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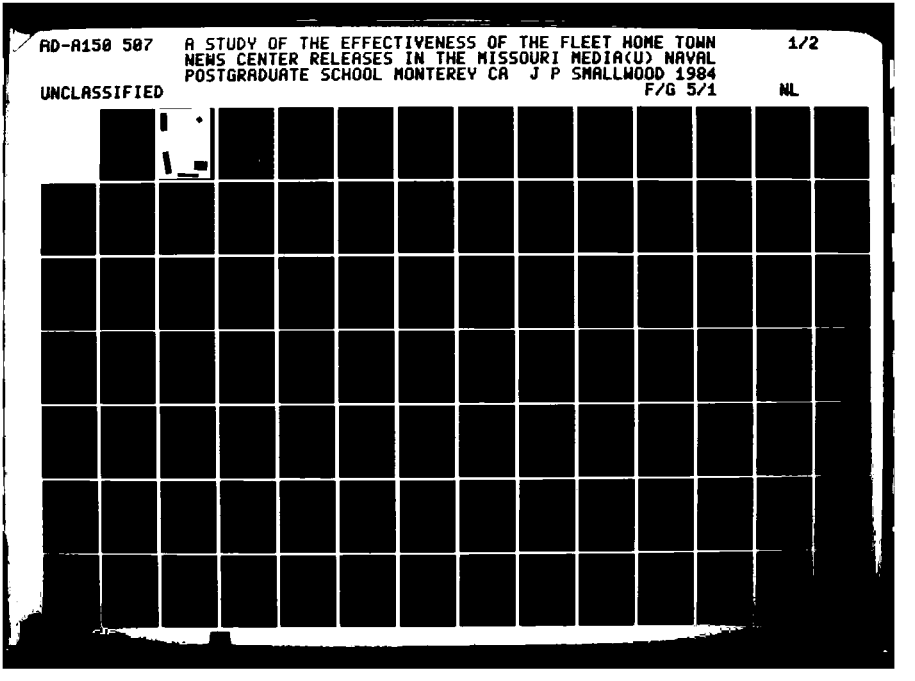

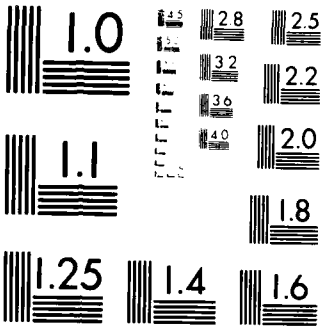

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"A Study of the Effectiveness of the *Fleet Home Town News Center Releases* in the Missouri Media."

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Graduate School,

University of Missouri

Graduate School, Columbia, MO
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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree,

Master of Arts

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by

Jeffrey P. Smallwood

1984

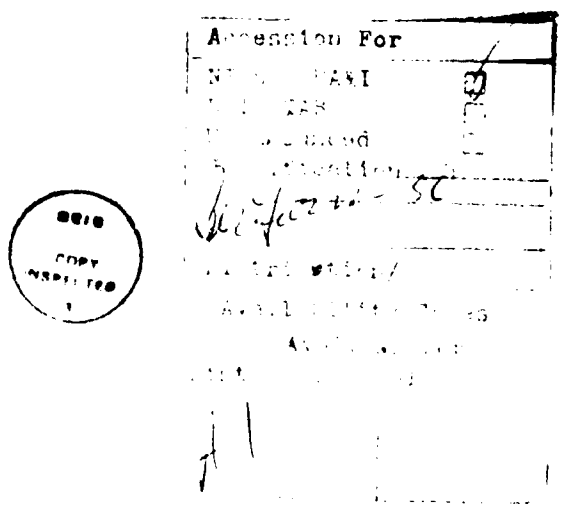
Dr. Donald J. Brenner, Thesis Supervisor

December 1984

This document has been approved for public release and sale; its distribution is unlimited.

This is dedicated to the memory of

Paul Lewis Smallwood



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem

Each military service has a public affairs operation whose mission is to "conduct programs designed to keep the public informed, within the limitations of accuracy, propriety and policy, on the actions of DoD [Department of Defense] and the Armed Forces."[1] Part of the operation is performed by the two military home town news centers. The Army and Air Force now have a joint center in San Antonio Texas. The Fleet Home Town News Center serves the sea services (Navy, Marine Corps and the Coast Guard) and is located in Norfolk, Virginia.

The mission of these centers is to prepare releases for home town civilian media on individuals in the military services. An instruction prepared by the Navy's Office of Information says: "The mission of the Fleet Home Town News Center is to evaluate, edit and reproduce home town news stories submitted by the three sea services and to disseminate these stories to those regional news media which [sic] have requested them in response to their readers' interests."[2] The instruction also says that the Fleet Home Town News Center, hereafter referred to as the Center or the FHTNC, "reduces the cost to the sea services of processing

and distributing such news material on an individual basis and provides equitable service to all submitting Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard commands, as well as to the various home town news media."[3]

However, there has not been a close examination of the use to which these releases are put by the civilian media that receive them. The military home town news centers can be well organized, with smooth operations that generate great numbers of releases. But if the releases are not effective, that is, if they are not used by the civilian media, then all the effort is for naught.

This study will examine the way some civilian media use the releases. It will look at who uses the releases; whether a particular type of release is used more than another; how much editing is required; and whether the civilian journalists consider accuracy to be a problem with the releases. The study will also include some suggestions from the civilian media as to methods of improving the releases.

The study will be made available to the Center to allow its staff to see what areas of the home town news program already in effect enhance the effectiveness of the releases and what areas need evaluation to prepare a better public information product for the home town media.

B. The Conception of a Home Town News Release

Two young sailors who earlier in the day reported for duty aboard an aircraft carrier tied up at Pier 12 at the

Norfolk Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia, are led through the twisting, haze gray passageways, and up and down steep, shiny aluminum ladders as they start the process of checking into the new command. Both newcomers look around in wide-eyed wonder as they scrape their shins on "knee-knockers" and bump their heads on a variety of bulkhead projections. They are escorted by an "old salt" of a seaman who came aboard only six months before. He escorts the new "boots" from the Disbursing Office to Sick Bay. From there, the group proceeds to the Legal Office and then through the noisy, crowded messdecks to the office of the Master-at-Arms. The trio finally arrives at the ship's Public Affairs Office.

There, the chief journalist welcomes the new sailors aboard and gives them a quick briefing on the ship's newspaper, the radio and television stations and the other functions of the office. But before the chief signs the new arrivals' check-in sheets, allowing them to continue their merry journey through the labyrinth of the ship, he asks them if they are interested in the Fleet Home Town News program.

When both claim ignorance of the program, the chief tells them it is an opportunity for them to get their names in their home town newspapers.

One of the two new arrivals remembers he joined the Navy to escape what he believed to be the boredom and mediocrity of his home town and declines the chief's offer. But across the mind of his shipmate flashes the reactions

of his girlfriend, his high school buddies and his parents when they see his name in print. He eagerly assents and fills out the form handed to him by the chief. The Old Salt, who in the meantime has been passing the latest messdeck scuttlebutt to another journalist, collects his charges and heads them out the door toward the Chaplain's Office.

The chief takes the completed form and places it with the others that have been filled out earlier in the day. The forms will go out in the afternoon mail to the Fleet Home Town News Center, also located at the naval station. There, the forms will be generated into news releases and mailed to the media in the sailors' home town areas.

C. History of the Fleet Home Town News Center

Wartime has always seen a closer involvement between the civilian media and the government when it came to reporting military operations and the activities of military personnel. World War II saw great efforts on the part of the government to obtain positive coverage of the war effort.[4]

Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz established at his headquarters in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, a "Home Town Section." This section generated stories on men serving in the Navy in the Pacific and forwarded these stories to Washington for clearance and distribution to newspapers and radio stations back home.[5]

The number of these stories rose to approximately 5,000 a week. This volume prompted then-Secretary of the Navy

James V. Forrestal to approve the establishment of a separate processing center for these releases. The Fleet Home Town News Center began operations in April 1945 in Chicago.[6] The Center then moved to the Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Illinois, in September 1946. Since 1976, the Center has been located in Norfolk.

The Army followed the Navy's lead and established its center in 1951 at Kansas City, Missouri. The Air Force did the same in 1961 at Oklahoma City.[7] These services have combined their operations, and, as stated previously, now have a joint center at San Antonio.

D. Modern FHTNC Operations

The Fleet Home Town News Guide, which is prepared to help collateral duty public affairs officers and journalists conduct the program, states the FHTNC's mission is to "Collect, evaluate and edit newsworthy material about the accomplishments, assignments and recognition of individuals of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard all around the world."[8]

The public affairs officers and journalists from fleet units and shore-based commands from around the world forward a standardized form, the NAVSO 5724/1, which appears in Appendix A, to the Center for processing.

In the cases of units that are deployed from a home port, a "hold file" of all forms completed by the members of the unit has been forwarded to the Center. If the unit or

individuals in the unit have participated in a noteworthy event, the command will send a message or letter containing a master story for use with the hold file or a master story and a list of names pertinent to the story.

The Center's job is to standardize and centralize the processing of the releases derived from the 5724/1 forms.

The Center is directed by a Navy captain (0-6) who is assisted by a Marine captain (0-3). The Center is further staffed by a Coast Guard Officer, 10 enlisted Marines, eight enlisted sailors, one enlisted Coast Guardsman and 12 civilians.[9]

All personnel working as journalists in the military receive training in the profession. Most have attended courses at the Defense Information School at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, where they have received instruction in news and feature writing, editing, layout and design, photography and other elements of military public affairs.

Upon receipt of the 5724/1 forms, the appropriate release is prepared by checking how Part B of the form is completed. This could indicate the necessary release would deal with the service member's graduation from a school, receipt of a medal or award, reenlistment, etc., or the previously cited master story.

The appropriate release is selected from a file of stock stories maintained in a computer. The stock stories have been written in a format and style that is acceptable

to most civilian media. The military journalists then edit the releases to ensure the correct data from the forms have been entered and no style errors have been committed. If no computer stock story is appropriate, an editorial writer will prepare a release.[10] The editorial writer also edits master stories.

The releases are a maximum of 21 lines because the mechanical operation, which prints the releases from the computer, then separates, folds and staples them for mailing, restricts the releases to one page in length.[11] Examples of these releases are contained in Appendix B.

The Center then mails the releases to civilian media throughout the United States, American Samoa, Guam and the Virgin Islands.[12]

Originally, the Center "shotgunned" its releases to every newspaper in the country. Addresses were determined by reviewing Ayer's Newspaper and Magazine Directory.[13] However, postal regulations now prohibit the centers from mailing releases to those media that do not request them.[14] Therefore, mailing lists are maintained. The Center surveys the media on the lists on a yearly basis to determine if those media still desire to receive the releases. If no response is received from a particular medium after 30 days, a reminder letter is mailed out. If no response is received from this effort, that medium is deleted from the mailing list. Media not on the Center's list are surveyed to

determine if they desire the releases. The names and addresses are determined again by Ayers and the Working Press of the Nation, The Broadcasting Yearbook, and state press association directories. Media that reply with a signed response are added to the mailing list. Those that do not reply are not added, but are surveyed the following year.

