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STARS AND STRIPES AND COMMERCIAL
NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS

A THESIS

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A CONTENT ANALYSIS COMPARISON BETWEEN

STARS AND STRIPES AND COMMERCIAL

NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS

A THESIS

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM

AND MASS COMMUNICATION

By

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A CONTENT ANALYSIS COMPARISON BETWEEN STARS AND STRIPES
AND COMMERCIAL NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Stars and Stripes newspapers, published in the Pacific and in Europe, are authorized publications of the Department of Defense (DOD). DOD Instruction 5120.4, "DOD Newspapers and Civilian Enterprise Publications," which provides overall guidance on DOD newspapers, states the policy for Stars and Stripes is "that a free flow of news and information shall be provided to all military personnel without censorship or news management."¹ The DOD instruction requires them to maintain balance in presentation of

¹United States General Accounting Office Report to the Congress. Stars and Stripes: Inherent Conflicts Lead to Allegations of Military Censorship, (Washington, D.C. : Government Printing Office, December 1988), 2.

commercial news and opinion and prohibits the newspapers from taking editorial positions. According to then Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs William Hart, Stars and Stripes is "recognized as the G.I.'s newspaper and has a long, proud tradition of being a credible news source providing a daily hometown newspaper filled with national, international, and military community news as well as features, United States newspaper editorial comment, comics, and sports."² The papers have two specific missions. The first mission is:

To bring DOD personnel and their dependents the same international, national, and regional news and opinion from commercial sources available to newspapers hroughout the United States. This news makes possible the continued intelligent exercise of the responsibilities of citizenship by DOD personnel while they serve away from home. It helps their morale and readiness by dispelling rumor and by keeping them in touch with aspects of life in the United States while they live in unfamiliar surroundings.³

The second mission is:

To provide applicable U.S. government, DOD, command, and

²ibid., 104.

³ibid., 11.

local news and information, which improve individual capability for mission accomplishment and brings a sense of joint mission purpose to the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps personnel operating together to carry out the U.S. defense mission overseas.⁴

The Stars and Stripes newspapers are "authorized, unofficial" overseas unified command⁵ newspapers that carry stateside news and are financed primarily through nonappropriated⁶ funds. Because they carry no advertising, they are subsidized. Headquartered in Tokyo, Japan and Darmstadt, West Germany, they differ from unit or installation newspapers (base newspapers) that are used primarily as management tools for the commander and are paid for through appropriated funds or contracts with commercial publishers. The unified commanders in chief in each theater are the publishers of the newspapers. They are required by regulation to appoint military

⁴Ibid.

⁵A unified command is composed of forces from two or more military departments.

⁶Nonappropriated funds are public funds used to subsidize revenue-generating activities.

act as editors and deputy or assistant editors in chief.⁷ According to Hart, "recognizing the need to provide credible news for their Unified Commands both in peacetime and in the event of conflict, the editorial staff of the papers is a mixture of civilian and military personnel."⁸

After World War II, Stars and Stripes became nonappropriated fund agencies, which meant they had to pay their own operating costs. At this time, they began to hire civilians to operate the newspapers. As of May 1988, the total staffing to produce the newspaper in Europe was 206 and 105 in the Pacific. The European paper has a larger staff because it produces four editions in its theater, while the Pacific paper produces only one edition. Half of the editorial staff in the Pacific is military, while only a quarter of the European editorial staff is military. The difference in the military ratio reflects past financial problems in the Pacific, which were dealt with, in part, by increasing the number of

⁷U.S. General Accounting Office Report 1988, 10.

⁸Ibid., 104.

military personnel who were paid from appropriated funds.⁹

During World War II, Stars and Stripes in Europe was a 12-page paper with a daily circulation of over 1 million copies. It is now 28 pages with a current daily circulation of about 134,000 copies. The Pacific Stars and Stripes was first published in 1945 as a 4-page newspaper. Its current size is 28 pages with a daily circulation of about 39,000 copies.¹⁰

Both papers buy their international, U.S., and regional news from commercial sources, such as the Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI) wire services. They also print articles provided by DOD news sources and local news gathered by Stars and Stripes reporters.

Past Studies

Censorship is defined as "the act, process, or policy of censoring" or "to remove or suppress objectional material."¹¹ The

⁹Ibid., 10.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹American Heritage Dictionary, 2d ed.(1982),s.v. "censorship."

allegation that censorship could exist in a military newspaper has been made before. Most recently, DOD conducted three separate investigations on allegations by Pacific Stars and Stripes staff members. A December 16, 1986, report on an investigation done by the offices of the inspector general and staff judge advocate of Headquarters, U.S. Army Japan consisted of an examination of documents submitted by staff members on allegations of censorship. The investigators concluded that there was no basis to substantiate the allegations because no instances were observed of excessive or undue pressure by the paper's military management of the news staff, nor was there any evidence that personnel outside the newspaper attempted in any way to regulate its content.¹²

A second investigation was conducted by a command information officer for U.S. Army Japan, and consisted of interviews with senior management officials of the paper and an analysis of the DOD instruction governing military newspapers. The February 6, 1987, report concluded that some of the editorial staff had a continuing

¹²U.S. General Accounting Office Report 1988, 13.

strong perception of news management. It stated that some of the staff, primarily civilians, either did not understand or disagreed with editorial policies established in the DOD instruction, particularly as they related to the treatment of military information.¹³

A third investigation was conducted by a professor of journalism from the American University Department of Journalism in Washington, D.C., who is a reservist and, if mobilized, would become director of the American Forces Press and Publication Service. Conducted at the request of the Director of the American Forces Information Service, who is responsible for establishing and overseeing implementation of overall policy on DOD newspapers, the investigation consisted of interviews with seven senior management and editorial personnel and observations of the newspaper's operations. The September 7, 1987, report on the investigation concluded that there was no definitive evidence of censorship at the paper since the current editor in chief's arrival in

¹³Ibid.

