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MASTERS OF MILITARY STUDIES

Marine Public Affairs and the Battle of Iwo Jima

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Executive Summary

Title: Marine Public Affairs and the Battle of Iwo Jima

Author: Major Ben H. Owens, USMC

Thesis: Using aggressive public affairs, the Marine Corps took one of the bloodiest battles in its history and turned it into an icon of military valor.

Discussion: The battle for Iwo Jima was bloody and a strong argument can be made that had the United States used different tactics, it might have suffered fewer casualties. It is often believed that the U.S. media during World War II was accepting of high casualties and the censorship of the Allied military judgement. A review of the literature, however, shows that the media did ask the hard questions and did analyze the actions of our military. However, by aggressively trying to accommodate the media combined with open honesty, Marine Corps public affairs “won-over” most media objections. Although censorship and other delays were impossible to avoid, the Marines went to great lengths to identify and minimize the impact of these delays. Marine Corps Combat Correspondents were trained journalists and used this knowledge to show empathy towards the media and gain their respect by “talking-the-talk”; i.e. using the common jargon of civilian journalists. In this way, Marine public affairs shaped the media battlefield to their advantage without sacrificing their ethics so that even when things did not go well or there were unexpected problems, the civilian media were less likely to show the Marines in an unfavorable or unduly critical light.

Conclusion: The American military is worried about the impact of American casualties upon the public’s support of military operations. The battle of Iwo Jima shows that by shaping the public information battlefield, the American public will accept casualties when needed. While the attempt to minimize casualties is a noble endeavor, it should not be allowed to become a vulnerability and adversely influence decisions at all three levels of war (strategic, operational, and tactical).

Orientation: Framing The Public Affairs Battle at Iwo Jima

The Battle for Iwo Jima has come to be known as an epic engagement, symbolizing all that is virtuous in military valor. While many of today's non-combat tested Marines may look towards that volcanic island dreaming of glory on the battlefield, today's U.S defense establishment is more concerned about casualties. Driven by a conventional wisdom that the American public will accept only light casualties,¹ the military has established "force protection" as a doctrinal tenant for the commander to perform.²

This paper will show that the work of military theorists validates the need for an analysis of military actions vis-a-vis public affairs. It will assert that the Marines' victory at Iwo Jima was a terribly bloody battle with the sort of casualties that today's military is convinced the American public is unwilling to sustain. Although the cultural and social norms of the United States have changed since 1945, and WWII was a unique war, the casualties and destruction wrought before Iwo Jima during

¹ Col Michael R. Lehnert, USMC, "The End of the Attila the Hun Defense," **Marine Corps Gazette**, December 1997, 63.

² Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub, **Capstone and Keystone Primer** (Washington, DC: GPO, 15 Jul 1997), 53.

the Battle of Tarawa and the air campaign over Europe were controversial even from the perspective of the times.

Significantly, it demonstrates that the Iwo Jima battle was neither immune from critical analysis by the popular media, nor was it a foregone conclusion that Iwo Jima would be hailed historically as a victory rather than a bloody mistake. It will look at how the Marine Corps used the newborn (June 30, 1941) occupational specialty of public affairs to tell the American people about the war in such a way as to maintain the public's confidence and support. By honestly portraying the horror of the war, the Marine Corps found that many of the images and quotations from this battle would become emblematic of the Marine Corps' entire history and not just this one battle. This paper will conclude by showing how many of the public affairs lessons of Iwo Jima are still relevant on the modern battlefield in today's era of electronic journalism.

CHAPTER 1

The Military Study of Public Affairs

“The United States does not need a Marine Corps. However, for good reasons which completely transcend cold logic, the United States wants a Marine Corps.”³

Lieutenant General Victor “Brute” Krulak in a letter to then Commandant General Randolph McC. Pate in 1957.⁴

The fervent warrior might challenge the need for public relations, known in the Marine Corps as public affairs, on the battlefield. No kinetic impact befalls the enemy by the actions of public affairs people or the media on the battlefield as is wrought by a rifleman’s bullet or an artillery shell. On the contrary, having the media or even a servicemember focused on public relations in the battlespace can be viewed by some as detrimental to friendly forces -- if for no other than logistic reasons (as this paper will look at later). So, why even bother with public relations?

Military theorist Carl von Clausewitz’s theories provide the logical underpinnings of a great many military philosophies and studies including the United States Marine Corps’ own Command and Staff College. Clausewitz validates

³ Lt Gen Victor H. Krulak, USMC (Ret), *First To Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps*, (New York: Pocket Books, 1991), xx.

the need for a democracy's military to practice public affairs and he thereby answers the warrior's questions about this subject. Clausewitz introduces the notion that war is comprised of a paradoxical trinity.⁵ The trinity consists of the feelings and passions felt by the peoples involved, the probabilities and chances involved in any undertaking exemplified in the army (i.e. armed forces today), and the role of war as policy or a tool of political policy which resides in political leadership.