E. Research Focus

The FHTNC operation has been generating releases on individuals in the sea services for almost 40 years. The Center distributed more than 60 million releases during its first 25 years.[15] Regrettably, the total number of releases distributed is not known, but the Center's average has been about 2 million a year.[16]

Records can be maintained on the number of forms received and the number of releases mailed out, but there has not been a method to explore the effectiveness of the FHTNC program. Effectiveness in this case is defined by the extent of usage. A clipping service responsible for a review of every civilian medium that uses the releases would be cost prohibitive. A recent review by the Center indicated that 7,005 newspapers, 2,048 radio and television stations and 939 college publications receive these releases.[17] Relying on family members of those service members about whom releases appear in print or are broadcast would be an impractical if not impossible method of feedback.

Therefore, a research design was developed to explore the effectiveness of the program. The bulk of the research is based on survey responses provided by the 260 Missouri newspapers and radio stations that receive the releases.

To determine the effectiveness of the program, the research attempts to establish the following information:

1. What percentages of the releases are used and how many are "high users;"
2. How much of the material in the releases is used in the form in which it arrives and how much of it is considered accurate by the media;
3. Is there any particular type(s) of release that is used more than others;
4. What are the reasons for editing the releases;
5. What do the media perceive the purpose(s) of the program to be;
6. Is there any reader/listener reaction;
7. Is there any way the media can suggest to improve the program.

The intention of the research is not limited to determining frequencies of responses. Additional analysis is conducted to examine the relationships between certain variables in the survey. This analysis will consist of examining cross tabulations between such variables as the type of media that uses the releases and the extent of use; the extent of rewriting or editing of the releases and the extent of use; the extent of accuracy checking and the extent of rewriting or editing; and the extent of use and any previous military experience on the part of the respondent.

The importance of this research is that it partially fills a void that has existed since the inception of the home town news program. The author has been involved in the program during eight years of service in the Navy and will continue to work with the program for the remainder of his naval career. A better knowledge of the program's effectiveness will enhance his further involvement in the program.

Endnotes

[1]Public Affairs Handbook, Defense Information School, Ft. Benjamin Harrison, Ind., June 1979, p. 1-3.

[2]CHINFO Instruction 5724.1A, Fleet Home Town News Program, Department of the Navy, Office of Information, Washington, D.C., June 13, 1977, p. 1.

[3]Ibid., p. 1.

[4]Phillip Knightley, The First Casualty (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), pp. 275-276.

[5]Donald S. Wakefield, A Study of Media Use of Air Force Home Town News Releases (University of Missouri, 1972), p. 9.

[6]Ibid., p. 9.

[7]Ibid., pp. 10-14.

[8]Fleet Home Town News Guide (No publication date available on pamphlet), p. 2.

[9]Telephone conversation with JOCS Wayne Baker, June 14, 1984.

[10]Telephone conversation with Capt. Dean Chamberlain, USMC, June 26, 1984.

[11]Ibid.

[12]CHINFOINST 5724.1A, p. 2.

[13]Telephone conversation with JOCM Oliver W. Lund, USN (Ret.), July 17, 1984.

[14]Telephone conversation with Ms. Linda Leist, June 13, 1984.

[15]Wakefield, pp. 9-10.

[16]Telephone conversation with LCDR Eric Berryman, USN, July 17, 1984.

[17]Previously cited telephone conversation with Baker.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Introduction

There has been an extensive amount of writing on the use of press releases and the public affairs programs that generate those releases. There have also been a number of studies done concerning military public affairs activities. Unfortunately, most of this research was conducted in the period beginning after World War II and continuing into the 1950s. The number of studies of this sort declined to a minimum during the 1960s and 1970s. But the number of studies done on the military home town news programs was even more limited, and most were examinations of the operations of the home town news centers themselves. This chapter will examine some of the research in these three areas.

B. News Releases

Robert Sobel wrote that the news release was given birth by the Committee for Public Information during World War I.[18]

The Committee's News Division was directed by J.W. McConaughey, who was a former editorial writer for Munsey's Magazine. The division was staffed by experienced

editors and writers. The division's responsibility was to churn out items of information about the war effort that would keep the newspapers abreast of what was happening.

> It was a simple matter for a reporter to rewrite a CPI release, hand it in, see it published and then go on to do other things. By the war's end, the "press release," unknown before 1917, had become institutionalized. The practice was continued by government in the 1920s and after, and picked up by businesses, many of which hired public relations firms....[19]

Samuel L. Becker discussed the need that exists for news releases, such as when the events to be reported are unobservable, or are too complex for the reporter to understand fully. However, he cautioned his readers about relying to a great extent on releases from military or government leaders -- "Obviously, these are not unbiased sources."[20]

Evan Hill and John J. Breen referred to press releases as "handouts" and described the vast amount of releases that flood some newspapers; they wrote that many are tossed into the waste basket unopened.[21] Hal Lister, in his media communications handbook, substantiates this fact by citing Joseph Pulitzer Jr., who said only about five percent of the material that comes to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch ever gets into print.[22]

Hill and Breen say that once a decision has been made to use a release, the editors then

> assign reporters to rewrite the news releases, tightening them, checking names in the directories, correcting errors, occasionally telephoning to confirm or expand some points and almost always writing a new lead.[23]

John Hohenberg says this rewriting is done "to blunt the factor of self-interest that is the essence of most handouts."[24] He goes on to say: "There is no reason for a news organization to carry a public relations message, particularly when advertising space is easily available."[25]

The Missouri Group says some newspapers insist every press release be rewritten to avoid the embarrassment of running the same story as a competitor; for some newspapers, rewriting is a matter of "integrity and professionalism."[26]

But Harold Y. Jones, who served as the news director of the EXPO '74 World's Fair at Spokane, Washington, found that not all press releases are rewritten.

> I found that a surprising number of the smaller daily and weekly newspapers (most of the major metropolitan papers are a different story altogether) are quite willing to dispense with editors and reporters whenever they can, and turn instead to innocuous feature stories and "canned" copy -- free, if possible -- in order to fill up the empty spaces between the advertisements.[27]

Jones found that a thousand-word release was used by more than 50 newspapers exactly as it was written by an EXPO public relations staff member.[28]

C. Military Public Affairs Programs

Kay K. Cowan looked at the Army's efforts in the public affairs field by examining the operations of the Fifth Army's Public Information Division in Chicago.[29] Cowan also surveyed 55 editors throughout the United States who had contact with the operations of the Army's Public Information Field Branch. The editors provided Cowan with comments on the content of the Army's public information releases and their timeliness. From their comments, Cowan concluded the information division proved to be a highly successful method for telling the public about the Army.

Harry C. Beaumont also looked at the relations between the Army and the Press in the Fifth Army's geographic area (a 12-state area of the Midwest).[30] Beaumont surveyed 78 dailies, 92 weeklies and 30 press service bureaus and found that stories about local personnel in the Army were used the most. The surveyed media indicated their major concerns were that the stories they were receiving were too long, contained errors and were not always timely.

In another study, Richard H. Hansen traced the history of U.S. Army public relations and the attempts to improve the Army's dealings with the press.[31] Hansen sent letters to 241 major news outlets in the six Army areas, requesting

comments and criticisms concerning the material received from Army information officers. Hansen found that the newspapermen wanted the information officers to be more aware of the difference between the material used by daily newspapers and the material used by weeklies. The editors also stressed the need for short, well-written releases that were accurate and timely.

> By far the greatest number of these complaints were aimed at the lack of local angle in most Army releases. Editors were desirous of receiving home town releases about local men and women in the service and stated that more of these releases should be sent out by the Army.[32]

James H. O'Brien looked at the public relations efforts involved in re-establishing the National Guard after World War II.[33] This was viewed as a major public relations problem because Congress and the Army determined the post-war Guard was to be three times its pre-war strength and most people viewed the Guard as incapable of performing its mission. O'Brien said the Army realized that a massive public relations program was necessary because:

> The days of "It's none of the public's business" are gone. The Armed Forces realize that they belong to the people and must tell the people what they are doing and why.[34]

While not studying a military public relations program, Everett M. Brown did cite the military's efforts in his study of publicity releases in Missouri weeklies.[35] He said:

> The armed services have done much to personalize the vastness of their complex organization and keep a sense of home town feeling in their publicity.[36]

D. Recent American Attitudes Toward the Military

As O'Brien stated in his thesis, the attempt to re-establish the National Guard after World War II was viewed as a major public relations problem. By 1945, Americans were tired of war, olive drab and Navy blue. Everyone, especially the GIs who had served, wanted an immediate return to a peacetime, and preferably civilian, lifestyle.

This caused the military to reduce considerably its numbers of service members. The military did not cease to exist. But public knowledge about life in the military was no longer as extensive as before. In fact, Morris Janowitz wrote that by 1955 a survey of public attitudes toward the military service as a career concluded:

> The civilian public bases its attitude toward the military service more on reports from people who have been in the service than on any other source of information.[37]

But whatever the attitudes the American public had held toward the military during the 1940s and 1950s, a wave of hostility rose up during and following the Vietnam war. Frederic J. Brown wrote in 1973 that "public animosity exceeds that in the previous experience of any of those soldiers presently serving."[38]

He continued:

> In the view of critical observers, the Army [and this could probably be applied to other services] not only serves an increasingly questionable social purpose -- the use of force in defending the nation -- but also is dysfunctional in that it constitutes a non-productive, inefficient drain of resources which [sic] could be better used to meet pressing social needs.[39]

The draft came under increasing attack and was finally abandoned in 1973 in favor of an All-Volunteer Force (AVF). But the AVF also became a target in the years that followed the Vietnam war. Retired Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft wrote:

> Murmurings of discontent against the AVF began shortly after its initiation and swelled to a chorus by 1978 with stories...that enlistment quotas were not being met, quality was deteriorating and the make-up of the armed forces was becoming increasingly unrepresentative.[40]

Not until the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the takeover of the U.S. Embassy in Iran and the attack on the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan did Americans start to change their perceptions of the military. "Finally, there emerged a national resolve to correct the deficiencies in the U.S. military posture...."[41]

However, at this time, the military was still trying to recover from all the aches and pains inflicted during the post-Vietnam period. The biggest bruise was carried by the American service member. The stories about signs on Norfolk lawns during World War II saying, "Sailors and dogs -- Keep off the grass!" may have been apocryphal in nature, but the open hostility toward the service member during the late 1960s and early 1970s was not.

As a result, the military was suffering from a "hemorrhaging of talent." Retention of mid-grade petty officers and non-commissioned officers was poor because military pay scales had been allowed to lag. Many service members found they could get higher salaries in civilian jobs. And they found they had more respect once they were out of the military. Former Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird said:

> Maybe we have lost the respect that we should have for the military. I think that the lack of appreciation and respect do indeed have some effect on how the military view their salaries compared with those of civilians in similar jobs.[42]

During the most recent period of time, from the end of the Carter presidency into the Reagan presidency, the American public has been was exposed to a great deal of coverage of the plight of the service member. The newspaper and magazine articles and photofeatures on military life have been too numerous to count. The author provided assistance for two major television documentaries and a book on the military while serving at the Pentagon during 1980-1981. There were also many discussions about the military on news programs and talk shows.