September 1986. It further noted that some of the civilian journalists who had previous commercial newspaper experience did not seem to accept the differences between Stars and Stripes and other American newspapers.¹⁴

The most noteworthy study thus far on the issue of censorship and Stars and Stripes was an investigation conducted by the General Accounting Office (GAO) from November 1987 through May 1988. Allegations of censorship and news management by military commanders of the Stars and Stripes newspapers led to a requirement in the Defense Authorization Act for fiscal years 1988 and 1989 that the GAO investigate the validity of these allegations. The GAO defined censorship as "any effort, such as news management, to suppress publication of news for other than national security reasons," and that the concept of censorship in DOD is "one of external pressure on Stars and Stripes in the selection and presentation of news."¹⁵ The objective of the study

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., 3.

was to determine the validity of the allegations of censorship by military commanders of the Stars and Stripes newspapers. Three approaches were used:

First, we used audit and investigative techniques to document the allegations and the events surrounding them to determine whether command influence existed and what editorial practices were and are in force.

Second, we performed a content analysis of the coverage of news in Stars and Stripes. The purposes of this analysis were to determine if (1) patterns of news coverage in Stars and Stripes were consistent with the news coverage on the wire services and (2) patterns existed that indicate anti-DoD and anti-administration views were being censored.

Third, the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, established an advisory panel, as directed by the conference report on the legislation requiring this study, to (1) assist us in understanding the distinctions between editorial judgement and censorship, (2) provide the Society's view on specific allegations of censorship based on documents we provided, and (3) review and comment on our draft report.¹⁶

The GAO investigated over 200 allegations dating back to 1984 and performed an analysis of how the news reported in Stars and Stripes compared to the wire services. Interviewing current and former employees of the papers, the GAO identified a relatively

¹⁶ibid., 14.

small number of allegations about command influence at Stars and Stripes in Europe and a much larger number in the Pacific. Using the advisory panel formed by the Society of Professional Journalists, the GAO reviewed 45 specific allegations of censorship and news management involving the Pacific paper and 12 allegations involving the European paper. Concluding that the evidence was inconclusive for the European paper, the panel found that at the Pacific paper, it agreed with only 8 editorial actions taken and disagreed with 19. In 12 instances at least one panel member was unable to make a decision based on the materials provided, and they were evenly divided on whether appropriate actions were taken in the remaining 6 instances.¹⁷

The GAO study compared by content analysis the coverage of news stories in the Pacific Stars and Stripes with the coverage in the European Stars and Stripes. They also compared the DOD/U.S. military stories run in both newspapers with those carried by the AP and UPI wire services. The GAO analyzed stories carried by both

¹⁷Ibid., 4.

newspapers and the major wire services during March 1987 and found that both newspapers ran a lower proportion of stories that presented a negative image of DOD than the wire services had carried, and that the Pacific paper ran a lower proportion of these negative image stories than the European paper. The wire service stories on DOD had 47 percent portraying a negative image of the military, while European Stars and Stripes ran 35 percent and Pacific Stars and Stripes ran 27 percent. They felt this proved consistent with the allegations of censorship and news management.¹⁸

During March 1987, according to the GAO report, both papers ran about the same number of stories: 1,312 in the major news sections for the Pacific paper and 1,328 in Europe. For the Pacific, about 81 percent (1,059 stories) came from the AP and UPI wire services, and for Europe, 85 percent (1,132 stories). Of the DOD/U.S. military stories, 65 percent of Europe's were from wire

¹⁸Ibid., 5.

services, with 44 percent for the Pacific paper.¹⁹

The GAO concluded that "while no legal standard existed for determining whether censorship had occurred at Stars and Stripes because they are government newspapers," evidence of "censorship and news management was conclusive at Stars and Stripes in the Pacific but not in Europe." Further, "military commanders in both theaters have repeatedly attempted to influence the reporting of news." They concluded that "trying to simultaneously accomplish the Stars and Stripes dual mission creates an inherent cultural conflict between civilian journalists who must execute the First Amendment mission and commanders who must execute the military mission," and that "different expectations by these groups are the primary reason allegations of censorship exists."²⁰

The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense direct guidance stating that Stars and Stripes:

- * shall have a civilian editor in chief whose term of office shall be fixed for a period of 3 to 5 years and
- * shall have editorial and news policy provisions that

¹⁹Ibid., 40.

²⁰Ibid., 2-3.

emphasize subjects of interest to the readership.

In addition, the guidance should state that

- * military officers shall not interfere with or attempt to influence news content;
- * investigative reporting be allowed; and
- * a content analysis, similar to the one GAO performed, shall be done on a periodic basis to ensure that U.S. troops in the two different parts of the world are exposed to approximately the same news from back home.²¹

While these past studies are useful, none have determined whether or not censorship exists at the Stars and Stripes newspapers. One way to judge whether the content the Stars and Stripes' audience is exposed to is censored is to compare it to the content of a supposedly uncensored newspaper. The purpose of this study is to compare by content analysis the military news stories in the Pacific and European Stars and Stripes with two civilian national daily newspapers, the New York Times and the Washington Post.

²¹Ibid., 5-6.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Modern content analysis was first used in World War II by allied intelligence units monitoring the number and types of songs played on European radio stations. It was used after the war to study propaganda in newspapers and radio. When Bernard Berelson published Content Analysis in Communication Research, content analysis was recognized as a "tool for communication scholars."²²

Content analysis is defined as "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication."²³ Quite simply, "it is the analysis of

²²Roger D. Wimmer and Joseph R. Dominick, Mass Media Research, 2d ed., (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1987) 165.

²³Guido H. Stempel III and Bruce H. Westley, Research Methods in Mass Communication, 2d ed., (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1989) 125.

what is said, printed, broadcast, or written."²⁴ Tannenbaum and Greenberg reported in 1968 that content analysis of newspapers was the largest single category of master's theses in mass communication.²⁵ One of the purposes of content analysis is to "identify what exists," or "catalog the characteristics of a given body of communication content at one or more points in time."²⁶ Another is "to compare media or 'levels' of communication."²⁷

The media content studies, according to McQuail, are "evaluations that have been attempted with a social scientific framework, seeking to provide objective assessments of media performance and tendency, according to certain stated criteria."²⁸

²⁴H.J. Hsia, Mass Communications Research Methods: A Step-by-Step Approach, (Hillsdale, N.J. : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1988) 318.