It is easy to see how the passions of the fighting units are important to war, but Clausewitz's "peoples" goes beyond the actual soldier under fire. To fight a war on a grand scale requires a national level of support of policy, and mobilization of resources to include funding.

Americans are famous for their resistance to taxation and have little tolerance for funding a military venture that does not appeal to their self-perceived ideals and passions. Equally important are the mothers and wives of a society. Large armies capable of overpowering an enemy require a constant and ample supply of new recruits.

Asking a mother or wife to send her child or husband off to

⁴ Lt Gen Victor H. Krulak, USMC (Ret) was a Brigadier General in 1957 according to the Marine Corps Historical Center.

⁵ Carl Von Clausewitz, **On War** (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 89.

war requires a level of passion and support on her part that is not easily won, but can be quickly lost.⁶

Clausewitz expends much effort in analyzing how war is an extension of a nation's policy. He argues that it is so much so that military conflict is inherently really a tool of policy, as phrased in his famous line "war is a continuation of policy by other means."⁷ Especially for a democracy, this argument strengthens the contention that the paradoxical trinity goes beyond the fighting man to encompass the passions and support of the entire country. Politicians must maintain their constituent's faith in their policies or lose support for a conflict and possibly face losing an election. Using the military may be a tool, but like taxes, it is a tool that draws the quick and close scrutiny of the electorate.

LtGen. Krulak, in his quotation noted above, acknowledges Clausewitz's contention, taking it a step further for the Marine Corps. The reason that Americans want a Marine Corps defies rational logic, and hence, is, therefore, an emotional passion. Without it, the Marine

⁶ It must also be recognized that as barriers to women in combat fall, this emotional equation can be expected to increase exponentially as we are asked to see our daughters and wives go more directly into harms way. We received a small taste of this in Vietnam and Desert Storm as women were placed in supporting operations exposed to the enemy. It can also be argued that the 1940's social view that a father should see his son going to war as a mark of manhood is also evaporating.

Corps could be disestablished like it was from the time the Continental Marines disbanded in 1785 until 1796.⁸ Krulak also says that to maintain that support, we have to be able to tell the American public what we are going to do, and then do it. As Krulak wrote, "...if the United States wanted to try, she could get along without a Marine Corps."⁹

The United States could get along without the Marine Corps, but has chosen not to. In fact, the politicians have found it expedient to not only authorize a Marine Corps, but to codify its minimum size. The passions of the people override cold logic and are powerful, indeed.

But this passion did not just happen. It was born from tales of great exploits and valor, primarily on the battlefields of World War II. What was the mechanism for creating this reputation and how can it be maintained? Obviously, deeds are the foundation upon which the public's perception of the Marine Corps is built. But such accomplishments are meaningless in terms of building passion if they go untold. Public relations and the Marine Corps' public affairs officers and combat correspondents have provided the tools and carpenters.

⁷ Clausewitz, *On War*, 86.

⁸ BGen Edwin H. Simmons, USMC (Ret), *The United States Marines 1775-1975*, (New York: The Viking Press, 1976), 12-13.

The public affairs military occupational specialty can be split into two groups: the officers and the enlisted personnel, the latter also known as combat correspondents. Today's public affairs officer is tasked with being the commander's primary advisor on the media, the military's main conduit to the people. The combat correspondent is tasked with providing products (everything from stories and scripts, to audio and video footage, and photos and drawings) to the media for use in informing the American public about its Marine Corps. This was also the mission of the enlisted public affairs Marines on Iwo Jima.¹⁰ In short, Public Affairs specialists are tasked with telling the Marine Corps' story to the American people. That story feeds the people's passions, whether for good or ill.

Therefore, in the same way that war is a tool of policy, public affairs is a tool in building and maintaining the support, to include emotional, of the people. It is, therefore, worthy of study by the military theorist and practitioner of the profession of arms.

⁹ Krulak, *First to Fight*, xxi.

¹⁰ V Amphibious Corps Landing Force, In the Field. *Special Action Report, Iwo Jima Campaign*. Letter from the Public Relations Officer to The Commanding General. Unpublished USMC microfilm in the Marine Corps Research Center Library microfilm collection, 4 May 1945.

But why specifically study the public affairs associated with Iwo Jima? Because that battle is firmly established as one that has proven the Marines in the minds and hearts of the American people. To all Americans, the numerous quotations and images, many included in this paper, are known and considered proof of the Marines' virtues and the capabilities of the Corps.

But that alone does not make it significant in terms of being a public affairs case study. Iwo Jima had many characteristics that today's senior military and public affairs officers dread: heavy casualties, victory taking longer than the generals and admirals had predicted, and mistakes that may have compounded the casualties. A brief operational analysis illustrates these points.

CHAPTER 2

The Battle for Iwo Jima: A Military Campaign

“Among the men who fought on Iwo Jima, uncommon valor was a common virtue.”