The attitude toward the military became more favorable during the early 1980s. This attitude was marred only by the turn of events in Beirut, Lebanon, and the invasion of Grenada. The entire country was outraged by the many deaths in Beirut. But it was the media who were incensed by what they considered to be a news "blackout" during the Grenada invasion. Media across the country decried the actions of the Reagan Administration and the military commanders involved, but John Chancellor, an NBC commentator, told a House committee hearing that letters to the network on the government-press conflict had been running 10 to 1 in favor of the administration.[43]

1984 is an election year and the debates about massive defense spending and U.S. military involvement in "hot spots" around the world are continuing. Thus, at the time of this study, the American public seemed to be still looking

favorably on the military. But it remained to be seen for how long.

E. Home Town News Programs

As stated earlier, the Army decided to follow the Navy's lead by establishing its own home town news center. Robert J. Coakley conducted a descriptive study of the Army's center in which he outlined the reasons for the center.[44] He also reviewed the center's operations in light of its assigned function. As part of Coakley's research, he cited the fact that 12,648 letters were sent from the center to newspaper and radio stations across the country, requesting to know if the home town releases were desired. The returns amounted to 67.2 percent, with mostly positive responses to the releases.

Richard E. Haughton researched the idea that news about service members in their home town papers was important to the service members and their families.[45]

> By not letting the home town forget where he is and what he is doing while his military service is in progress, a newspaper is helping the service man maintain his spot in the community and at the same time is assisting the services to keep troop morale at a high level.[46]

Haughton did not use the military center releases, but generated his own while working on the Columbia Missourian. He initiated this effort by sending approximately 500

letters to parents of Boone County men in the service. The letters expressed Haughton's desire to write articles that would make the community aware of the contributions being made by the service members. Approximately 33 percent of the parents responded while 20 percent of the service members answered Haughton's letters. The thesis cited many favorable comments from the respondents about stories that appeared in the Missourian.

The Air Force home town news operation was examined in part by George L. Jones III.[47] The focus of his study was on the center's deployment of a small, mobile team to Vietnam with the mission of gathering material for home town release. However, there was no attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of the material once it was released. Another thesis about the Air Force center by Newel E. Sawyer dealt with the advisability of going to an automated system.[48]

There have not been as many studies conducted concerning Navy efforts in the area of home town news. Paul L. Stillwell, in his thesis on the public affairs program of USS New Jersey (BB-62) during the Vietnam war, did discuss the battleship public affairs officer's program to generate home town news releases.[49] But again, effectiveness was not examined.

As part of a research project, John Jenks did a study on FHTNC releases in selected newspapers.[50] In his study, Jenks received copies of stories from the Center and scanned

his selected papers for a two-month period to obtain a count of those releases actually used. He divided the papers into weeklies, dailies with a circulation under 25,000, and dailies with a circulation between 25,000 and 50,000. Stories were also categorized into groups according to importance or newsworthiness. Jenks found the usage percentages were generally low, though no reason was given for this situation. There was also no attempt to determine how the home town releases were used or whether they were edited or rewritten.

The research that most closely examines the effectiveness of home town releases is contained in a thesis by Donald S. Wakefield.[51] He discussed the home town program and centers of all the military services but he also surveyed 424 newspapers and 78 radio stations across the country about how the releases were used.

Wakefield's research looked at some of the same areas examined by this author. Wakefield was interested in determining if the size of the medium had anything to do with the number of releases that was used and how many were used; if the size of the medium had anything to do with how many of the releases were used "as is;" how many of the releases were checked for accuracy by the home town media; whether journalists thought the program "spreads the service story" or "tells what a service man or woman does;" and if there was a reader or listener reaction to the releases.

This study partially replicates Wakefield's research by examining, as stated in Chapter I, how many of the releases are being used; how many are being used without rewriting or editing; how much checking for accuracy is being done by the media; what function the releases perform according to the home town journalists; and if there is a reader/listener reaction. The major difference is that Wakefield's larger sample from across the United States allowed him to explore whether or not the size of the medium was a significant factor in the use of the releases. However, the value of this study is that 12 years later, it updates Wakefield's research by looking at some of the same issues, but during a period of markedly different social attitudes toward the military.

Of all the media Wakefield surveyed, he received responses from 56.3 percent of the newspapers and 55.0 percent of the radio stations. From these responses, Wakefield concluded several things about the usage of home town releases. For instance, he said that the smaller the newspaper, the higher the percentage of releases used; it was station format and not size or broadcast power that determined the usage of the releases; there was less rewriting than had been assumed, but rewriting did increase with the circulation size of the paper; and there was only a "slight" consensus of agreement that the releases "tell the service story" and "tell what a man does."[52]

Endnotes

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[39]Ibid.

[40]Brent Scowcroft, Introduction, Military Service in the United States (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1982), p. 2.

[41]Ibid.

[42]"Patriotism Is No Longer Enough," Time, June 29, 1980, p. 36.

[43]"Anybody Want To Go To Grenada?", Time, March 14, 1983, p. 73.

[44]Robert J. Coakley, "Army Home Town News Center" (Thesis, University of Missouri, 1953).

[45]Richard E. Haughton, "Newspapers' Treatment of News About Servicemen" (Thesis, University of Missouri, 1952).

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[48]Newel E. Sawyer, "Feasibility of Computerizing the Air Force HTNC" (Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1971).

[49]Paul L. Stillwell, "USS New Jersey Public Affairs/ Media Coverage During the Vietnam War" (Thesis, University of Missouri, 1978).

[50]John Jenks, Media Usage Survey (Wisconsin State University-Lacrosse, 1969).

[51]Donald S. Wakefield, "A Study of Media Use of Air Force Home Town News Releases" (Thesis, University of Missouri, 1972).

[52]Ibid., pp. 114-117.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. The Method

As stated earlier, the intent of the research was to examine the effectiveness (amount of usage) of the Fleet Home Town News Center releases. Of the various available research methods, it was decided a survey was the best suited for an exploration of this type because it would enable the researcher to look at the attitudes and beliefs of those dealing with the releases in a large number of media. The advantage of the survey was that use of a representative sample would allow statements to be made about a much larger population -- all the civilian media that receive the releases.

The initial step involved deciding what were the important questions about how the media viewed and used the releases. Most of the questions focused on what the home town media used and did not use; what they would like to have; how the releases were edited; and how the home town media viewed the home town news program. These questions were then discussed with Captain Clark M. Gammell, USN, director of the Center, as to their relevance to any research on the effectiveness of the releases.

However, having once determined the nature of the questions, a closer examination showed that these questions would have provided good responses in a face-to-face interview, but would not have provided many responses that could have been tabulated. An example question is:

6. To what extent do you rewrite/edit Navy press releases to suit your needs?

It was decided this question was too open-ended and would result in a plethora of responses too cumbersome to use.

The remainder of these questions appears in Appendix C.

A subsequent draft produced a questionnaire, the bulk of which required responses that could be tallied by ranking them on a five-point scale. The question was changed to read:

6. How often do you have to rewrite Navy Center releases? (Circle one)

Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

An accompanying question was devised because it was decided additional information was required as to the extent and reason for editing the releases. The accompanying question read as follows:

7. If rewrite is necessary, what is the specific reason? (Circle one)

A. Releases do not conform to local style.
B. Excessive use of military jargon.
C. Inaccuracies concerning personal details.
D. Releases are poorly written.
E. Other (explain) _____
_____

These two questions satisfied the requirement for Question 6 in the original draft. Every numbered question included specific instructions as to how to indicate answers (e.g., "Circle one;" "Write 'most' in one slot; 'least' in another;" "Mark 'X'"). The remaining questions in the second draft appear in Appendix D.

The third draft further refined these questions and incorporated a block of questions to provide identifying information about the respondents. One question was designed to determine if a respondent was a veteran because it was believed this might have an effect on usage. Another question requested the respondent to indicate his or her position with the media and another asked if the respondent's identity could be cited in the research. The author was also advised to refer to the releases as "Navy Center" releases because it was felt "Fleet Home Town News Center" releases in every question would finally prove tiresome to an already harried editor/news director, and "FHTNC" would be too confusing. No attempt was made to slight the other sea services by referring only to the Navy. This series of questions appears in Appendix E.

The survey questions and cover letter that was to accompany them were re-evaluated and edited and a fourth draft was then pretested. Copies were given to five University of Missouri journalism students who were enrolled

in a research course dealing extensively with sampling and surveys. One of the students is an officer in the reserves and familiar with the releases while another had served as a civilian public affairs officer for the Army and had worked with the program. Five other copies were given to University journalism instructors. Four of the five have had experience in newsrooms and three of them were familiar with releases of this type.

Those who participated in the pretest were asked to review the survey for typographic and spelling errors, as well as for conceptual errors. They were also asked to role-play the part of respondents to provide an indication of the range of actual responses that would be received. This pretest proved helpful in fine-tuning the final survey. For example, it established that Question 7 could obtain more than one possible answer. The final version of this question reads:

7. If rewrite is necessary, why? (Mark "X" -- more than one answer is possible in this case)

_____ A. Releases do not conform to local style.
_____ B. Excessive use of military jargon.
_____ C. Inaccuracies concerning personal details.
_____ D. Releases are poorly written.
_____ E. Other (Explain briefly) _____
_____
_____

The pretest also added another open-ended question requesting any pertinent remarks. The pretest also served to

inspire a more critical look at possible word changes for the sake of clarity. The pretested questions appear in Appendix F.

The survey had purposefully been tailored to apply to both print and broadcast media. The major flaw in the pretest, which was not realized until well into the survey return period, was that no one with a broadcasting background was consulted during the pretest. This was an oversight, but the inclusion of a broadcaster in this pretest procedure might have pointed out significant weaknesses that, once corrected, could have ensured a greater return of surveys from radio stations.

The final version of the survey and cover letter were printed May 11, 1984. The surveys were stuffed, along with sequentially numbered, self-addressed, stamped envelopes, and were mailed May 17. This final version appears in Appendix G.

B. The Sample

Once the basic topic was determined, the sample was the next factor to be established in the research planning. It was decided to limit the sample to Missouri media for two reasons. First was the fact that limiting the scope by geographical bounds would add to the manageability of the research data. Second was that sampling the media within the same state would also help keep costs within the bounds of the funds available for research.

It was decided the fact that Missouri is landlocked within the middle of the continental United States, and remote from any area where media coverage of Navy activity and personnel is commonplace could have two opposite effects. The first is that the releases, and therefore the research, could be considered more novel than routine by the sampled media. The second is that in an area that does not have an economy based on naval or maritime activity, the media could consider the releases irrelevant to the majority of the civilian audience. It is unknown whether or to what extent these possible effects exist. But it is recognized that they could be limitations of the study.

Since the effectiveness of the releases was to be the center of the research's focus, the sample was further defined by those media that receive the releases. The identities of these media were established by obtaining a printout from the Center of all the Missouri media that receive the FHTNC releases. The list contained the names and addresses of 208 newspapers and 52 radio stations. An example of a page from this printout appears in Appendix H.