²⁵Wimmer and Dominick, 165.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 166.

²⁷Bernard Berelson, Content Analysis in Communication Research, (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1971) 39.

²⁸Denis McQuail, Mass Communication Theory, (London: Sage Publications, 1983) 126.

He notes that some of the concerns underlying evaluation are:

- (1) the regulation and control of media according to some moral criteria;
- (2) the degree to which media conform to certain professional or institutional criteria - especially those having to do with such matters as diversity, balance, objectivity, . . . accuracy, completeness, etc.;
- (3) the assessment of bias of ideological tendency, especially in contexts where media purport to be neutral and objective.²⁹

He further states that "the line between these different purposes is not a firm one and some are set by governments and regulatory bodies, some by the media themselves, and some by external critics of the media."³⁰

The following steps in content analysis are generally accepted and were used in this study; they do not necessarily have to be in this order:

1. Formulate the research question or hypothesis.
2. Define the population in question.
3. Select an appropriate sample from the population.
4. Select and define a unit of analysis.
5. Construct the categories of content to be analyzed.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

6. Establish a quantification system.
7. Train coders and conduct a pilot study.
8. Code the content according to established definitions.
9. Analyze the collected data.¹⁰ Draw conclusions and search for indications.³¹

The purpose of this study (and the research statement) is to compare by content analysis the military news stories in the Pacific and European Stars and Stripes and two civilian national daily newspapers, the New York Times and the Washington Post. Because the GAO report concluded that the Pacific Stars and Stripes was more censored than the European Stars and Stripes, both papers were chosen to be analyzed. Two national civilian daily newspapers were determined by reputation for uncensored reporting and research access to back issues. In addition, both papers are in the top ten among national circulation: the New York Times is 5th with a circulation of 1,068,217; and the Washington Post is 6th with 772,749.³²

There were 6 hypotheses used in this study:

³¹Wimmer and Dominick, 171.

³²"U.S. Newspapers With Highest Circulation," USA Today, 9 November 1989.

(H1) Stars and Stripes will print more military news stories than the civilian newspapers.

(H2) Stars and Stripes will use more military news stories from the AP and UPI wire services than the civilian newspapers.

(H3) Stars and Stripes will print more positive military news stories than the civilian newspapers.

(H4) Stars and Stripes will print relatively the same number of neutral military news stories as civilian newspapers.

(H5) Stars and Stripes will print relatively the same number of negative military news stories as civilian newspapers.

(H6) Stars and Stripes and the two civilian newspapers will cover the same major military news events.

The hypotheses were based upon the stated objectives or missions of the newspapers studied, and, in part, on past studies.

The purpose of the comparison is to determine the differences in coverage, specifically military news stories. The primary interest involved is if unbiased, uncensored content is available to military personnel in the Stars and Stripes reading audience. Do military personnel stationed overseas receive relatively the same newspaper information available to U.S. newspaper audiences? While a complete comparison of the newspapers in all categories would be beneficial, this particular study limited the analysis to

military news stories.

The most frequently used unit in content analysis, according to Berelson, is the item - the whole "natural" unit employed by the producers of symbol material. This is the analysis of an entire item, such as a news story, as opposed to analysis of a single word or theme. Analysis by the entire item is appropriate "whenever the variations *within* the item are small or unimportant." It is particularly applicable when only broad content differences are under analysis.³³

The unit of analysis for this study was limited to military news stories appearing in major news sections of the newspaper. The population was therefore defined as all military news stories in the four newspapers during 1987. A story was classified as a military news story if the main subject of the article was about the military, and at least 75% of the article was about or related to the military. No editorials, sports, comics, fashion, or non-military news stories were included. Military news stories

³³Berelson, 141-142.

included the following key terms:

- Pentagon
- Department of Defense (DOD)
- U.S. Army
- U.S. Navy
- U.S. Air Force
- U.S. Marine Corps
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Armed Forces
- U.S. Military

All military news stories, regardless of length or placement, were included. Photos and captions included with stories were also coded, and stand-alone photos and their captions were coded as well.

The sample was randomly selected issues of each newspaper edition from 1987. Twelve dates from each of the twelve months of 1987 were randomly selected for a total of twelve days. The year 1987 was chosen because it preceeded the turmoil which followed the GAO investigation. Twelve pieces of paper with the twelve months written on them were placed in a bowl, while pieces of paper with the numbers 1-31 were placed in another bowl. As a month was drawn, a day was drawn to match until all the months had been drawn. Each day was returned to the bowl after each

drawing. An alternate date was drawn as well in case the first date was a holiday or the newspaper was not printed that day for some reason. The dates randomly selected from 1987 with alternates in parentheses were:

January 13, Tuesday (11)
February 7, Saturday (15)
March 13, Friday (8)
April 7, Tuesday (30)
May 20, Wednesday (29)
June 17, Wednesday (4)
July 17, Friday (26)
August 12, Wednesday (17)
September 4, Friday (20)
October 11, Sunday (7)
November 25, Wednesday (6)
December 26, Saturday (1)

Letters requesting military news stories with the aforementioned key terms that ran on the selected dates were sent to the Pacific and European Stars and Stripes. Microfilm copies of the New York Times and Washington Post issues printed on the selected dates were searched for military news stories.

The categories of content were almost identical to the ones used by the GAO investigators in their study³⁴, and are quoted here

³⁴U.S. General Accounting Office Report 1988, 59-60.

almost verbatim. Categories relate to the "image" of the U.S. military as portrayed in the story. Image refers to the positive, negative, or neutral impression that the story gives the reader about the U.S. military. The four categories were neutral, negative, positive, and mixed image.

Neutral image U.S. military news stories are informational or descriptive stories that do not contain critical statements about the military or portray the military itself in a negative or positive way. For example, neutral image stories include announcements about DOD drug testing orders, a base closing, or a story about the military budget having to be cut. Stories about training accidents are neutral unless the story conveys an image of military negligence or incompetence. Similarly, military personnel committing off-base crimes are acts of individuals and are neutral unless the crime involves military property or is done while on duty.