Admiral C.W. Nimitz: Pacific Fleet communiqué, 16 March 1945 speaking of the Battle of Iwo Jima.¹¹

The Operational Level of War bridges the gap between a state's strategic (or the national level) goals and its tactical engagements in the most efficient and effective manner possible.¹² In layman's terms, it would be wasteful for military commanders to strike at the enemy "willy-nilly," i.e. without an overriding, clear and coherent purpose. Such a method of waging war could not guarantee the defeat of the enemy. Resources would be spent but little in payback received. Instead, military commanders should scrutinize the reasons for going to war and the desired outcome. They should analyze both their own and their adversary's strengths and weakens. Then, at the operational level, they should develop a war plan that orchestrates campaigns (comprised of battles made up of

¹¹ Col Robert Debs Heinl Jr, USMC (Ret), *Dictionary of Military and Naval Quotations*, (Annapolis, Md: United States Naval Institute, 1981), 335.

¹² Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, Feb 1995), 139.

individual engagements) to most effectively bring the enemy to capitulation and achieve the policy goals and strategic objectives of the war. This method helps ensure unity of effort among friendly forces, conserves precious resources, and provides a logical framework within which subordinate commanders can work.

Adhering to this principle would seem a must for a democracy so dependent on its populace for support of government policies. But does Iwo Jima measure up operationally? Strategically, the United State's goal was to prevent Japanese hegemony in East Asia and end Japanese aggression. Further, President Franklin D. Roosevelt had a less immediate goal of ending what he perceived as traditional colonialism in general. Washington's strategic end state was Japan's unconditional surrender.

Allied operational commanders saw this strategic goal as requiring the invasion of the Japanese home islands. Japanese culture fed that society's determination in many ways. The citizenry's belief in a divine Emperor equated to a religious belief in national strategy. In the case of war, this religious fervor was fanned by the Japanese belief in "bushito", or "the way of the warrior", which said that a soldier killed in battle became a revered spirit. The result was a fanatical passion among the

citizenry for their country's war aims, eventually evidenced by the bonsai and kamikaze attacks when defeat loomed. The U.S. commanders saw the Japanese's power emanating from that passion, making it the Japanese strategic-level center of gravity.

The operational commanders felt that this fanatical center of gravity could only be neutralized with the invasion of the Japanese homelands. The Allied commanders had, therefore, decided on a series of battles that would simultaneously cut the Japanese off from their resource-rich holdings in southeast Asia, and provide a stepping-stone approach to the Japanese home islands.

Likewise, Japanese commanders hoped U.S. forces would strike into Japanese-held territory where their own forces would then inflict heavy casualties on the Americans. The Japanese saw America's critical vulnerability as being the U.S. public's aversion to casualties and war in general. Enemy commanders felt that if enough casualties could be inflicted upon U.S. forces, then American public pressure would force negotiated peace on terms favorable to them. Much like the American strategists, enemy commanders saw their center of gravity as being their people's superior

toughness, moral and fighting spirit which had won the day against China and Russia.¹³

By late 1944, the Allies had advanced to and captured the Marianas, and landed in the Philippines. The next step was either Formosa or Iwo Jima. Formosa was deemed as too large and too heavily defended for an amphibious landing. Iwo Jima, on the other hand, would provide better protection for the Marianas. Iwo Jima also housed a Japanese radar site that was warning Tokyo of impending Allied air raids, and contained two functioning airfields used to attack the bombers coming and returning to the Marianas (with a third being built). These airfields sat approximately halfway in-between the Marianas and Tokyo, thus, they could provide a potential intermediate base of operations if in Allied hands. Finally, Iwo Jima was governed by the Tokyo Prefecture and, therefore, its capture might in theory provide a psychological blow to the Japanese and their passion and support for the Wars.¹⁴

Therefore Iwo Jima was chosen. The operational goals were to:

¹³ Ronald H. Spector, ***Eagle Against the Sun: The American War With Japan*** (New York: The Free Press, 1985), 44.

¹⁴ Lt Col Whitman S. Bartley, USMC, ***Iwo Jima: Amphibious Epic*** (Washington, DC: GPO, 1954), 19-23.

1. Establish a base from which to attack the Japanese Empire
2. Protect the Marianas
3. Cover naval forces and search operations in the approaches to the Japanese Empire and
4. Provide fighter escort for very long range operations.¹⁵

These were the reasons given to the reporters and the American people for the need to take the island of Iwo Jima.

What ensued as the Allies sought to capture the isle? The Allies did succeed in securing an intermediate base. On March 4th, as the battle raged on, a B-29 Superfortress made an emergency landing on Airfield Number 1. Marine riflemen could have looked up from the fighting and seen how their efforts directly contributed to the operational goal of providing relief for long range bombers and the strategic goal of hitting the Japan home island. By war's end, over 2,250 aircraft carrying nearly 28,000 crewmen had made emergency landings on Iwo Jima.¹⁶ On the other hand, 26,000 Marines, sailors and soldiers were killed or wounded securing those airfields. Iwo Jima, thus, became an

¹⁵ Bartley, *Iwo Jima: Amphibious Epic*, 23.

example of joint operations with operational and strategic impact on the war.