Further research in Editor and Publisher and Ayer's Newspaper and Magazine Directory, plus a conversation with Mr. Doug Crews of the Missouri Press Association, established which newspapers were dailies and which were weeklies. An additional breakdown of the sample into categories by circulation and Area of Dominant Influence

(ADI) numbers was considered but rejected when it was determined the categories would be too small for meaningful analysis.

C. The Returns

Experts in mail questionnaires predict a return rate of 10 to 50 percent. After being mailed, the surveys started to return very quickly. The first 36, or 13.8 percent, arrived on May 19, 1984, two days after being mailed. By May 26, 129, or 49.6 percent had arrived. The return rate then slowed down, with only 140, or 53.9 percent, arriving by June 9. This day was considered the final day to collect the returns because of time constraints. However, the final number and significant percent of returns already received made the decision to conclude the receipt process and initiate the data analysis easier.

For the most part, the survey provided usable responses. There were a few instances in which some questions were not answered. Some questions, regrettably, were not answered in accordance with the accompanying instructions and were therefore invalidated. Only five of the returned surveys were considered totally invalid. Two respondents said their media never received FHTNC releases. This is possible if service members decline to have releases forwarded to their home town media. Two respondents said the media in question never used any military releases. The

fifth was returned, stating the medium in question was no longer in operation.

This culling process established a total number of 135, or 51.9 percent, of the possible returns that could be used for data analysis.

D. The Tabulations

A coding sheet was generated to facilitate the transformation of survey responses into numbers that could be tabulated by a computer. Every survey was assigned a unique number and every answer to a variable was assigned a number value. The numbers were then transferred to a computer where all frequencies of answers were processed.

It was then decided certain variables were to be cross-tabulated to examine what relationships, if any, existed between certain variables.

The first variable considered for cross-tabulation dealt with the percentage of usage of FHTNC releases each respondent claimed. The mean percentage of use was 81.13. Therefore, all respondents who indicated they used more than 81 percent of the releases were considered "high users." Those indicating 81 percent or less were considered "low users." These user scores were then cross-tabulated with the responses to whether or not the releases were received in a timely fashion; to the type of media (daily, weekly or radio); and to whether or not the respondent was a veteran.

Another variable dealt with the extent to which a release is rewritten. Those who indicated they rewrote the releases "Always" or "Usually" were considered "high rewriters." Those who indicated "Seldom" or "Never" were low rewriters." These figures were then cross-tabulated with the responses to the questions about why the releases were rewritten; whether the rewriters checked the releases for accuracy; whether the rewriter had any special preference for the format of the releases; the type of media; and whether or not the respondent was a veteran.

In light of the statement by the Fleet Home Town News Guide (p.2) that the program is to recognize the service member instead of promoting the service, the responses to the statements about the purposes of the releases were also cross-tabulated.

Those cross-tabulations that resulted in significant test scores with .05 probability or less are considered to have generated significant results and are discussed as such.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

A. Organization

This chapter will focus on the statistical data derived from the returned questionnaires in the survey of media users of the Center releases. Frequencies of responses will be reported as well as cross-tabulations between certain variables. As stated previously, cross-tabulations that generated results with .05 or less probability will be discussed at length; those that did not will be merely noted as such.

The variables will be organized according to the aims of the research outlined in the introductory chapter. Each variable will be discussed, but not necessarily in the order in which it appeared in the survey.

Data tables and discussion of the data will reflect for the most part the combined responses of both newspapers and radio stations. It will be indicated where differences in responses between the media are considered relevant.

As stated previously, some respondents did not provide answers to some questions. Some answers were invalidated because they were not provided in accordance with the instructions. The notation "No Answer Provided" in the

tables refers to these. Some percentages do not total 100 because of rounding.

Responses to the open-ended questions on the survey, which requested comments on the Fleet Home Town News program, were not tabulated, but were taken into account in the conclusions. Responses deemed significant by the author appear in Appendix I.

B. Demographics

The initial block of questions requested the respondent to indicate his or her name; the name of the medium, which would establish if the response was from a newspaper or radio station; the respondent's position and phone number, to aid the author in contacting the respondent if the need arose; whether or not the respondent was a veteran, and if so, what branch of service; and whether the respondent desired confidentiality. The data derived from the responses appear in Table 1.

Table 1

Type of Medium		
Daily newspaper	18	(13.3%)
Weekly newspaper	102	(75.6%)
Radio station	15	(11.1%)
	135	(100%)
Veteran		
Yes	41	(30.4%)
No	94	(69.6%)
	135	(100%)
Desire Confidentiality		
Yes	34	(25.2%)
No	101	(74.8%)
	135	(100%)

No tabulation was conducted concerning the respondents' positions with the medium because the number of varying responses received (i.e., "publisher," "co-publisher," "publisher/editor," "news editor," etc.) would have been too excessive for further stratification of a sample this size.

No tabulation was attempted for the branches of the service after determining the small number of respondents who were veterans. However, the veteran variable was subsequently cross-tabulated with two other variables.

The confidentiality variable was tabulated but provides no data significant to the study. The only time confidentiality comes into play is in identifying the source of responses to the open-ended questions.

C. Extent of Use of Home Town News Center Releases

Questions 1 through 3 attempted to establish to what extent the respondents used military home town news releases; how often they used FHTNC releases compared to those from the combined Army-Air Force Center; and about what percentage of FHTNC releases that were received were used. The first two questions and accompanying data appear in Tables 2 and 3.

Question 3 asked: "About what percentage of the Navy Center releases that you receive do you use?" The mean percentage from the responses was 81.13 and this was used as the dividing line between the "high users" and the "low users." The breakdown of this variable is in Table 4.

Table 2

Question 1: How often do you use releases about individuals in the military written by the home town news centers?

Always	68	(50.4%)
Usually	50	(37.0%)
Sometimes	9	(6.7%)
Seldom	4	(3.0%)
Never	0	(0.0%)
No Answer Provided	4	(3.0%)
	135	(100%)

Table 3

Question 2: How often do you use releases from the Navy Center compared to releases from the Army and Air Force Center?

Always	69	(51.1%)
Usually	47	(34.8%)
Sometimes	9	(6.7%)
Seldom	3	(2.2%)
Never	0	(0.0%)
No Answer Provided	7	(5.2%)
	135	(100%)

Table 4

High Users	99	(73.3%)
Low Users	24	(17.8%)
No Answer Provided	12	(8.9%)
	135	(100%)

These tables indicate that there is a tendency to high use of the releases. Military home town releases were used "Always" or "Usually" 87.4 percent of the time, compared to only 3 percent for "Seldom" or "Never."

When comparing the use of Navy Center releases to those of the Army and Air Force Center, the figures were again high, with 85.9 percent for "Always" and "Usually" and only 2.2 percent for "Seldom" and "Never."

Even considering the high value of the mean of the percentages for Question 3, the percentage of "high users" is great at 73.3 percent.

D. What Releases Are Used

Question 4 asked the respondents to indicate the type of FHTNC releases that was used the most; the type that was used the least; or whether all were used equally. The question read:

> 4. Please indicate the type of releases . . . that you use the most and the type that you use the least.
>
> A. Arrival at a new place of duty
> B. Promotion
> C. Receipt of a medal or award
> D. Completion of a school or training
> E. Re-enlistment
> F. All are used equally
> G. Other

Table 5 indicates how the respondents answered Question 4.

Table 5

Type of Story Used Most		
Receipt of a medal or award	11	(8.1%)
Completion of a school	3	(2.2%)
	14	(10.3%)
Type of Story Used Least		
Re-enlistment	10	(7.4%)
Completion of a school	2	(1.5%)
Promotion	2	(1.5%)
	14	(10.4%)
All Stories Used Equally	111	(82.2%)

The significance of this last table is that it indicates there is really no one type of story that is used more or less than any other story. Most respondents use all the stories the same. If there is a difference in use, it is probably because of the personal preference of those responsible for making the decision about what stories will be printed or broadcast. The lack of consensus concerning the use of one type of story is underscored by the fact that three people used "Completion of a school or training" the most while two other people used it the least.

E. Timeliness

The next question dealt with how timely were the releases that the respondents received. The question and data appear in Table 6.

Table 6

Question 5: Do you receive Navy Center releases in a timely fashion?		
Alw ys	13	(9.6%)
Usually	85	(63.0%)
Sometimes	26	(19.3%)
Seldom	3	(2.2%)
Never	0	(0.0%)
No Answer Provided	8	(5.9%)
	135	(100%)

This table gives an indication of a possible weakness in the home town news program. Respondents indicate they receive the releases "Always" or "Usually" in a timely fashion only 72.6 percent of the time. But the program is actually a chain of events and the Center is only a link in the chain. The weakness could be because of the weakness of one of the other links, such as the efficiency of the public affairs office that sent the original 5724/1 form, or the mail flow between that public affairs office and the Center, and the Center and the home town media. Regrettably, these are weaknesses the Center cannot rectify.

F. Rewriting the Releases

Questions 6 and 7 dealt with the rewriting or editing of the releases. Tables 7 and 8 provide the questions and accompanying data.

Table 7

Question 6: How often do you have to rewrite Navy Center releases?		
Always	10	(7.4%)
Usually	17	(12.6%)
Sometimes	33	(24.4%)
Seldom	61	(45.2%)
Never	11	(8.1%)
No Answer Provided	3	(2.2%)
	135	(100%)

Table 8

Question 7: If rewrite is necessary, why?		
Releases do not conform to local style	58	(43.0%)
Excessive use of military jargon	26	(19.3%)
Inaccuracies concerning personal details	18	(13.3%)
Releases are poorly written	2	(1.5%)
Other	30	(22.2%)

For subsequent analysis, the data in the "Always" and "Usually" categories were collapsed into one, as were the data in the "Seldom" and "Never" categories. This established categories of "high rewriters" and "low rewriters." These new categories show that the "high rewriters" were only 20 percent of the total sample while the "low rewriters" were more than 53 percent of the sample.

Question 7 probed possible reasons for rewriting the releases. The question allowed more than one answer. Considering this, and the fact that not all the respondents answered this question, the number of responses does not total 135.

Of all the choices provided in the survey, the most common reason for rewriting a release was that it did not conform to the local style. That is understandable when it is considered that even newspapers that follow the guidelines of the Associated Press Stylebook have their own style for matters of local import.

The next most common reason was "Other." A review of the brief explanations that accompanied this choice showed that most of these answers dealt with condensing the releases for space or time constraints, combining releases on several individuals, adding information on other relatives residing in the area of the medium in question, or changing names and addresses because of divorce. Only one respondent indicated having a policy of rewriting all releases.

"Excessive use of military jargon" was the third most-chosen reason. This is a problem common to most professions, the only cure for which is closer attention to detail.

The choice pertaining to inaccuracies in personal details was the next most-chosen response. Regrettably, there was no way to determine what these inaccuracies are. Speculation and past experience lead the author to believe that most inaccuracies are in the areas of new addresses and misspellings of names.

It is significant and a testimony to the military's journalism training that only two respondents considered the releases to be poorly written.