Negative image DOD stories convey an unfavorable or critical image of the U.S. military. If two-thirds or more of the analyzed text about the military is negative, the story is coded as negative.

For example, negative image stories include congressmen charging the Air Force with deception in mismanaging the B-1B bomber, the head of military clothing procurement running a DOD kickback scandal, or a report of an entire fleet of helicopters being grounded for mechanical problems the Navy refused to correct. They are directly critical of DOD policy or actions and portray the U.S. military as negligent, criminal, or incompetent.

Positive image DOD stories portray the U.S. military in a favorable way. If two-thirds of the analyzed text about the military is positive, the story is coded as positive. Examples of positive image DOD stories include a congressional agency supporting an Army decision and commending the Army for making the best choice in procuring a new class of helmets, an Air Force unit volunteer working long hours to help civilian victims of a storm, and the Naval Investigative Service acting quickly to arrest 23 drug dealers.

Mixed image DOD stories contain both positive and negative images about the U.S. military. If less than two-thirds of the analyzed text about the military is positive or negative, the story

was coded as mixed image.

Two coders, both journalism professors at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio with master's degrees in communication, were hired and trained to code the articles. The coding worksheet and directions are at Appendix A. The coders were asked to identify the source of the article, to code the article, and for the source and code of any accompanying photos or graphics. Examples of story source include AP, UPI, Stars and Stripes wire service (S&S), New York Times news service (NYT), ect.

In addition to studying the frequencies of military news stories appearing in the four newspapers, all military news stories appearing in the newspapers which used AP and UPI as a source were recorded as well. The percentage of wire reports used by each of the four newspapers would also be included in the final analysis.

The quantification system used is based on percentages, such as the percentage of negative military news stories appearing in the sample.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS

The stories were collected and numbered for coding purposes. One newspaper sent the wrong date for the month of December so only January-November stories were used. A coding worksheet with coding instructions was developed and tested twice. Two coders rated 367 stories/photos. Twenty-five of the articles were duplicates used to determine coder reliability. Of these, the coders agreed on 20. Using a formula to compute intercoder reliability:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$$

M is the number of cases where the two coders agree in their classification. N1 is the number of cases coded by coder 1, and N2 is the number of cases codes by coder 2.³⁵ The intercoder

³⁵Glen Brown and David Dozier, Using Research in Public Relations, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall) 142.

reliability was determined to be 80%.

A total of 367 stories/photos were coded. Of these, 137 military news stories were from European Stars and Stripes, 95 were from Pacific Stars and Stripes, 63 appeared in the New York Times, and 72 came from the Washington Post. The breakdown of the images and the number of stories coded in each newspaper is shown below:

Table 1

	ES&S	PS&S	NYT	Post
Positive	7	11	2	2
Negative	18	11	7	13
Neutral	99	67	47	49
Mixed	13	6	7	8
Total	137	95	63	72

The breakdown of military news stories in each newspaper and their source(s) is listed in Table 2. WP indicates the story is from the Washington Post.

Table 2

	ES&S	PS&S	NYT	Post
AP	47	31	12	10
UPI	11	13	0	8
PS&S	0	32	0	0
ES&S	73	0	0	0
NYT	1	0	43	0
Reuters	0	0	5	1
Military	0	13	0	1
WP	0	0	0	54
Others	3	1	2	0
Total	135	90	62	74

Comparison by percentages of the image coded in each story in each newspaper is shown in the table below:

Table 3
(percentages)

	ES&S	PS&S	NYT	Post
Positive	5.1	11.5	3.1	2.7
Negative	13.1	11.5	11.1	18
Neutral	72.2	70.5	74.6	68
Mixed	9.4	6.3	11.1	11.1
Total	99.8	99.8	99.9	99.8

While the comparison of all four newspapers is noteworthy, the crux of this study is the comparison of the two military newspapers to the two civilian newspapers. The next table shows by percentage the breakdown of image coding between the two:

Table 4
(Percentages)

	Stars and Stripes	Civilian Papers
Positive	7.7	2.9
Negative	12.5	14.8
Neutral	71.5	71.1
Mixed	8.1	11.1
Total	99.8	99.9

And finally, the last table shows the breakdown by percentage and compares the sources of the military newspapers and the civilian newspapers:

Table 5
(Percentages)

	Stars and Stripes	Civilian Papers
AP	34.6	16.1
UPI	10.6	5.8
S&S	46.6	0
NYT	0.8	31.6
WP	0	39.7
Reuters	0	4.4
Military	5.7	1
Others	1.7	1.4
Total	100	100

The first hypothesis stated that the Stars and Stripes

newspapers will print more military news stories than the civilian newspapers. In sheer numbers alone, this hypothesis is supported. There were 232 military news stories in the two military newspapers and 135 in the civilian newspapers.

The second hypothesis indicated that Stars and Stripes will use more military news stories from the AP and UPI wire services than the civilian newspapers. According to the data, the military newspapers used AP and UPI 45.2% while the civilian newspapers used them 21.9%, indicating that Stars and Stripes uses the wire services twice as often as the two civilian newspapers.

Hypothesis three predicted that Stars and Stripes would print more positive military news stories than the civilian newspapers. Again, this hypothesis is supported by the data almost two-to-one. The military papers had 7.7% of its stories coded positive, and the civilian papers had only 2.9% coded as positive.

The next hypothesis said that the military and civilian newspapers would print relatively the same number of neutral military news stories. The data shows that the percentage of neutral military news stories was almost identical. Stars and

Stripes had 71.5% of its stories coded neutral, and the two civilian newspapers had 71.1% coded neutral.

The fifth hypothesis predicted that the military and civilian newspapers would print relatively the same number of negative military news stories. This hypothesis was also supported by the data. Stars and Stripes had a percentage of 12.5% negative stories compared to the civilian story percentage of 14.8%.