But this success could not obscure other less successful operational aspects of the battle of Iwo Jima. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff who authorized the move towards Iwo Jima specifically stated the Japanese needed to be denied use of the island's airfields.¹⁷ The Allies had so effectively cut off Iwo Jima from effective air or sea egress for nearly two months prior to the invasion that it had ceased to be a threat to the Marianas long before the landing. As pressure mounted upon Japan, and its military and its industrial strength sapped, Iwo Jima's importance¹⁸ as a Japanese fighter base had for all intents and purposes ended.¹⁹ The allies, thus, achieved part of their operational goals without risking any Americans on the ground.

Likewise, it is not clear that the amphibious landing in late February 1945 represented the most effective and efficient manner for obtaining Iwo Jima. The Japanese aviation assets on Iwo Jima were not the only military

¹⁶ Bartley, *Iwo Jima: Amphibious Epic*, 210.

¹⁷ Ibid, 22.

¹⁸ Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*, 502.

¹⁹ Bartley, *Iwo Jima: Amphibious Epic*, 16.

resource hurt by a lack of resupply. Iwo Jima's only natural resource was sulfur. It is worth stressing that even water had to be imported. The Japanese had between 20,000 and 21,000 defenders on the island and supplies were definitely finite.²⁰ The last message the Japanese Imperial Government received from Iwo Jima was on 21 March 1945. It said the defenders hadn't had anything to eat or drink for five days, but that their fighting spirits were high and they were going to fight bravely until the last.²¹ Our Navy had only given the island three days of naval bombardment despite the Marine Corps' pleas for ten days. A longer period of fire would predictably have further exhausted the enemy's supplies. Also, the landing had been delayed once because required resources were tied up in General McArthur's Southern Pacific area of operations in the Philippines. A further delay would have weakened the Japanese as their water and food became depleted with no hope of resupply. As tenacious as they were, the Japanese still had to eat and drink. (See below photo of the starved, dehydrated Japanese surrendering to Marines.)

Conversely, the Japanese defenders killed nearly 6,326 Marines, sailors and soldiers, and wounded another 19,217.

²⁰ Bartley, *Iwo Jima: Amphibious Epic*, 231.

Another 448 servicemen were missing, presumed dead.²² The three veteran Marine divisions badly mauled at Iwo Jima were experienced in the difficult art of amphibious landings. It was not known at the end of March 1945 that dropping the atomic bomb would negate the need for an invasion of the Japanese home islands, so the loss of these American fighting men had to have been of great concern both strategically and operationally to Washington.

In short, a strong argument could be made that the invasion was conducted too early. Iwo Jima had been nearly eliminated as a threat to our air operations and the Marianas by H-hour, thus eliminating that imperative. The 20,000 plus Japanese defenders could only consume their finite resources and, thus, every additional day reduced their strength. Finally, the envisioned invasion of the Japanese home islands made a premium of amphibious-experienced servicemen. Thus, the decision to invade on February 19, 1945 was truly a decision open to criticism.

²¹ Bartley, *Iwo Jima: Amphibious Epic*, 191.

²² *Ibid.*, 220-221.

CHAPTER 3

Organized Marine Public Affairs Starts In World War II

“The Marine Corps is the Navy’s police force and as long as I am President that is what it will remain. They have a propaganda machine that is almost equal to Stalin’s. “

Harry S. Truman: Letter to Representative Gordon L. McDonough 29 August 1950.²³

President Truman’s comment, although not meant as a compliment, makes the point that public affairs is vital to the Corps’ existence. Truman opposed the Marine Corps’ existence as a standing force, but was unable to withstand the hail of criticism that his letter brought. He was forced to apologize for his words saying, “I sincerely regret the unfortunate language which I used in my letter...”²⁴

During World War II, Marine public affairs utilized frontline servicemen to aid the media in getting battlefield stories and images disseminated to the public. Susan L. Carruthers in her analysis of war and the media errs when she says the Germans outmaneuvered the British and American governments in the public relations/propaganda

²³ Heinl, *Dictionary of Military and Naval Quotations*, 184.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 184.

front by being the only ones to make military personnel into combat correspondents.²⁵

In fact, the Marines outmaneuvered the Germans since the Nazi effort was confined largely to cinematography while the Marines went beyond this selectiveness to embrace all of the modern media: print, radio, still photography, and motion pictures. The Corps also transcended the notion of a combat soldier working as a journalist. They actively sought out working newsmen and offered to make them trained Marines who might get to work in their civilian specialty (but this was not guaranteed). Additionally, the Marines surpassed the Germans in the sense that their combat correspondents were meant to augment, not prevent, civilian journalists from heading to the field. It is important to stress the distinction that the Marines allowed civilian media to join the combat correspondent in the combat area while the Nazis didn't allow such independent reporting or verification.