G. Checking for Accuracy and Clarifying

Questions 8 and 9 dealt with the procedures for checking a release for accuracy and clarifying an unclear item with the Navy. The questions and tabulations appear in Tables 9 and 10.

Table 9

Question 8: How often do you have to check a Navy Center release for accuracy (with a city directory, phone book, phone call, etc.)?		
Always	1	(0.7%)
Usually	3	(2.2%)
Sometimes	24	(17.8%)
Seldom	75	(55.6%)
Never	30	(22.2%)
No Answer Provided	2	(1.5%)
	135	(100%)

Table 10

Question 9: How often do you have to call the Navy to clarify a release?		
Always	0	(0.0%)
Usually	0	(0.0%)
Sometimes	3	(2.2%)
Seldom	35	(25.9%)
Never	95	(70.4%)
No Answer Provided	2	(1.5%)
	135	(100%)

These tables show that very little checking for accuracy is performed by the media concerning these releases and even less effort is expended at clarifying any of the information. This is no doubt due in large part to time, staff size and

financial constraints on the news operation, but may also be some indication of confidence in the source of the releases.

H. The Media's Perceptions of the Purpose of the Releases

Question 10 and 11 were posed to determine what the media feel is the purpose of the home town news releases. These questions and the accompanying data appear in Tables 11 and 12.

Table 11

Question 10: A purpose of the Navy Center releases is to recognize and publicize the individual members of the Navy, Marine Corps or Cost Guard.		
Strongly agree	28	(20.7%)
Agree	77	(57.0%)
Neutral	24	(17.8%)
Disagree	2	(1.5%)
Strongly Disagree	1	(0.7%)
No Answer Provided	3	(2.2%)
	135	(100%)

Table 12

Question 11: A purpose of the Navy Center releases is to promote the Navy, Marine Corps or Cost Guard.		
Strongly Agree	20	(14.8%)
Agree	55	(40.7%)
Neutral	35	(25.9%)
Disagree	19	(14.1%)
Strongly Disagree	2	(1.5%)
No Answer Provided	4	(3.0%)
	135	(100%)

These two questions were incorporated into the study after the author read in the Fleet Home Town News Guide that the program "becomes a means of acknowledging that the individual, not the command, activity or service program is important. . . ."[53] This was contrary to the author's previous belief that the home town news program was designed to benefit both the individual and the command, activity or service. It then became intriguing to consider how the civilian media perceive the home town news program. If their perceptions were in line with what the Guide says the purpose is, then there should be a large number of respondents basically in agreement with Question 10 and basically not in agreement with Question 11. But this is not the case. While more than 77 percent are in agreement the program is to recognize the individual, more than half the respondents (55.5%) agree that the program also serves to promote the sea services.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to obtain a clear idea of how the media perceive the program based just on these questions. This is because of the way in which the questions were edited. In the original survey, one question presented the purpose of the program, based on the quote from the Guide. This question asked the respondent to choose if the program was to serve the individual, the service or both. A discussion with someone experienced in journalism research techniques persuaded the author to rewrite the question,

making two questions that were expected to provide a divergence in agreement as to what the purpose of the program is. This two-question approach was expected to give a better indication of the civilian media's perception of the program's purpose.

Then, a discussion with one individual who pretested the survey raised the issue of the respondent who perceived the program as being a benefit to both the individual and the service. Therefore, "The purpose" was changed to "A purpose."

The end result of this is that by looking at just frequencies of responses to these questions, it is possible to say that more than three-fourths of the respondents feel the program is to recognize the individual, but more than one-half feel the program promotes the service. It is now believed that more significant data might have been provided if the respondent had been forced to choose one purpose or the other but not both.

It is also interesting to see that sizable percentages (17.8% for Question 10 and 25.9% for Question 11) had no position as to the purpose of the program.

I. The Reader/Listener Reaction

Questions 12 and 13 dealt with the possibility of the media's receiving comments from their audiences about the releases. The questions and accompanying data appear in Tables 13 and 14.

Table 13

Question 12: How often do you receive comments (via telephone, letter or face-to-face conversation) concerning the Navy Center releases you use?		
Always	0	(0.0%)
Usually	5	(3.7%)
Sometimes	42	(31.1%)
Seldom	65	(48.1%)
Never	21	(15.6%)
No Answer Provided	2	(1.5%)
	135	(100%)

Table 14

Question 13: What is the nature of the comments?		
Generally Positive	68	(50.4%)
Generally Negative	1	(0.7%)
Other	23	(17.0%)
No Answer Provided	43	(31.9%)
	135	(100%)

The information in Table 13 is interesting because the author always assumed there was a greater level of audience feedback concerning these releases than is evidenced here. A "Seldom" or "Never" combined percentage of 63.7 percent indicates how little feedback there is.

However, the information in the second table showing that more than 50 percent of the comments were of a generally positive nature, combined with the 0.7 percent of generally negative comments, indicates that those people who do make the effort to provide feedback to their media seem to approve of the releases. A review of the "Other" comments showed that most dealt with parents or other relatives who wanted to

know from where the release originated; if the medium in question had received a release on the reader's service member acquaintance (after having seen one about another service member); or when a release would be published (probably after having been informed by the service member that one was forthcoming). One respondent commented:

> We seldom get any feedback on the releases from any of the services. That leads me to believe they have a good record for accuracy. People generally let you know when something is wrong.

J. Media Product Preference

Question 14 was concerned with determining if the media were satisfied with the product they were already receiving or if they preferred a different product. The question and accompanying data appear in Table 15.

Table 15

Question 14: Which of the following would you prefer?		
Navy Center releases as now prepared	100	(74.1%)
Fact packages to be prepared as a story	9	(6.7%)
Expanded releases	7	(5.2%)
Other	4	(3.0%)
No Answer Provided	15	(11.1%)
	135	(100%)

This table indicates that the vast majority of the respondents (74.1%) is satisfied with the type of release that is now being prepared and that only 14.9 percent would prefer a different type of product. The question made no provision for elaborating on the fact packages or expanded releases choices. It is assumed that the desire for these different types of products would be due to a difference in editorial taste and sense of news value.

A review of the explanations that accompanied the "Other" choice indicates that one respondent wanted "less emphasis on the 'Navy PR,'" while another wanted "more journalistic style, less military style." The other two explanations were based on release length. One wanted "shorter versions" while the other desired "more frequent in-depth stories." Once again, these last two comments are probably the result of differences in editorial taste and sense of news value.

K. Cross-tabulation of Question 1 and Question 3

This cross-tabulation looked at the relationship between the use of military home town news releases in general and the "high use/low use" of the FHTNC releases. The chi-square value for this cross-tabulation yielded a probability of 0.0000. The data are depicted in Table 16.

Table 16

	Seldom	Sometimes	Usually	Always
High users	0.0%	0.0%	81.8%	95.2%
Low users	100.0%	100.0%	18.2%	4.8%

This table indicates that of those respondents who claimed they used military home town news releases "Always," 95.2 percent were "high users" of FHTNC releases, while only 4.8 percent were "low users." Of those who stated they used the military releases "Usually," 81,8 percent were "high users" of FHTNC releases, while only 18.2 percent were "low users." The significant difference is that, of those who reported using military home town news releases only "Sometimes" or "Seldom," all were "low users" of the FHTNC releases. This indicates rather conclusively that the "high users" of military home town news releases are also the "high users" of FHTNC releases.

L. Cross-tabulation of Type of Media and Question 3

This cross-tabulation examined the relationship between the type of media and the "high user/low user" of FHTNC releases. The chi-square value of this cross-tabulation yielded a probability of 0.0000. The cross-tabulation is depicted in Table 17.

Table 17

	Daily	Weekly	Radio
High users	94.4%	84.6%	35.7%
Low users	5.6%	15.4%	64.3%

In this table, daily newspapers had the highest percentage (94.4%) of "high users" of FHTNC releases. Only 4.2% of the dailies surveyed were "low users." Of the weekly newspapers, 84.6% were "high users" and only 15.4% were "low users." The significant difference in this table is between radio and newspapers. Radio had a much larger percentage of "low users" (64.3%) than "high users" (35.7%).

This information is contrary to the author's previous belief that the highest users were weekly newspapers. It was believed weeklies were higher users than dailies because of their tendency to smaller staffs, little or no use of wire copy and a strong emphasis on local news and coverage of those people native to the newspaper's circulation area.

The tendency for radio stations to be "low users" is probably attributable to the fact that a separate FHTNC release is not prepared in broadcast style for radio stations. This then forces the station staff to rewrite the releases, which might be more effort than the station staff considers to be worthwhile. Another probable reason is that radio stations use comparatively less news copy.

M. Cross-tabulation of Question 6 and Question 3

This cross-tabulation looked at the relationship between "high rewriters/low rewriters" and "high users/low users" of FHTNC releases. The chi-square value for this cross-tabulation yielded a probability of 0.0001. The data are depicted in Table 18.

Table 18

	Low Rewriters	"Sometimes" Rewriters	High Rewriters
High users	89.2%	87.1%	50.0%
Low users	10.8%	12.9%	50.0%

This table shows that of the "high rewriters," there was an even split (50.0%) between "high users" and "low users." However, there is a significant difference among the "low rewriters" in that 89.2 percent are "high users" and only 10.8 percent are "low users." This indicates that those who tend to do more rewriting of the releases are not the "high users" and conversely, the "high users" do not tend to be "high rewriters." This is an indication that those media that use the FHTNC releases to a high degree are satisfied with the product in its original form, but another factor may be that high use entails more rewriting than the newspaper is willing or able to do.

N. Cross-tabulation of Question 5 and Question 3; and Previous Military Service and Question 3

The first cross-tabulation looked at a possible relationship between the timely arrival of the FHTNC releases and the "high user/low user." The second examined a possible relationship between the respondents' status as veterans and the "high user/low user." The chi-square values for both of these tabulations yielded no significant differences between the variables in either case. This indicates that the respondents' opinion of whether the releases arrive in a timely fashion, and the respondents' previous military experience have no significant effect on the use of the releases.

O. Cross-tabulation of Question 7 and Question 6

This cross tabulation looked at a possible relationship between reasons for rewriting the releases and "high rewriters." The original computer run could not generate one table of cross-tabulations for these two variables because of the original method of coding the responses. However, this problem was solved by cross-tabulating the frequencies of the responses of the "high rewriters" and the mean of these frequencies. The cross tabulation's chi-square value, derived by calculator, had a probability of less than .025. The data from this cross-tabulation appear in Table 19.

Table 19

	Local Style	Jargon	Inaccuracy	Poorly Written	Other
High rewriters	50.0%	18.4%	5.2%	5.2%	21.0%

This table shows that the "high rewriters" felt the primary reason for rewriting the releases was that the releases do not conform to local style. This reason was chosen 50 percent of the time. This is a problem that would no doubt confound any source of press releases since local style is exactly what the words imply--the style that is unique to each medium, in addition to any industry-wide style, such as that outlined in the Associated Press Stylebook.

The next most-chosen reason (21.0%) by "high rewriters" for rewriting was "Other." As stated earlier in this chapter, these "Other" reasons included condensing or combining articles or incorporating other facts the FHTNC might not have included in the releases but would be interesting to the home town audiences.