The last hypothesis stated that Stars and Stripes and the two national civilian newspapers would cover the same major military news events. The stories that were covered by one or more of the four papers are listed at Appendix B. Of the 367 stories covered, 30 (8.1%) were covered in one or more of the four newspapers. When comparing those covered in the Stars and Stripes to those in the two civilian newspaper, the number of stories is only 18 (4.9%). Therefore, this hypothesis is not supported by the data.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to gather empirical evidence comparing the Stars and Stripes military newspapers to two civilian national newspapers. The following discussion sets forth the findings based on the data.

Findings

The first hypothesis proposed for the study was, "Stars and Stripes will print more military news stories than the civilian newspapers." Because the audience of the Stars and Stripes is military personnel and their families, it only stands to reason that the military newspapers would bring more military news to its military readers than a civilian newspaper which focuses on a wide variety of audiences. The data gathered showed that Stars and Stripes had 232 military news stories during the test period while

the two civilian newspapers had only 135. This does not indicate a lack of coverage of military news stories on the part of the civilian newspapers - it merely reflects the audience and mission differences between the two. For specific breakdowns of the findings related to Hypothesis #1, see Table 1.

Hypothesis #2 stated, "Stars and Stripes will use more military news stories from the AP and UPI wire services than the civilian newspapers." The two national civilian newspapers have bureaus in many parts of the United States and the world, and it was reasoned that they would rely upon their own correspondents along with the wire services. However, the Stars and Stripes does not have nearly the number of correspondents the civilian newspapers do, so it was hypothesized that Stars and Stripes would have to rely on the wire services for much of its news, particularly AP and UPI. One of the reasons for comparing the source of the stories was in response to the GAO study which used all AP and UPI military news stories available during the test period and based its analysis on the percentage of negative military news stories Stars and Stripes used. No newspaper uses all available AP and UPI

stories. A more realistic comparison would be to compare the percentages of use between Stars and Stripes and civilian newspapers. The data gathered in this study shows that Stars and Stripes credited 45.2% of its military news stories to AP and UPI while the civilian newspapers used only 21.9% of its stories from the AP and UPI wire. Stars and Stripes used AP and UPI military news stories twice as often as the two civilian newspapers. For more specific information on this finding, refer to Table 5.

The third hypothesis stated, "Stars and Stripes will print more positive military news stories than the civilian newspapers." Because the Stars and Stripes mission is to "maintain balance in presentation of commercial news and opinion," it was assumed that the military newspapers would be more likely to print positive news than the civilian newspapers.³⁶ In addition, the Stars and Stripes is more likely to do news features on military personnel or units assigned in theater. The data supported this hypothesis. Of its military news stories, 7.7% of the Stars and Stripes stories

³⁶*Ibid.*, 11.

were positive, while only 2.9% of the civilian newspaper's stories were rated positive. Again, Stars and Stripes printed more than twice the number of positive military news stories than the two civilian newspapers.

The next hypothesis stated, "Stars and Stripes will print relatively the same number of neutral military news stories as civilian newspapers." The reasoning behind this prediction is that most print "news" stories are written factually and in a neutral tone. In fact, neutral military news stories accounted for almost three-fourths of the stories coded for both the military and civilian newspapers. This hypothesis was also supported by the data gathered. Stars and Stripes had 71.5% of its stories coded neutral compared to 71.1% of the civilian newspapers. Both types of newspapers printed almost identical percentages of neutral military news stories.

Hypothesis #5 stated, "Stars and Stripes will print relatively the same number of negative military news stories as civilian newspapers." Again, this hypothesis is based upon what is considered "news" in most print media. It seems that negative

news events are more likely to be reported on than positive news events. The data gathered seems to support this hypothesis. Stars and Stripes had 12.5% of its stories coded as negative while the civilian newspapers had 14.8% - a difference of only 2.3%. For more specific information on the findings concerning Hypotheses 3-5, see Table 4.

The final hypothesis states, "Stars and Stripes and the two national civilian newspapers will cover the same major military news events." This hypothesis did not seem to be supported by the evidence gathered. Of the 367 military news stories from all four newspapers, only 30 (8.1%) were topics shared by more than one newspaper. In comparing Stars and Stripes to the civilian newspapers, only 18 (4.9%) stories with the same subject were covered by both.

Many things could account for the discrepancy. Most likely, the time difference between the United States newspapers and the Germany- and Pacific-based Stars and Stripes may account for a huge gap between the two deadlines for publishing. A 12 January story may appear in the 12 January issue of the New York Times but

in the 13 January issue of the Pacific Stars and Stripes. In addition, many newspapers may hold a news story until the larger weekend edition of the newspaper. The only way to determine which newspapers reported on certain topics would be to do a content analysis comparison of consecutive issues of the newspapers instead of randomly selected issues throughout the year. For more complete information on the data relating to this hypothesis, see Appendix B.

Suggested Further Research

This study has hopefully served as a focal point for additional research, and certainly for comparison to past research in the analysis of military news stories available to DOD personnel in the United States and overseas. This study has supported five hypotheses relating to the publication of military news stories in military and civilian national newspapers, and rejected one.

One of the main reasons this study was initiated was in response to the GAO study published in 1988. By comparing European and Pacific Stars and Stripes to each other, and to all

available AP and UPI wire stories, the GAO report failed to accurately assess the amount and kind of news DOD personnel overseas were receiving. A more realistic comparison to judge whether or not Stars and Stripes coverage is different from United States media coverage is to compare by content analysis the amount and types of news published in both types of newspapers. The findings of this study directly conflict with some of the findings of the GAO study - a study which has resulted in major allegations and changes at the Stars and Stripes newspapers. Clearly, further research is needed on this matter.

In addition, only military news stories were addressed in this study. A more comprehensive study would be to compare all sections of the Stars and Stripes newspapers to civilian newspapers.

Another facet in this study is the fact that the data studied was from the year 1987. After all the changes that have occurred at Stars and Stripes since the GAO investigation, a new study should be conducted to see if coverage has changed due to new critical observations. Comparing past Stars and Stripes stories to

present would show if any changes have resulted since the GAO investigation. And comparisons between Stars and Stripes and national civilian newspapers in 1990 would also shed a more realistic light on the differences today.