The Division of Public Affairs was established on 30 June 1941. Prior to this, there was no organized, official public affairs with such efforts, instead, being dependent upon the initiative and charisma of individual Marines.

²⁵ Susan L. Carruthers, *The Media at War: Communication and Conflict in the Twentieth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 79.

Initially, its mission was recruiting, and the original table of organization called for the public affairs Marines to be assigned to the recruiting regions. Its first director, Brigadier General Robert L. Denig, realized that public affairs could play a larger role in the approaching war.²⁶ The decision to recruit professional journalists was made with the stipulation that they all receive recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, South Carolina, which meant that they were Marines (basic riflemen) firstly, and combat journalists secondly.

Initially, Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC) limited recruiting to ten print journalists from the Washington, D.C. area, although Denig had asked for 100 in order to place these Marines with all major combat commands. The Battle for Wake Island in December of 1941 gave General Denig the opportunity to pressure HQMC manpower for more public affairs personnel. Without the presence of trained journalists at Wake, all the Marine Corps could provide America's media were dry and bureaucratically written official communiqués. Because these releases read so poorly and required great effort on the part of editors to

²⁶ Benis M. Frank, "A History of the Combat Correspondents" U.S. Marine Corps Combat Correspondents and Photographers Association Silver Anniversary Program in the Marine Corps Research Center Archives, Marine Combat Correspondent Collection, 15 September 1967, 3.

make them readable to the average civilian, they were not extensively used by the civilian media. Thus, in the public's mind, the battle for Wake Island was a Navy fight with the Marines largely ignored PR-wise.²⁷ Immediately after the fall of Wake, Headquarters, Marine Corps, decided to expand public affairs by placing such trained Marines at the corps, division, wing, and brigade level as quickly as they could be recruited and trained. Public affairs then expanded to cover all areas of the media.

The journalists were attracted by the Corps' promise that they could personally report on combat. Since war is a good place for a reporter to build a reputation, many reporters wanted to cover the war but could not because the newspapers they worked for either could not afford the costs or had already sent the reporters the outlet could afford to send. Many also saw a safety advantage to covering the war with the benefits of Marine training and having a rifle in their possession.

General Denig's initial instruction to the combat correspondents was to: "Give most of your time and attention to the enlisted man and what he says, thinks and

²⁷ Frank, 3-4.

does. Tell the human interest side of the Marine Corps."²⁸ Recruiting active and well-known journalists was justified as negating the need for specialized training in a time constrained environment. Whether intentional or not, it would also have two valuable side effects.

First, it helped co-opt the media. Logically, *The Washington Post*, for example, would be more accepting of an article written by one of its former writers than from an unknown Marine with no professional credentials. Stories that might otherwise have been labeled as fluff or 'flack' (a derogatory term the media often applies to military news releases) might be accepted without question. Also, the civilian media going to the field would be more accepting of conditions and limitations placed upon them by individuals they saw as colleagues.

Secondly, as the war expanded, reporters were enlisted from across the country. Often, they already had "followings" in their local area. Readers would be more interested in the stories written by a "local boy" gone to war than a story with just a faceless wire service byline. The Marine Corps, thus, had hometown boys writing stories about hometown boys -- an unbeatable combination from a public relations standpoint.

²⁸ Frank, 11.

To take advantage of this phenomena, the district recruiting offices in January 1943 sent letters to newspaper editors telling them that they could use these combat correspondents for special coverage of boys from their local community. The response was overwhelming.²⁹ The number of stories by the 121 combat correspondents jumped from 450 in that February 1943 to 972 in that April and continued to rise to 3,184 the following February.³⁰

Thirdly, recruiting media professionals brought an instant expertise to this fledgling occupational specialty. This was demonstrated when the Marine Corps won an Academy Award for Best Documentary Short Subject in 1945 for it's film *With The Marines At Tarawa*.³¹

Initially Marine public affairs had trouble with both Army and Navy censors, but by the battle of Iwo Jima they had overcome most of this. Again, using the principles of co-opting, the Division of Public Affairs had placed public affairs officers on the staffs of the Commander-in-Chief, Southern Pacific, and the Commander-in-Chief, Central

²⁹ Benis M. Frank, ***Denig's Demons and How They Grew...The Story of Marine Corps Combat Correspondents, Photographers and Artists*** (Washington, D.C.: Marine Corps Combat Correspondents and Photographers Association, Inc, 1967), 21.

³⁰ Ibid., 27-28.

³¹ The Oscar for this film is on display at the Marine Corps Historical Center in Washington DC. A copy of the movie is held at the Marine Corps University Research Center's Visual Information Repository at Quantico, Va.