The next most-chosen reason of "high rewriters" (18.4%) was "excessive use of military jargon." The use of jargon is not unique to any one profession and every career has its own vocabulary that allows insiders to communicate with each other, often to the bafflement of those not privy to the meaning of certain words or expressions. However, the military seems to have more than its share of jargon that

creeps into every form of written communication. The reduction of jargon is a concern in the education of military journalists; the total elimination is probably impossible.

"Inaccuracies in personal details" and "Releases are poorly written" each earned only 5.2 percent of the responses from the "high rewriters." This indicates that even those rewriters who tend to rewrite to a greater degree than others do not think the content or writing style is a problem with the releases.

It is interesting to note that the results of cross-tabulating the reasons for rewriting with the "high rewriters" parallels the findings of the frequencies for the question of why the releases are rewritten. The frequencies indicated "local style" to be the primary reason, followed by "Other," "military jargon," "inaccuracies," and finally "poorly written."

P. Cross-tabulation of Question 8 and Question 6

This cross-tabulation was performed to see if a relationship existed between those respondents who check a FHTNC release with a phone book, etc., for accuracy and the "high rewriters/low rewriters." The cross-tabulation yielded no significant relationship between the variables.

Q. Cross-tabulation of Question 9 and Question 6

A cross-tabulation was considered to examine the relationship between those respondents who call the Navy to

clarify a release and the "high rewriter/low rewriter." However, this cross-tabulation was rejected after a review of the frequencies reported for Question 9 indicated the most often respondents called the Navy was "Sometimes," and only three respondents did this. A cross-tabulation between rewriters and those who call the Navy only "Seldom" or "Never" was considered not to be worthwhile.

R. Cross-tabulation of Question 14 and Question 6

This cross-tabulation examined the possibility of a relationship between the respondents' preferences in a FHTNC product and the "high rewriters/low rewriters." This cross-tabulation yielded no significant relationship.

S. Cross-tabulation Between Type of Media and Question 6

This cross-tabulation looked for a relationship between the type of media that uses the releases and the "high rewriter/low rewriter." The chi-square value for this cross-tabulation yielded a probability of 0.0001. The data appear in Table 20.

Table 20

	Daily	Weekly	Radio
High rewriters	27.8%	13.0%	64.3%
Low rewriters	33.3%	62.0%	28.6%

This table shows a difference of only 5.5 percent between the "high rewriters" and "low rewriters" at daily newspapers. However, significant differences exist in the other two media categories.

There are nearly five times as many "low rewriters" (62.0%) as "high rewriters" (13.0%) at weeklies. But there are more than twice as many "high rewriters" (64.3%) than "low rewriters" (28.6%) at radio stations.

As stated previously, this is probably because the nature of weekly newspaper operations precludes much rewriting of the releases, and the nature of the releases, written in a print media style, requires more rewriting to conform to the needs of the radio stations.

T. Cross-tabulation of Previous Military Service and Question 6

This cross tabulation looked for a relationship between the respondents' status as veterans and the "high rewriters/ low rewriters." The chi-square value for this cross-tabulation yielded a probability of 0.0312. The data appear in Table 21.

Table 21

	Veterans	Non-Veterans
High rewriters	17.5%	21.7%
Low rewriters	42.5%	59.8%

This table shows that of the rewriters who were veterans, the "low rewriters" outnumbered the "high rewriters" by almost two-and-a-half to one. Among the non-veterans, the "low rewriters" outnumbered the "high rewriters" again, but this time by almost three to one. The difference in ratios is found to be significant. Perhaps veterans are less inclined to recognize the jargon, or the need to eliminate it.

U. Cross-tabulation of Question 10 and Question 11

This cross-tabulation looked to see if a relationship existed between the agreement/disagreement that the releases serve to recognize the individual or promote the service. The original data table was based on the responses "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Neutral," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree." However, 17 out of 25 (68.0%) of the cells had an expected cell frequency of less than 5.0 percent. Therefore, the cells were collapsed ("Strongly Agree" and "Agree" became simply "Agree"; "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree" became simply "Disagree") into a nine-cell cross-tabulation. The chi-square for this cross-tabulation was computed by calculator.

Although the chi-square value was not significant, Table 22 is shown to explain this comparison.

Endnotes

[53] *Fleet Home Town News Guide*, p. 2.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

1) It is almost impossible to determine what percentages of the Fleet Home Town News releases are used. However, almost three-fourths (73.3%) of the users are "high users" (those respondents who use more than 81% of the releases they receive).

This indicates an encouraging level of use of the releases by the home town media, which therefore indicates an encouraging level of satisfaction with the releases.

The study also shows that those media that tend to be high users of military home town news releases in general are high users of FHTNC releases.

Daily newspapers appear to be the highest users of the FHTNC releases, contrary to the assumption that weekly newspapers would be in this category. Radio stations were the lowest users, with radio low users outnumbering high users by an almost two-to-one margin.

2) The topic of the release does not seem to affect the amount of usage. There is no one type of release that is used more than any other.

The releases, for the most part, are used equally.

3) There is a relatively low frequency of rewriting of the releases. Rewriting exists, but the majority of the

rewriters (53.3%) are "low rewriters."

However, as the tendency to use the releases decreases, the tendency to rewrite appears to increase.

But the primary reason for rewriting is that the releases do not conform to local style, a problem over which the Center has no control because local style is a factor unique to every medium. The next most-chosen reason for rewriting is that the media tend to combine, condense or add additional information unknown to the Center. These are also situations over which the Center can exercise no control and are more the results of the decision-making processes of each individual editor or news director, on a case-by-case basis.

There is little difference in numbers between those who rewrite to a high degree and those who rewrite to a low degree at daily newspapers. But at weekly newspapers, nearly five times as many rewrite to a low degree as those who rewrite to a high degree. The opposite is true, however, for radio stations, where those who rewrite to a high degree outnumber those who rewrite to a low degree by more than two to one.

4) The journalists' previous military experience appears to have no influence on their tendency to use the releases. However, previous military experience does appear to have some influence on how a journalist rewrites a release.

As suggested previously, this latter situation may be the result of the journalist/veteran's failure to recognize

jargon as a problem for the civilian reader because of the journalist's familiarity with the jargon.

5) Most of the media express no concern about the potential for inaccuracies or unclear points in the FHTNC releases.

This generalization is based on the frequencies of the responses to the questions about how often the respondents checked the accuracy of a release and called the Navy to clarify a release.

It is possible to suggest that the tendency to check a release for accuracy, or to call the Navy to clarify an unclear point is minor because some news operations may be understaffed and/or restricted by limited operating budgets. However, the generalization is supported by the small number of responses (13.3%) indicating that the releases are rewritten because of "inaccuracies concerning personal details."

But again, this lack of expressed concern may be an indication of the high amount of trust the media have in the Center.

6) Although nearly three-fourths of the respondents (73.1%) indicated they preferred the FHTNC release in the form in which it is presently being produced, many respondents indicated in their comments (open-ended Questions 15 and 16) that they want photographs included in the releases.

Many indicated a desire for photos showing the service member in a working environment, and not just a portrait.

7) More than three-fourths of the media believe the releases serve to recognize the individual members of the sea services, but more than half also believe the releases serve to promote the sea services.

The media understand that the vast majority of press releases are generated to serve the source of origination. The complaints of "excessive Navy PR" were minimal among the responses to the survey.

But this should not be interpreted as a green light for an increase in material in the releases that serves solely to promote the sea services. It is unlikely, however, that an effort to stress the mutual benefit of the program to the public affairs officers in the fleet and shore commands would have any negative effects on the media's use of the releases. In fact, this approach might inspire more aggressive home town news programs at the individual commands, which would then benefit more service members, and therefore, further benefit the sea services.

8) Reader/listener reaction to the FHTNC releases exists, but considering the nature of the subjects it is far less than had been assumed existed.

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This study does not answer all the questions concerning the effectiveness of the Fleet Home Town News releases. Future studies can examine more closely certain areas discussed herein.

A study could look further into the question of how the media perceive the home town news program, and if their perceptions affect the way in which the releases are used and rewritten.

Another study could examine how the reader or listener or even the subject service member perceives the program, and if it affects enlistment and personnel retention in the military.

A study that would be of definite use to the military would be to research why radio stations tend to be "low users," "high rewriters," and what could be done to improve the product for radio.

There are also areas that were not considered in this study but would constitute useful research.

The first would be to study those media that do not use home town news releases to determine why they do not use them and what could be done to encourage participation.

Another study could compare the FHTNC releases to the releases of the Army and the Air Force Center to determine if one center's releases are more effective.

A third study could compare the effectiveness of the FHTNC release to that of the "expanded" home town photo-feature that is generated by several commands and then marketed to the media by the regional Navy Offices of Information.

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APPENDIX A

This is an example of the NAVSO 5724/1 form as it would be filled out by a public affairs office prior to being mailed to the Fleet Home Town News Center.

(space above for FHTNC use only)

Information concerning the Privacy Act of 1974 is contained on reverse—
IMPORTANT—READ REVERSE PRIOR TO COMPLETING THIS FORM.

PART A—To be completed by subject. *PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE SUBMIT ORIGINAL ONLY*

1. BRANCH OF SERVICE	2. DATE OF EVENT	3. SEX	4. AGE	FHTNC USE ONLY
USN X USMC USCG	15 OCT 84	X M F	33	

5. RATE/RANK	6. NAME (First, middle initial, last)
LT	Jeffrey P. SMALLWOOD

7. NAME(S) OF PARENTS FULL NAME — ADDRESS (No., Street, City, State, Zip Code)

FATHER Jacob P. SMALLWOOD 495 Edward Rd., Circleville, OH 43113
MOTHER Mary L. SMALLWOOD (same)

8. MARRIED	9. SPOUSE'S FULL NAME — ADDRESS (No., Street, City, State, Zip Code)
X YES ☐ NO	Clotilde Di Palma SMALLWOOD

10. SPOUSE'S PARENTS' FULL NAME(S) — ADDRESS (No., Street, City, State, Zip Code)

FATHER Franco Di Palma Naples, Italy
MOTHER Margherita Di Palma (same)

11. HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDED	CITY STATE	GRADUATED	YEAR
Harvey S. Firestone	Akron, OH	X YES ☐ NO	69

12. COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY	CITY STATE	DEGREE EARNED	TYPE	YEAR
Ohio State University	Columbus, OH	X YES ☐ NO	BS	73

13. DATE ENTERED SERVICE (Month, year)	14. DATE REPORTED THIS COMMAND (Month, Day, Year)	15. DUTIES TO WHICH ASSIGNED
JAN 76	15 OCT 84	CINC NAVSTA PAO/NAVBCST DET 13

16. COMPLETE UNIT DESCRIPTION/DESIGNATION AND HOMEPORT/HOMEBASE (If deployed)

Naval Station Rota, Spain/Naval Broadcasting Det 13

17. I UNDERSTAND THE INFORMATION CITED ON THE REVERSE. I CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE IS CORRECT AND I HAVE NO OBJECTION TO ITS PUBLICATION.