Censorship is a serious charge. All Americans are entitled to a free flow of information regardless of their geographic location. The mixture of media and military may have been unstable in the past, but it doesn't mean a working relationship is impossible - it is imperative.

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APPENDIX A
Coding Instructions and Worksheet

CODING WORKSHEET

Categories of Content. On the coding sheet under "code," mark the story as **positive, negative, neutral, or mixed image**. Categories relate to the "image" of the U.S. military as portrayed in the story. Image refers to the positive, negative or neutral impression that the story gives the reader about the U.S. military.

Positive image DOD stories portray the U.S. military in a favorable way. If two-thirds of the analyzed text about the military were positive, the stories are coded as positive. Examples of positive image DOD stories include a congressional agency supporting an Army decision and commending the Army for making the best choice in procuring a new class of helmets, an Air Force unit voluntarily working long hours to help civilian victims of a storm, and the Naval Investigative Service acting quickly to arrest 23 drug dealers.

Negative image DOD stories convey an unfavorable or critical image of the U.S. military. If two-thirds or more of the analyzed text about the military were negative, the stories are coded as negative. For example, negative image stories include congressmen charging the Air Force with deception in mismanaging the B-1B bomber, the head of military clothing procurement running a DOD kickback scandal, or a report of an entire fleet of helicopters being grounded for mechanical problems the Navy refused to correct. They are directly critical of DOD policy or actions and portray the U.S. military as negligent, criminal or incompetent.

Neutral image U.S. military news stories are informational or descriptive stories that do not contain critical statements about the military or portray the military itself in a negative or positive way. For example, neutral image stories include announcements about DOD drug testing orders, a base closing, or a story about the military budget having to be cut. Stories about training accidents are neutral unless the story conveys an image of military negligence or incompetence. Similarly, military personnel committing off-base crimes are acts of individuals and are neutral unless the crime involves military property or is done while on duty.

Mixed Image DOD stories contain both positive and negative images about the U.S. military. If less than two-thirds of the analyzed text about the military is positive or negative, code the story as mixed image.

Source. This refers to where the story/photo came from e.g., AP, UPI, S&S, etc. If the story was by a staff writer, put the name of the paper as the source. If no attribution is given, code as "none." Examples are:

AP
UPI
Pacific S&S
European S&S
New York Times
Washington Post
Reuters

Photo(s). Put the number of accompanying photos in this block. If none, put 0. Underneath, identify the photo source and code. There may be many photos. Identify all.

CODING SHEET

Coder Initials _____

Date _____

Story Number _____

Source _____

Code _____

Photo(s) _____

-source

-code

Coder Initials _____

Date _____

Story Number _____

Source _____

Code _____

Photo(s) _____

-source

-code

CODING SHEET

Coder Initials _____

Date _____

Story Number _____

Source _____

Code _____

Photo(s) _____

-source

-code

Coder Initials _____

Date _____

Story Number _____

Source _____

Code _____

Photo(s) _____

-source

-code

APPENDIX B
Major Topics Covered by at Least Two Papers

APPENDIX B

13 Jan 87

Post "SDI May Be Deployed in Stages, Weinberger Says"
NYT "Weinberger Gives Strategy Outline on Missile Shield"
Post "Army Recruiters are Punished for Violations"
ES&S "Recruiting Scandal Reported in Army Battalion"

Post "Addenda"
PS&S "Tridnet 2 Missile Protesters Arrested"
ES&S "15 Protesters Arrested at Trident Missile Test Site"

Post "Weinberger Damns the Torpedos"
ES&S "Weinberger Criticized on Carrier Plans"

ES&S "Crew Saved After Navy Copter Sinks"
PS&S "Crew OK After Ditching Navy Helo in Atlantic"

7 Feb 87

PS&S "Hollings Seeks Return of Draft"
ES&S "Hollings Calls for Revival of Military Draft"

7 Apr 87

ES&S "Embassy in Moscow 'Fully Comprised'"
NYT "US Legislators Inspect Embassy in Moscow"

NYT "Navy Nominee has Reservations on Role of Women at Academy"
Post "Navy Nominee to 'Reexamine' Academy's Pro Sports Policy"

PS&S "Tourists Stranded on USS Saratoga"
ES&S "Rough Seas Strand 123 Tourists on Saratoga"

20 May 87

PS&S "Military Pay Sweetened"

ES&S "Military's Raise in Pay Likely to be Limited to 3%"

PS&S "Stark's Death Toll Now at 37"

PS&S "Navy on Alert in Gulf"

NYT "US Officer Says Frigate Defenses Were Turned Off"

Post "2 Saudi F15s Refused to Intercept Jet"

Post "Admiral Tells of Surprise Aboard Stark, Toll is 37"

PS&S "French-Made Exocet Strikes Stark Off Guard"

NYT "US and Iraq Plan a Joint Inquiry"

ES&S "Weinberger Defends US Role in Gulf to Lawmakers in Wake of Attack"

NYT "US Widens Navy's Escort Role in Gulf War Zone Despite Attack Ship"

ES&S "Commander of Stark 22-Year Navy Veteran"

ES&S "Lawmakers Cautious in Reaction to Attack"

17 June 87

NYT "US Navy Defense is on Hair Trigger Escort in Gulf"

Post "Congress' Fears Deepen Over Persian Gulf Plan"

ES&S "Iran Reportedly Laying Mines to Stop Kuwaiti Oil Shipments"

PS&S "No Suspects in Murder of GI on Patrol at Honduran Air Base"

ES&S "Suspect Arrested in Slaying of GI in Honduras"

ES&S "Who Controls the National Guard?"