Pacific. These Marines were given strict guidance to assist their sister services in any way possible without hindering Marine public affairs. Marines helped in darkrooms, editing backlogs of news releases (both civilian and military of all services), transmitting stories and data, and other related areas that a harried higher headquarters might need. The results were that by Iwo Jima, grateful censors, film processors, and communicators allowed the Public Affairs (PA) Marines to move their products to the front of the line.³²

These great efforts meant that news items were taking days, instead of weeks, to be sent back home. News print, being easier to send, could sometimes be cleared in hours, while photos took the Marines up to three days to get back to the home front. All of this would reap benefits when Iwo Jima arose in helping the Marines make it the battle symbolic of the fighting in the Pacific war.

³² Frank, *Denig's Demons and How They Grew...*, 34-35.

CHAPTER 4

Public Affairs at Iwo Jima

The Marines had a lead public affairs office assigned to the V Amphibious Corps Landing Force, and additional public affairs shops assigned to the three Marine divisions assigned to the invasion. The deputy affairs officer and one enlisted Marine were to hit the beach in the initial wave. Their mission was to provide a central point where both military and civilian products could be submitted. These two individuals immediately became casualties (one killed, the other injured) upon hitting the beach. V Corps decided to wait four hours before trying to send in more journalist-trained Marines. A "lesson learned" ensued from this: the after action report recommended public affairs not try to establish an administrative-type function such as a press center while the beachhead is still hot.

With successive waves, additional public affairs members of the Landing Force arrived to establish a press shop so civilian reporters could be provided with food, berthing, and escorts. The division public affairs Marines, in addition to helping escort civilian media, were to look for photo and story ideas of their own for world-wide release.

The press collection center would arrange for transportation of these products back the USS El Dorado (AGC III), the amphibious force's flagship, where other Marines would start the process of expediting them back to the home front. Photos were sent via air to Guam for development and subsequent release via wire. Stories were to be sent via radio to Commander-In-Chief, Pacific Public Affairs for censoring and release. The Marines additionally worked out a system for many of the Marine stories and photos to be sent directly to the Division of Public Affairs for release.

As they had learned to do in earlier battles and operations, the Marines set up a network of people working at possible bottlenecks to expedite the system. As a result, most print products were released within hours of being written. Photographs, however, were delayed by up to three days. The latter was a function of both the time needed for the physical act of processing film, and the fact that Guam was the photographic processing point for both the Central and Southern Pacific theaters of actions. Still, both the journalists and their outlets could see an earnest effort being exerted to overcome the challenges to journalism imposed by war.

The Marines tried to further soften the blow of the long processing and delivery of photographs (due to lack of on site photo laboratories) by providing photographic alternatives for the media. This was done by providing photographs taken earlier in the campaign or by using Marine photographs that had bypassed the normal bottlenecks by being sent directly to HQMC-PA. An example of this can be found in the February 21, 1945 *The New York Times*. Although the story was of Marines taking the first airfield, the photos were of the pre-invasion bombardment.³³

The effort made by the Marine PAs to predict, find, and overcome information-flow bottlenecks is highly significant for today's battlefield. Today's media is keenly sensitive about both censorship and press pools. John J. Fialka spent an entire chapter on media pools, entitled "The Pools: Business is Frustrating", in his 1992 book, *Hotel Warriors: Covering the Gulf War*.³⁴ The military had the media in Desert Storm run the pools, and yet there was enough unhappiness that the Senate held hearings concerning the military's handling of the media. During

³³ ***The New York Times***, 21 February 1945, 3. Multiple stories by different authors accompanied by three military photographs.

³⁴ John J. Fialka, ***Hotel Warriors: Covering the Gulf War*** (Washington, D.C.: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1992), 33-44.

these, both sides acknowledged the validity of the other's position, but little was resolved.

The media on Iwo Jima had both censorship and pools, and yet on Iwo Jima it praised Marine public affairs. Why? It seems the answer lies in the efforts made by the Marines there to accommodate the media. An implied validation of this may lie in studies by Susan L. Carruthers and also a comparison between Army and Marine public affairs in Desert Storm.

Susan L Carruthers studied the media in World War II. In Britain, the cables used by the print journalism media to get stories into Britain all entered the British Isles at the same place. Government censors established their post there, thus intercepting, editing, and then releasing the material in a manner that was quick and fairly transparent to the media. Carruthers found that as the war progressed and censorship became less intrusive, the media became more acceptant of it.³⁵

In Desert Storm, complains Fialka's book, the U.S. Army was obstructionist in how it handled the press. He asserts that the Army purposely hampered and harassed, assigned and approved press pools. The Marines, on the other hand, went to great lengths to accommodate the media,

whether in a pool or not. He cites several stories where the Marines worked to avoid or overcome a bottleneck, while the Army either did nothing or, in some cases, exacerbated the impediment. Although the Army had the main role in the ground war, Fialka cites studies that clearly show the Marines received a greater amount of media space and higher quality of treatment.³⁶ This seems to validate Carruthers' contention that the more an organization works with the media to overcome the difficulties of the battlefield (as the Marines did at Iwo), the more the media will cooperate with it and forgive what it can't overcome.