SIGNATURE

PART B—To be completed by Public Affairs Office: Check appropriate story box. Do not use for Hold files.

X REPORTED	PROMOTED TO THE ABOVE RANK	MERITORIOUSLY PROMOTED TO THE ABOVE RANK	COMMISSIONED IN THE ABOVE RANK

DESIGNATED A (Specify)	MEDAL (Type)* *Attach copy of citation or letter	AWARD (Type)* *Attach copy of citation or letter

SERVICE SCHOOL GRADUATE	COURSES COMPLETED	WILL REPORT TO (Do not abbreviate; list location)
COMPLETED RECRUIT TRAINING	HONORS/AWARDS	WILL REPORT TO (Do not abbreviate; list location)
REENLISTED FOR ____ YEARS	RETIRED AFTER ____ YEARS	LIST KEY ASSIGNMENTS (Continue on reverse)

OTHER (Continue on additional sheet if necessary)

18. RELEASE AUTHORIZED (Signature, Title, Date)	19. RELEASE NO	20. COMMAND AND LOCATION (Must be filled in)
LCDR S.A. GRAHAM, USN Public Affairs Officer 15 OCT 84		Naval Station, Rota, SP

AUTHORIZED HOME TOWN NEWS RELEASE

THIS FORM SUPERSEDES ALL PREVIOUS EDITIONS WHICH MAY NOT BE USED.

NAVSO 5724/1 (REV. 1/76) S/N 0104-LF-007-2406

APPENDIX B

This is an example of a Fleet Home Town News Center release as it is mailed from the Center to the home town media.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
FLEET HOME TOWN NEWS CENTER
BUILDING X18 NAVAL STATION
NORFOLK VIRGINIA 23511
OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, $300

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
DOD-316

SAMPLE ONLY

MEMO ADDRESS WOULD NORMALLY BE IN THIS SPACE.

For Immediate Release

May 15 (FHTNC)--Marine Cpl. Robert J. Behrens, a 1980 graduate of Sachem High School, Lake Ronkonkoma, N.Y., recently returned from a six-month deployment to Beirut, Lebanon and the eastern Mediterranean.

He is a member of Marine Service Support Group-22, 22nd Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU), based at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

The MAU was involved in "Operation Urgent Fury" in Grenada in October 1983. It began its peacekeeping role in Lebanon in early November 1983 as part of the multi-national Peacekeeping Force and continued serving in the eastern Mediterranean Sea until early April.

The Marines of the 22nd MAU were among the last Americans to leave Lebanon when the U.S. Peacekeeping forces pulled out of the war-torn country.

(122902:bd)4/103-105

APPENDIX C

This is the first draft of the survey questions.

Survey Questions

1. What is your circulation/How large is your audience?
2. How often do you publish/Do you broadcast all day?
3. How often do you publish/broadcast releases on military personnel?
4. Do you also receive press releases from the Army and Air force?
5. Do you use every press release the Fleet Home Town News Center sends you?
6. To what extent do you rewrite/edit Navy press releases to suit your needs and why?
7. Do the Fleet Home Town News Center releases provide enough information?
8. Do you think the range of events reported in Navy press releases (i.e., awards/medals, promotions, school graduations, reporting to duty stations) warrants this type of coverage?
9. Coverage of what other events would be of interest to your readers/audience?
10. What type(s) of Fleet Home Town News Center releases don't you use and why?
11. How would you change the Fleet Home Town News Center releases you receive?
12. Do you receive expanded (multi-page with photos) press releases on sea service personnel from regional Navy Offices of Information?
13. If so, are these releases preferable in any way, and why?
14. Do you consider the Army - Air force releases to be of a better quality than the Fleet Home Town News Center releases?
15. If so, why?
16. Do you think the press release service provided by the Fleet Home Town News Center is a worthwhile service?

APPENDIX D

This is the second draft of the survey questions. The reader will notice the questions in this draft all apply to newspapers. The major intent of this effort was to establish the basic format for each question. Once that was done, the questions were then to be tailored to apply to both newspapers and radio.

Survey Questions

1. How often do you publish releases generated by home town news centers on all branches of military personnel? (Please circle response)

   Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

2. How often do you publish home town releases on sea service personnel compared to those releases generated by the Army - Air Force Center? (Circle one)

   Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

3. What percentage of the FHTNC releases that you receive do you use? (Circle one)

100%	More than 60%	More than 20%
More than 90%	More than 50%	More than 10%
More than 80%	More than 40%	Less than 10%
More than 70%	More than 30%	0%

4. Please indicate the type of story you use the most and the type you use the least. (Write "most" in one; "least" in another slot)

   A. Reporting to new command _____
   B. Promotion/Advancement _____
   C. Medal/Award _____
   D. School/training completion _____
   E. Re-enlistment _____
   F. All used equally (mark "X") _____

5. Do you receive the FHTNC releases in a timely fashion? (Circle one)

   Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

6. How often do you have to rewrite FHTNC releases? (Circle one)

   Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

7. If rewrite is necessary, what is the specific reason? (Circle one)

   A. Releases do not conform to local style.
   B. Excessive use of military jargon.
   C. Inaccuracies concerning personal details.
   D. Releases are poorly written.
   E. Other (explain) _____

   _____

8. How often do you have to check a FHTNC release for accuracy (with a phone call to a relative, or looking at a city directory or phone book)? (Circle one)

   Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

9. How often do you have to call the Navy to clarify something in a FHTNC release? (Circle one)

   Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

10. The stated purpose of the Fleet Home Town News program is to "tell the service member's story." What do you think the program does? (Circle one)

   A. Tells the individual service member's story.
   B. Tells the sea services' story.
   C. Both
   D. Other _____

11. How often do you receive feedback from your readers about the FHTNC releases you use? (Circle one)

   Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

12. What is the nature of the feedback? (Circle one)

   Positive Negative Other (explain) _____

   _____

13. What would better serve your needs? (Circle one)

A. FHTNC releases as now being produced.

B. Fact packages that allow you to write your own copy.

C. More expanded releases with additional information.

D. Other (explain) _____

_____

14. In your opinion, what could be done to improve the quality of releases or the service you receive from the Fleet Home Town News Center?

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX E

This is the third draft of the survey questions. The reader will notice the questions still apply only to newspapers. It is not until the questions are pretested do they appear in a manner that applies to both newspapers and radio.

Survey Questions

Your name: _____

Name of your media: _____

Your position: _____ Phone: _____

Were you ever in the military? _____ Branch: _____

May I use your name, or do you wish confidentiality? (Circle one)

Use my name if you wish Do not use my name

1. How often do you publish releases about individuals in the military that were written by the military home town news centers? (Circle one)

   Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

2. How often do you publish releases from the Navy Center compared to releases from the combined center that now serves the Army and the Air Force? (Circle one)

   Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

3. What percentage of the Navy Center releases that you receive do you use?

   _____

4. Please indicate the type of story about individuals in the sea services (Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard) that you use the most and the type that you use the least (write "most" in one slot; "least" in another slot).

   _____ A. Arrival at a new place of duty.
   _____ B. Promotion in rank.
   _____ C. Receipt of a medal or award.
   _____ D. Completion of a school or training.
   _____ E. Re-enlistment.
   _____ F. All are used equally. (In this case, mark "X")

5. Do you receive the Navy Center releases in a timely fashion? (Circle one)

Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

6. How often do you have to rewrite Navy Center releases? (Circle one)

Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

7. If rewrite is necessary, what is the specific reason? (Mark "X")

____ A. Releases do not conform to local style.
____ B. Excessive use of military jargon.
____ C. Inaccuracies concerning personal details.
____ D. Releases are poorly written.
____ E. Other (explain briefly) _____

_____

8. How often do you have to check a Navy Center release for accuracy (with a city directory, phone book or a call to a relative)? (Circle one)

Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

9. How often do you have to call the Navy to clarify something in a Navy Center release? (Circle one)

Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

10. The purpose of the Fleet Home Town News program is to recognize and publicize the importance of the individual member of the sea service (Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard). (Circle one)

Strongly agree Neutral Strongly Disagree
Agree Disagree

11. The purpose of the Fleet Home Town News program is to promote the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. (Circle one)

Strongly agree Neutral Strongly Disagree
Agree Disagree

12. How often do you receive comments (via telephone, letters, or face-to-face conversations) concerning the Navy Center releases you use? (Circle one)

Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

13. What is the nature of the comments? (Circle one)

Generally positive Generally negative Other (explain here) _____

14. What would better serve your needs? (Mark "X")

____ A. Navy Center releases as now being produced.

____ B. Fact packages that allow you to write your own copy.

____ C. More expanded releases with additional information.

____ D. Other (explain) _____

_____

15. In your opinion, what could be done to improve the effectiveness of releases or the service you receive from the Navy Center?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX F

This is an example of the survey in the form in which it was pretested. The reader will notice that in this form, the questions make no differentiation between newspapers and radio.

Survey on Navy Center Releases

Your name: _____

Name of your medium: _____

Your position: _____ Phone: _____

Are you a veteran? _____ Branch: _____

May we use your name, or do you wish confidentiality? (Circle one)

Use my name if you wish Do not use my name

1. How often do you use releases about individuals in the military written by home town centers? (Circle one)

   Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

2. How often do you use releases from the Navy Center compared to releases from the Army and Air Force Center? (Circle one)

   Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

3. About what percentage of the Navy Center releases that you receive do you use?

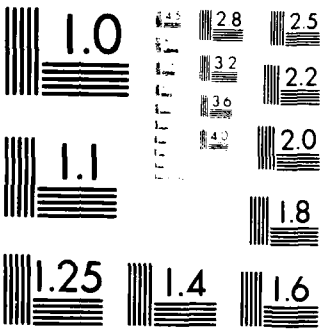
   _____

4. Please indicate the type of releases about individuals in the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard that you use the most and the type that you use the least. (Write "most" in one slot; "least" in another slot)

   _____ A. Arrival at a new place of duty.
   _____ B. Promotion.
   _____ C. Receipt of a medal or award.
   _____ D. Completion of a school or training.
   _____ E. Re-enlistment.
   _____ F. All are used equally. (In this case, mark "X")
   _____ G. Other.

AD-A150 507 A STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FLEET HOME TOWN NEWS CENTER RELEASES IN THE MISSOURI MEDIA(U) NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL MONTEREY CA J P SMALLWOOD 1984 2/2

UNCLASSIFIED F/G 5/1 NL



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A

5. Do you receive Navy Center releases in a timely fashion? (Circle one)

Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

6. How often do you have to rewrite Navy Center releases? (Circle one)

Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

7. If rewrite is necessary, why? (Mark "X")

_____ A. Releases do not conform to local style.
_____ B. Excessive use of military jargon.
_____ C. Inaccuracies concerning personal details.
_____ D. Releases are poorly written.
_____ E. Other (Explain briefly) _____
_____

8. How often do you have to check a Navy Center release for accuracy (with a city directory, phone book, phone call, etc.). (Circle one)

Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

9. How often do you have to call the Navy to clarify a release? (Circle one)

Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

10. The purpose of Navy Center releases is to recognize and publicize the individual member of the Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard. (Circle one)

Strongly agree Neutral Strongly Disagree
Agree Disagree

11. The purpose of the Navy Center release is to promote the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. (Circle one)

Strongly agree Neutral Strongly Disagree
Agree Disagree

12. How often do you receive comments (via telephone, letters, or face-to-face conversations) concerning the Navy Center releases you use? (Circle one)

Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

13. What is the nature of the comments? (Circle one)

Generally positive Generally negative Other (explain here) _____

14. Which of the following would you prefer? (Mark "X")

____ A. Navy Center releases as now produced.
____ B. Fact packages prepared.
____ C. Expanded releases.
____ D. Other (explain here) _____

_____

15. In your opinion, what could be done to improve the effectiveness of releases or the service you receive from the Navy Center?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX G

This is an example of the survey in its final form, with the cover letter, as it was mailed to Missouri newspapers and radio stations.