NYT "11 States Seek Right to Restrict Guard's Training"

Post "Shultz, Visiting Manila, Praises Aquino's Rule"

ES&S "\$900 Million Pledge to Philippines is 'Aid', Not 'Rent' Shultz Insists"

Post "US B1B Jump Started"

ES&S "Broken Power Unit Grounds B-1B in Paris Temporarily"

17 July 87

Post "Air Crash Kills 6 Americans in El Salvador"
ES&S "6 GIs Die When Copter Crashes in El Salvador"
NYT "6 Americans Killed in El Salvador"

ES&S "Military Recruits' AIDS Rate Highest Among Young Blacks"
PS&S "Army AIDS Study Finds Black Men Highest Risk"

PS&S "Search Continues for F-4E Crew"
ES&S "AF Jet Crashes; 2 Crew Members Missing"

ES&S "MX Payments Withheld from Morton Thiokol"
Post "Thiokol Payments Cut for Poor Work on MX"

12 Aug 87

PS&S "9 Americans Injured"
ES&S "November 17 Terrorists Say They Bombed Bus"

NYT "British in Switch, Add Minesweepers for Gulf Patrols"
ES&S "4 Floating Mines Found in Gulf of Oman"
Post "Europeans Send Mine Sweepers"

PS&S "US Jets Fire on Iranian Planes"
Post "US Officials Won't Confirm Fighter Incident"
Post "High Over Strait of Hormuz, 'It Was the USS Stark Revisited"
NYT "Missile Attack: Pulling the Hair Trigger"

NYT "Navy Holds 2 in Gulf Ship Death"
ES&S "Missing US Navy Crewman Allegedly Killed by 2 Sailors"
Post "US Sailor Slain Aboard Carrier in Arabian Sea"

Post "Love, Revenge Called Motives for Lonetree"
NYT "Testimony Begins in Trial of Marine"
ES&S "Potential Juror Admits Negative View of Lonetree"

4 Sep 87

Post "Iran, Iraq Attack More Gulf Ships"

NYT "20 Ships Hit in Gulf in Six Days, Raising Fears of Maritime Nations"
PS&S "7 Gulf Ships Damaged"

11 Oct 87

ES&S "GI Personnel Cuts Ruled Out"
NYT "Reagan Bars Military Pay Cuts in '88 Budget"
Post "Military Pay Exempt From Budget Cuts"

ES&S "2 Navy Personnel Killed After Car Falls Into Gulf"
PS&S "2 Sailors Die As Car Runs Off Gulf Pier"

PS&S "Navy is Flying 'Mock' Attacks Against Soviet"
ES&S "Navy Jets Out of Alaska Stage Mock Attacks Against USSR"

25 Nov 87

PS&S "Carlucci Sworn In as Defense Chief"
Post "Carlucci Sets New Approach but 'No Purges' for Pentagon"

APPENDIX C
Coding Results

APPENDIX C

Story #	Source	Code	Photos	Code	Source
1002	AP	negative			
1006	AP	mixed			
1007	AP	neutral	2	neutral	ES&S
1008	UPI	negative			
1009	UPI	neutral			
1010	UPI	neutral			
1015	ES&S	neutral			
1019	ES&S	negative			
1020	ES&S	neutral			
1021	ES&S	neutral			
1022	AP	neutral			
1023	AP	neutral			
1028	ES&S	neutral			
1029	ES&S	negative			
1030	ES&S	neutral			
1031	ES&S	mixed			
1032	ES&S	neutral			
1033	ES&S	neutral			
1034	ES&S	positive			
1037	AP	neutral			
1040	ES&S	positive	1	positive	ES&S
1041	ES&S	neutral			
1043	AP	negative			
1044	ES&S	neutral	1	neutral	ES&S
1045	ES&S	neutral			
1046	ES&S	negative			
1047	ES&S	neutral			
1048	ES&S	neutral			
1049	ES&S	neutral			
1050	ES&S	neutral			
1051	UPI	mixed			
1052	UPI	positive			
1054	AP	neutral			
1055	AP	neutral			
1056	ES&S	neutral			
1057	AP	neutral			
1058	ES&S	neutral			
1059	ES&S	neutral			
1060	ES&S	mixed			

1062	ES&S	negative			
1063	ES&S	negative			
1064	ES&S	mixed			
1065	ES&S	neutral			
1066	ES&S	mixed			
1067	ES&S	neutral	2	neutral	ES&S
1068	ES&S	neutral			
1069	AP	neutral	1	neutral	AP
1070	AP	mixed	1	mixed	AP
1071	AP	neutral			
1075	ES&S	neutral			
1076	ES&S	neutral			
1077	ES&S	neutral	.		
1078	AP	neutral			
1081	ES&S	negative			
1082	ES&S	neutral			
1083	UPI	neutral			
1084	AP	neutral	1	neutral	AP
1085	AP	mixed	1	mixed	
1087	AP	neutral			
1088	AP	neutral			
1089	AP	neutral			
1091	AP	neutral			
1092	ES&S	neutral			
1094	ES7S	neutral			
1095	AP	neutral			
1096	ES&S	neutral			
1097	ES&S	neutral			
1098	AP	negative			
1099	ES&S	neutral			
1100	AP	neutral	1	neutral	Chicago Tril
1103	AP	neutral			
1104	AP	neutral			
1106	AP	neutral			
1108	ES&S	neutral			
1109	ES&S	neutral			
1110	ES&S	negative			
1111	wire reports	neutral			
1112	AP	neutral			
1114	ES&S	negative			
1115	ES&S	neutral			
1116	AP	negative			
1117	AP	mixed			
1118	AP	negative			

1119	AP	negative			
1120	AP	neutral			
1121	UPI	neutral			
1125	ES&S	mixed			
1126	ES&S	neutral	1	neutral	ES&S
1127	ES&S	neutral			
1128	ES&S	neutral	1	neutral	ES&S
1129	AP	negative			
1130	UPI	negative			
1131	AP	mixed			
1134	ES&S	neutral			
1135	ES&S	neutral	2	neutral	ES&S
1136	AP	neutral			
1137	ES&S	neutral	1	positive	ES&S
1138	ES&S	neutral			
1139	AP	negative			
1140	AP	neutral			
1142	AP	positive			
1143	NYT	neutral			
1144	UPI	neutral			
1145	ES&S	neutral	1	neutral	ES&S
1146	ES&S	neutral	1	neutral	ES&S
1148	ES&S	neutral			
1150	AP	neutral			
1151	ES&S	neutral			
1152	ES&S	neutral			
1154	ES&S	neutral			
1155	AP	neutral			
1156	AP	neutral			
1157	UPI	neutral			
1158	AP	positive			
1159	AP	neutral	1	neutral	Chicago Tri
1160	UPI	neutral			
1161	ES&S	neutral			
1163	AP	neutral			
2003	UPI	neutral			
2006	AP	neutral			
2007	UPI	neutral			
2012	AP	neutral			
2013	AP	mixed			
2014	UPI	negative			
2017	wire report	neutral			
2019	AP	mixed			
2020	PS&S	neutral			