Like the media, the military also has misperceptions about the public affairs-military-media relationship and its results. Army Specialist Fourth Class Bob Hodierne produced both photos and a story about the fighting in Hiep Duc Valley, Vietnam, which ran in 31 August 1969 issue of *Stars and Stripes*. The story was about part of an army company that had been cut-off and the attempts by the rest to rescue them. One photo showed a dead American soldier lying face down. U.S. Army Colonel James Campbell, speaking for the Army Command in Vietnam, stated that such coverage was treason and was "... of tremendous aid and

³⁵ Carruthers, *The Media at War*, 89.

comfort to the enemy."³⁷ This comment appears to applaud hiding the ugly truth of war -- that it costs lives. Seemingly, this senior public affairs officer would believe in preventing any coverage of war that might portray it as either an unmitigated success or that the human cost is lower than it really is.

This is in stark contrast with what happened at Iwo Jima, where public affairs Marines captured and published stories about the extreme difficulties the Marines on the volcanic island were having. Earlier in the war the decision had been made that photographs of dead Americans could actually fuel American war aims. President Franklin Roosevelt had become convinced that the US public would not abandon the war cause if shown pictures of American dead. Just the opposite -- he felt that they were becoming complacent as a result of sanitized news reports.³⁸ Roosevelt pushed the services to allow the media more freedom in running pictures of the dead provided a body was not too identifiable, the latter a gesture of respect for the family.

³⁶ Fialka, *Hotel Warriors: Covering the Gulf War*, 7-9.

³⁷ Nick Mills, *Combat Photographer: The Vietnam Experience* (Boston: Boston Publishing Company, 1983), 92-94.

³⁸ Jeffery A. Smith, *War and Press Freedom: The Problem of Prerogative Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 162.

Similar, when U.S. Forces didn't provide a casualty figure for action on Iwo Jima up to 24 February 1945, the Federal Communications Commission provided to the media its recording of Japanese broadcasts. The Japanese put the U.S. casualty figures at 17,000 from an invasion force of 40,000.³⁹ That day's *The New York Times* had several stories referring to heavy Marine casualties and the enemy's furious resistance. It is hard to say why no figures were released that day, but it was probably due to the information being delayed by the long communication's lines from the Pacific since the U.S. government provided the enemy-produced figures instead.

The American media did not shy away from covering U.S. casualties, the abilities of the enemy, or the savagery of battle. For example, a front-page story by Warren Moscow credits tactics derived by Japanese commanders from studying past amphibious assaults as to why the Marines were having such a tough fight at Iwo Jima.⁴⁰

News clips from the front show that neither the military nor the media tried to hide the horrors of combat. A February 21, 1945 *The New York Times* story by Morrie

³⁹ Warren Moscow, "Marines Win Half of Iwo Jima," *The New York Times*, 25 February 1945, 1 and continued on 28 in jump entitled "Japanese Overrun in Drive on Iwo".

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Landsbregge describes the first two days of fighting as "torturous" among other things.⁴¹ Landsberge, an Associated Press Correspondent, was aboard Vice Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner's flagship and not actually on the island. His story painted a picture of bitter fighting derived from what he was told by the military.⁴²

Clearly, Marine public affairs actions confirmed Roosevelt's contention that unsanitized stories and photos of American casualties are not in and of themselves sufficient to undermine public support in a war effort. Likewise, it enfeebles many contemporary military members' contention that such unsanitized coverage is treasonous. Some veterans of Vietnam remember what happened in that conflict and not what occurred, media wise, in World War II. Many of today's service members are well aware of the complaints of these Vietnam veterans, but know very little about the media and how they worked in conflicts prior to Vietnam.

To the contrary of such military beliefs, in World War II, the Marine Corps actively promoted the ugly reality of

⁴¹ Morrie Landsbregge, "Bloody Battle for Field," *The New York Times*, 21 February 1945, 3.

war. Staff Sergeant David Dempsey wrote a piece about the fighting of 22 February 1945 which appeared in newspapers across the country to include page 5 of the 23 February 1945 issue of *The New York Times*.⁴³ The story describes what it calls a two-mile stretch of death, telling how Japanese weapons had been pre-aimed so that, "they couldn't miss and they didn't." It also described how the island's terrain hampered the movement of the Marines making them "easy prey."

Dempsey sanitized very little in his descriptions of Iwo and its carnage: "The invasion beach of this island, stormed four days ago by Marines in the face of blistering Japanese mortar and artillery fire, today is a scene of indescribable wreckage - all of it ours." He continued "Death is not a pretty sight, but it has taken possession of our beach. An officer in charge of a tank landing boat received a direct shell hit while trying to free his boat from the sand. He was blown in half. A life preserver supports the trunk of his body in the water."

⁴² Further evidence of that military and media were not afraid to report war casualties can be seen in a photo appearing in *The New York Times* on both February 23 and 28, 1945. These photos taken by combat correspondents show greater numbers of casualties and Marines pinned down than the aforementioned Spec 4 Hodiern's 1969 story in *Stars and Stripes*.