May 14, 1984

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am a graduate student presently completing a master's degree at the University of Missouri. I am writing my thesis on the releases prepared by the Fleet Home Town News Center. This center is the source of the brief news/feature releases you receive on individuals in the sea services -- the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. To distinguish from those releases generated by the center that serves both the Army and the Air Force, I will hereafter refer to them as the "Navy Center releases."

I would greatly appreciate it if you would pass this survey to your staff member who handles the Navy Center releases and ask him or her to answer it. The survey can be returned to me with the self-addressed stamped envelope that I have enclosed.

I appreciate your assistance in this matter.

Thank you,

Jeffrey P. Smallwood

Jeffrey P. Smallwood

Survey on Navy Center Releases

Your name: _____

Name of your medium: _____

Your position: _____ Phone: _____

Are you a veteran? _____ Branch: _____

May we use your name, or do you wish confidentiality? (Circle one)

Use my name if you wish Do not use my name

1. How often do you use releases about individuals in the military written by the home town news centers? (Circle one)

   Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

2. How often do you use releases from the Navy Center compared to releases from the Army and Air Force Center? (Circle one)

   Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

3. About what percentage of the Navy Center releases that you receive do you use?

   _____

4. Please indicate the type of releases about individuals in the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard that you use the most and the type that you use the least. (Write "most" in <u>one</u> slot; "least" in <u>another</u> slot)

   _____ A. Arrival at a new place of duty.

   _____ B. Promotion.

   _____ C. Receipt of a medal or award.

   _____ D. Completion of a school or training.

   _____ E. Re-enlistment.

   _____ F. All are used equally. (In this case, mark "X")

   _____ G. Other.

5. Do you receive Navy Center releases in a timely fashion? (Circle one)

Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

6. How often do you have to rewrite Navy Center releases? (Circle one)

Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

7. If rewrite is necessary, why? (Mark "X" -- more than one answer is possible in this case)

_____ A. Releases do not conform to local style.

_____ B. Excessive use of military jargon.

_____ C. Inaccuracies concerning personal details.

_____ D. Releases are poorly written.

_____ E. Other (Explain briefly) _____

_____

_____

8. How often do you have to check a Navy Center release for accuracy (with a city directory, phone book, phone call, etc.) (Circle one)

Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

9. How often do you have to call the Navy to clarify a release? (Circle one)

Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

10. A purpose of the Navy Center releases is to recognize and publicize the individual member of the Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard. (Circle one)

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

11. A purpose of the Navy Center releases is to promote the Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard. (Circle one)

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

12. How often do you receive comments (via telephone, letters or face-to-face conversations) concerning the Navy Center releases you use? (Circle one)

Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

13. What is the nature of the comments? (Circle one)

Generally positive Genrally negative Other (Explain briefly) _____

_____

14. Which of the following would you prefer? (Mark "X")

_____ A. Navy Center releases as now prepared.

_____ B. Fact packages to be prepared as a story.

_____ C. Expanded releases.

_____ D. Other. (Explain here) _____

_____

15. In your opinion, what could be done to improve the effectiveness of the releases or the service you receive from the Navy Center?

_____

_____

_____

_____

16. Any other remarks?

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX H

This is an example of the computerized mailing list used by the Fleet Home Town News Center in forwarding releases to the home town media.

DATE FIRST WENT ON LINE: (NOT CURRENTLY ON LINE IF BLANK)
*1/6/83

DATE LAST SURVEYED:
*7-83

ARE PHOTOGRAPHS DESIRED: Y=yes, N=no
*y

ZIP CODES WITHIN CIRCULATION/BROADCAST AREA:
*64075 64070 64029 64011 64016 64074

MEDIA NAME AND ADDRESS:
*Odessan
P.O. Box 40, 204 W. Mason
Odessa, MO 64076

MEDIA TYPE: N=Newspaper, R=Radio Station, T=Television Station
*N

DATE FIRST WENT ON LINE: (NOT CURRENTLY ON LINE IF BLANK)
*1/6/83

DATE LAST SURVEYED:
*7-83

ARE PHOTOGRAPHS DESIRED: Y=yes, N=no
*y

ZIP CODES WITHIN CIRCULATION/BROADCAST AREA:
*64076 64071 64037 64011 64074

MEDIA NAME AND ADDRESS:
*St. Clair County Courier
P.O. Box 405,
Osceola, MO 64776

MEDIA TYPE: N=Newspaper, R=Radio Station, T=Television Station
*N

DATE FIRST WENT ON LINE: (NOT CURRENTLY ON LINE IF BLANK)
*1/6/83

DATE LAST SURVEYED:
*7-83

ARE PHOTOGRAPHS DESIRED: Y=yes, N=no
*y

ZIP CODES WITHIN CIRCULATION/BROADCAST AREA:

APPENDIX I

These are comments provided in response to Questions 15 and 16, which asked "In your opinion, what could be done to improve the effectiveness of the releases or the service you receive from the Navy Center?" and "Any other remarks?"

[Make them] more timely--they are one to two weeks old or older when we receive them.

These releases fall in the same category as graduation announcements, births, marriages, etc.--in a fairly closeknit community, they represent newsy fillers. Once in a great while they prove to be good tips for an expanded story.

Jim Dustin, St. Charles edition
of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Get the story or release to us a little quicker following the promotion, graduation or completion of maneuver.

I really have no harsh criticism of the Navy press releases. There does not seem to be many people from this area now serving in the Navy. I do appreciate the releases when they are timely, comprehensive and concise regarding the individual.

Editor of a weekly newspaper.

[Please send] an occasional feature story on local personnel, including photos.

Howard Hill, Richmond Daily News

We could probably use a short feature-type article about local persons, along with a picture showing the persons in their work environment. What I have in mind is an article giving some personal background, a service description, and an explanation of how that job fits into the national defense scheme. By short, I mean 1½-2 pages of double-spaced manuscript, which is apt to get cut some. All releases which we use must have a local tie-in. Those vague general releases from all the services which talk of ships, planes, units, or wonderful opportunities will get chucked in the trash.

Max E. Cates, Areawide Media, Inc.

[Please send a] picture of person named in release.

Mary Warden, Bourbon Beacon

We're happy to run stories of promotions, awards, etc. We used to run the items on boot camp, training, completing school, but there are simply too many, so we had to discontinue this, reluctantly.

Gene Saffern, St. Louis County Star

When sending release to broadcast outlet, needs to be written short, sweet and to the point.

Routine "news" releases will always wind up in the circular file. That goes for all types of news releases, not just service-related.

Assignment editor, radio station

Perhaps the first paragraph could be a double-spaced summary--which would better fit radio. The rest of the more in-depth details done in single space for print media. Or perhaps one short, concise version written and mailed to radio stations. Other more in-depth versions written and mailed to newspapers.

Ray Hicks, KCLU

Generally, they do a pretty good job. However, in addition to regular "fill in the name-address-parents-wife" releases, I would like photo-features.

I do feel the Army and Air Force Home Town News service does a better job than the Fleet News service. However, this is not to mean they're doing a bad job. Generally, though, I feel there is room for improvement. The sailor in question or Marine enjoys the community recognition--as do the relatives. They like to read it--I like to print it--but I can't unless we receive it--Heck, with the number of naval and Marine Corps personnel serving from this area, we should be receiving several releases a week instead of an occasional one.

Daniel Black Miles II,
Democrat Publishing Co.

Photos of service people might add spice to the stories.

C.A. Moore, Bates County
News-Headliner

[Please send] photographs.

Kimball Long, El Dorado Springs Sun

Generally well received. We are happy to print releases on hometown-local angle stories. Some could be expanded with more detail on certain assignments with pictures of action, not just portraits.

R. A. Whipple, Kearney Courier

Send "on location" photographs of the troops.

Art Wallhausen, Charleston
Enterprise-Courier

Keep them coming--we like this news for our readers.

William B. Roberts, Platte
County Citizen

In the past, the high school graduating year and name of school was listed. How long in service. Any background on family (such as wife's maiden name and hometown) is helpful. Any service background as well.

They need more individualization. In a recruit training story, if you take out the name of the service member, his parents, their home town and his training center, they're all alike--verbatim--with all other recruit training stories. Five to ten different basic stories would be good. Would like to hear about more promotions, awards, re-enlistments.

Lisa Wilson, KMRN

I would like to know when events occurred instead of "recently." We always edit out, as much as possible, service-promotion verbage. Although we run the releases on the basis of local news value, we also understand that they are essentially free advertising for the military--a "Catch-22."

Larry Peautsch, Cass County
Democrat-Missourian

Releases should be sent quicker. More emphasis on the person, not on the Navy's "occupational fields."

Barbara C. Bless,
The Weston Chronicle

Improve quality control.

Richard A. Kemp, Crawford Mirror

We have found the releases have been well written and usually immediately usable in our paper.

David W. Steinbeck,
Canton Press-News Journal

Releases should be brief, newsy and more about the individual. Perhaps a quote from the service member.

Virginia Styron,
Newton County News

[Provide] more background information on individuals.

Editor of a weekly newspaper

[Please] ascertain blood parents names.

Percy Pascoe, Cuba Free Press

[Please] include photo.

David Bloom, Fredericktown
Democrat-News

The news releases concern our local youth and we feel that is important to a weekly paper.

Robert M. Gaines, Fairfax Forum

[We] believe releases should be more about person--not service branch.

Twila E. Miller, Savannah Reporter

[We] would like to receive recorded interviews so we could use the voices of local service personnel.

Marvin L. VanGilder, KDMO/KRGK

I don't know how difficult it would be to do this, but a comment by the service person concerning the positive aspects of service life, plus plans to re-enlist would be good. You can sell military life more effectively by personal endorsements than by the military's endorsement of itself.

Erwin Lloyd, Portageville Review

Instead of writing a release that conforms to newspaper-only use, a fact package should be utilized that gives the newsperson the freedom to use what's really vital.

Ron Davis, KYOO

[Please] check name spellings.

Mike Crawford, Lexington News

[Please] send pictures.

Betty Cooper, Dunklin County Press

We look for audio. Would love to hear the member's voice.

Tom Colvin, KBOA/KTMO

Photos would be good, especially if there was a local angle to a big story. For example, local people serving in Lebanon or Grenada operations.

K. Kirk Powell, Holden Progress

We appreciate all news about local people and are glad the armed services provide us with releases.

Roger Dillon, Eminence Current Wave

END

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