2021	PS&S	negative			
2022	PS&S	neutral			
2026	UPI	neutral			
2029	USAF	positive	1	positive	USAF
2031	PS&S	neutral	4	neutral	PS&S
2032	PS&S	neutral	2	neutral	PS&S
2034	PS&S	positive	1	neutral	USN
2035	UPI	positive			
2038	PS&S	neutral			
2040	AP	negative			
2041	UPI	negative			
2042	PS&S	neutral			
2043	PS&S	positive	1	neutral	PS&S
2044	UPI	neutral			
2045	AP	negative	2	negative	AP
2047	AP	neutral			
2048	PS&S	negative			
2049	PS&S	neutral			
2050	PS&S	neutral			
2051	PS&S	mixed			
2053	AP	neutral			
2056	PS&S	negative			
2057	PS&S	neutral			
2058	PS&S	positive			
2060	UPI	neutral			
2061	AP	neutral			
2063	AP	neutral			
2065	UPI	mixed			
2067	PS&S	neutral			
2068	AP	neutral			
2069	USMC	positive	1	neutral	USMC
2073	PS&S	neutral			
2074	PS&S	mixed			
2076	PS&S	neutral	2	neutral	PS&S
2077	AP	neutral	1	neutral	AP
2078	AP	neutral	1	neutral	AP
2079	UPI	neutral			
2080	AP	neutral			
2082	PS&S	neutral			
2083	USAF	positive			
2084	PS&S	neutral	3	neutral	USMC
2086	AP	neutral			
2087	AP, UPI	neutral			
2088	AP	neutral			

2089	USMC	positive			
2090	AP	negative	2	neut/neg	AP
2092	USA	positive			
2093	AAFES	neutral			
2094	UNC	neutral			
2095	PS&S	neutral	1	neutral	PS&S
2098	AP	mixed			
2100	AP	neutral			
2102	AP	positive			
2103	AP	neutral			
2104	AP	neutral			
2105	AP	neutral			
2108	UPI	neutral			
2110	UPI	neutral			
2112	AP	neutral			
2113	PS&S	neutral			
2115	PS&S	neutral	3	neutral	
3006	NYT	neutral	1	neutral	NYT
3007	NYT	neutral			
3009	NYT	neutral			
3011	NYT	neutral			
3012	NYT	neutral			
3014	NYT	mixed			
3025	AP	negative			
3027	NYT	neutral			
3028	AP	neutral			
3029	NYT	mixed			
3030	AP	neutral			
3031	NYT	neutral	1	neutral	NYT
3032	AP	negative			
3035	NYT	mixed	2	neutral	AFP, Reute
3036	NYT	mixed	1	neutral	NYT
3037	NYT	mixed	1	neutral	AP
3038	AP	neutral	1	neutral	AP
3039	NYT	negative	1	negative	NYT
3040	NYT	neutral			
3044	AP	neutral			
3046	NYT	neutral			
3049	NYT	neutral			
3050	Reuters	neutral			
3054	NYT	neutral			
3055	Reuters	neutral			
3065	AP	negative			
3066	NYT	neutral	1	neutral	NYT

3067	NYT	neutral			
3068	NYT	neutral	2	neutral	Reuters
3069	NYT	neutral			
3070	NYT	mixed			
3073	NYT	neutral	1	neutral	NYT
3075	NYT	negative			
3076	NYT	neutral			
3079	NYT	neutral	2	neutral	AFP, AP
3081	NYT	neutral			
3082	NYT	neutral			
3086	Reuters	neutral			
3090	NYT	neutral			
3091	NYT	neutral			
3092	NYT	negative			
3093	AP	mixed			
3094	NYT	positive	1	positive	NYT
3097	NYT	neutral			
3098	NYT	neutral			
3099	NYT	neutral			
3100	NYT	neutral			
3101	AP	neutral			
4001	WP	neutral			
4002	WP	neutral			
4003	UPI	negative			
4004	AP	negative			
4007	WP	neutral			
4008	WP	neutral	1	neutral	WP
4014	WP	neutral			
4015	WP	neutral	1	neutral	WP
4019	WP	neutral			
4020	WP	neutral	1	neutral	WP
4021	WP	mixed	2	mixed	WP
4022	WP	neutral			
4023	WP	neutral	1	neutral	WP
4024	WP	neutral	1	neutral	WP
4025	WP	neutral	2	neutral	WP
4026	WP	neutral			
4027	WP, AP	neutral	1	neutral	UPI/Reuter
4028	WP	negative	1	neutral	UPI
4029	WP	mixed			
4030	WP	mixed	2	neutral	WP
4031	WP	mixed	1	neutral	WP
4032	WP	neutral			
4033	WP	negative	1	negative	AP

4034	WP	neutral			
4035	WP	negative	2	neut/neg	WP, DOD
4036	WP	neutral			
4037	WP	neutral			
4038	WP	neutral	1	neutral	WP
4039	WP	mixed	1	neutral	WP
4040	WP	neutral			
4041	WP	neutral			
4042	WP	neutral	3	neutral	AP,UPI,AP
4043	WP	negative	1	negative	WP
4044	UPI	neutral			
4045	AP	negative			
4046	WP	negative			
4047	WP	neutral	1	neutral	UPI
4048	WP	neutral			
4049	WP	negative			
4050	WP	negative			
4051	WP	mixed			
4052	AP	neutral			
4053	UPI	neutral			
4054	WP	neutral			
4055	AP	neutral			
4056	WP	neutral			
4057	AP	positive	1	positive	AP