Army. The Army retains editorial control over the newspapers' content. Most large installation newspapers are published under CE contracts.

CI NEWSPAPER: A newspaper published by the Army to provide information to internal audiences. CI newspapers may be either AF or CE (containing ads sold by a civilian printer).

COMMAND INFORMATION (CI): A function of command, CI provides news and information to internal audiences (soldiers, their families, DA civilians and other workers, cadets, and retirees). During war, CI must be the overriding mission of public affairs at all levels.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS (CR): Direct contact between the military and civilian communities. The goal is to gain public understanding for, and acceptance of, the military mission. In CONUS, the PAO is responsible for CR; in peacetime overseas, CR is a task shared with G5/J5. During combat operations, CR becomes a civil affairs responsibility.

DEADLINE: The time by which reporters must complete their stories to get them into the planned issue or broadcast.

DISCLOSURE: Literally, to open up or expose. In the context of media relations, it means the exchange of factual information regarding an operation or incident.

DOD NATIONAL MEDIA POOL: A group of civilian news media representatives, mobilized by OASD-PA to cover major deployments when it is unlikely that other media representatives will be on hand or when the need for OPSEC is paramount.

ESCORT: The individual -- usually a PAO or NCO -- who accompanies members of the press while they are in theater and accredited by the news media center, allied press information center or joint information bureau.

EXTERNAL PUBLIC: Audiences not generally associated with the military. In addition to the general public in the United States, this category of audience includes local populations overseas and, by extension, the enemy and his civilian population. The external public is usually reached through the civilian news media.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA): Federal law that makes the public release of most information about DOD activities mandatory. The Army's FOIA Program is explained in AR 340-17, Release of Information and Records from Army Files.

HOST-NATION SENSITIVITIES: Cultural, religious, and political customs and topics identified by the Embassy Country Team as potentially offensive to local populations and governments. U.S. military commands receive periodic listings of sensitivities; PAOs are required to observe these sensitivities in external as well as internal information products.

INTERNAL PUBLIC: Audiences with a direct relationship to the Army and the command. The major groups of internal audiences are soldiers, soldiers' family members, Department of the Army civilians and civilian contract U.S. employees, Military Academy and ROTC cadets, and military retirees.

JOINT INFORMATION BUREAU (JIB): A news media center set up and operated by public affairs personnel of more than one DOD component. JIB personnel may include personnel from other federal agencies.

MAXIMUM DISCLOSURE, MINIMUM DELAY: The DOD policy of informing the American public. The policy is intended to reduce the time "bad" news is in the limelight by satisfying the demand for information as quickly as facts are available.

MEDIA: The means by which news is transmitted to the public, including both military and civilian television, radio, newspapers and magazines. Also, the representatives of news organizations, both American and international, who gather, evaluate, package and distribute through print and electronic means, information for consumption by the public.

MEDIA REGISTRATION: The process of registering news media representatives, leading to official recognition and acceptance in the theater of operations. Accredited members of the media have access to units and soldiers, and to military support services as directed by Unified Commanders.

MOBILE PAD (MPAD): An 18-member public affairs detachment charged with augmenting press camp headquarters (PCHs), and corps and higher PAO operations.

NEWS MEDIA CENTER: Provides the means through which a commander can cope with media interest for the least outlay in terms of time and personnel. Centers register or accredit news media, brief reporters, and provide them with military escorts and limited work space. When operated by unified/specified commands, news media centers are called JIBs. At the combined commands, they are called APICs or Combined Information Bureaus.

NEWS RELEASE: News and features about the Army, released to the civilian and military media, so that the public can assess the Army's readiness and capabilities. News releases may be initiated by Army public affairs practitioners, or they may be generated by inquiries from the media. News releases may not violate security, accuracy, policy, and propriety (SAPP) rules, host-nation sensitivities, FOIA or Privacy Act.

NEWS RELEASE AUTHORITY: The person officially responsible to release news about the Army or its elements, usually limited to the commander and the PAO. Army regulations limit release of specific types of information to certain echelons.

NEXT-OF-KIN NOTIFICATION: The process of notifying the primary and secondary next of kin when a soldier is killed, wounded or missing. The Casualty Assistance Center confirms notification is complete before the soldier's name can be released to the media and public.

OASD-PA: The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs.

OCPA: Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, U.S. Army.

OPINION LEADERS: Individuals in a civilian community whose attitudes influence those of the citizenry at large. Opinion leaders do not necessarily hold public office; teachers, clerics, and successful businessmen, for example, can also sway public opinion.

PAO: Public affairs office or officer.

PRESS CAMP HEADQUARTERS (PCH): A public affairs unit whose primary mission is to set up, operate and maintain news media centers at corps level and above.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE (PAG): Specific guidance issued by OASD-PA or subordinate commands for major military exercises and contingencies. PAG supplements or clarifies published doctrine.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS TEAM (PAT): A public affairs unit whose mission is to provide command information support to divisions and separate brigades.

PUBLIC INFORMATION (PI): A function of command, PI is the means used by the commander to provide news and information to the various external publics through U.S. and other civilian news media.

QUERY: A formal request by a member of the public or a media representative for information.

SAPA: Office symbol for Secretary of the Army for Public Affairs, sometimes used interchangeably with OCPA.

SAPP: Security, accuracy, policy, and propriety are the principles applied by Army PAOs when they make internal and external releases. (By Army as well as by DOD regulations, public affairs products must not violate OPSEC nor offend the sensibilities of the intended audience. They must be accurate and truthful; they must be handled in accordance with policies (e.g., notification of next of kin).

UPAR: Unit Public Affairs Representative. An individual at battalion or brigade level with the additional duty as public affairs representative. Usually someone out of the S-1 shop.

APPENDIX H

CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY GUIDANCE

Message, SAPA-ZA, 271300Z May 92, SUBJECT: Principles Governing Future Arrangements For News Coverage of the U.S. Military in Combat.

1. The DOD combat coverage principles delineated below have my unqualified endorsement. They are a product of our experience with the media during and after Operations DESERT SHIELD/STORM. They emanate from the constitutional imperatives about the free press in an open society and the realities of the electronic age. We in our Total Army are sworn to defend the former and can stand up exceedingly well under the scrutiny that comes with the latter.

2. Army Public Affairs is working hard on doctrinal, structural, training, and equipment modernization initiatives that will fundamentally improve our Army's collective ability to support these principles. Each of these efforts has my unequivocal support. Meanwhile, I expect all to do the best we possibly can do with the people and equipment on hand.

3. The DOD combat coverage principles are:

A. Open and independent reporting will be the principal means of coverage of U.S. Military operations.

B. Pools are not to serve as the standard means of covering U.S. Military operations. Pools may sometimes provide the only feasible means of early access to a military operation. Pools should be as large as possible and disbanded at the earliest opportunity -- within 24 to 36 hours when possible. The arrival of early access pools will not cancel the principle of independent coverage for journalists already in the area.

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

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

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

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

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

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

I. These principles will apply as well to the operations of the standing DOD National Media Pool System.

4. Our challenge, then, is to support these principles and, concurrently, to ensure soldier safety and mission on the battlefield. I know we can do this well and do it right.

5. Expiration date cannot be predetermined.

General Gordon R. Sullivan
27 May 1992

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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