⁴³ SSgt David Dempsey, "Ghastly Ruin Lines Iwo Landing Beach: Two-Mile Stetch Strewn With Wreckage Of Boats, Trucks, Rifles, Packs, Masks, Etc.," ***The New York Times***, 23 February 1945, 5.

That story, and others, were accompanied by photographs taken by Marines (and civilian photographers) that showed the carnage of battle. Photos of Marines pinned down and the debris and casualties littering the beach were common. On Page 3 of the 28 February 1945 *The New York Times* is a pictorial page of photos from Iwo Jima. The dominant photo - placed at the top and over 6 inches by 11 inches - shows overturned amtracks, destroyed tanks, and wounded Marines - and this was a Marine photo.⁴⁴ While there was no overt glorification of the gore of war, it wasn't ignored by Marine PA's nor deleted by the censors.

There is a general myth that U.S. media in World War II played softball because the American public was behind the war. As stated earlier, Iwo Jima was ripe for examination by the media. In fact, *The New York Times* analyzed in-depth the wisdom of taking Iwo Jima. That newspaper ran a five-part series entitled "The Battle for Iwo." from March 5 through March 9, 1945.⁴⁵ It also ran a

⁴⁴ "The Fighting Was Bitter and Bloody on the Iwo Beachhead, But At the End Old Glory Flew Over the Island," ***The New York Times***, 28 February 1945, 3. Pictorial spread of photos by both Marine and civilian photographers.

⁴⁵ Hanson W. Baldwin, "The Battle for Iwo," ***The New York Times***, 5 March 1945; 6 March 1945, 14; 7 March 1945, 13; 8 March 1945, 12; 9 March 1945, 6. A five-part series.

major analytical piece in their *Times Sunday Magazine* on 4 March 1945.⁴⁶



Figure 1: “Marine stretcher bearers removing a prisoner who crawled from a cave when he couldn’t hold out any longer after ten days without food or water. One of their buddies covers the entrance to the cave for any other of the enemy that might emerge.” This USMC combat correspondent photo and caption ran in the March 18, 1945, *New York Times* on page 26. The Marines did not hide the fact that the Japanese resistance started to fail because the tenacious enemy was running out of food, water and ammo. The media criticized many aspects of the battle, but the Marines were not afraid to provide photos, stories or information about portions of the battle that were open to criticism.

The New York Times criticized intelligence lapses and the military for not having special weaponry prepared to handle the fortified caves. It also examined the possibility of using paratroopers or other amphibious landings to establish a second front. Likewise, its assessment noted that calls for a night

landing wouldn’t have reduced casualties because of the pre-registered nature of the Japanese counter-fire. The author even analyzed the possibilities of using chemical warfare against the fanatical and entrenched enemy. The report chastised both the upper level officers for having over-promoted the effects of strategic/pre-invasion

⁴⁶ Robert Trumbull, “The Road to Tokyo: Red Epic of Iwo,” *Times Sunday Magazine* (Supplement to *The New York Times*), 4 March 1945, 8.

bombing, and the American public for looking to such technological advancements to reduce the human costs of warfare.

It is true that *The New York Times* never called for withdrawing American troops. Also, in most cases, the analyses generally agreed with the military action. Still, it is erroneous to say that the media gave the Marine-Navy leadership a free ride.

Yet, by the same token, *The New York Times* was careful never to undermine America's faith or support of the fighting man. This passage is indicative of how *The New York Times* maintained a separation between military actions and the frontline grunt (infantryman): "The Navy and the marines (sic) did not act alone in deciding to invade Iwo. They were merely the instruments of the highest command - the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington..."⁴⁷

A review of the *New York Times* during the battle for Iwo Jima shows that the media was well aware of and reported on the high loss of life at Iwo Jima -- and that at least some of the military miscalculations may have added to the body count. Still, the Marine Corps was very much engaged in assisting *The New York Times* and other

⁴⁷ Hanson W. Baldwin, "The Battle for Iwo Island - II," *The New York Times*, 6 March 1945, 14.

media even when the reports were not glowing. Marine combat correspondents escorted media, delivered the civilian products to be censored, and aided in delivering the materials to the States for publication. These Marines also produced their own photos and stories for use by the civilian media. During this period, stories of U.S. casualty rates of nearly 50% ran, as did photos of battlefield carnage. All coverage was directly aided by government involvement, especially Marine public affairs. It seems that such Marine assistance did not result in a treasonous drop in support for the war effort, or the Marine Corps, or a drop in troop morale.



Figure 2 This photo was taken by a USMC combat correspondent. It shows both a fallen Marine and a Marine using a flame-thrower on an enemy pillbox. It appeared on page 3 of the February 28, 1945 *New York Times*. Its size in the paper was about 7 inches wide. An even more explicit flame-thrower photo taken by a Marine appeared on page 8 of the March 5, 1945 *New York Times*. Marines were not afraid of taking and distributing photos with casualties or some of the more barbaric aspects of war.

It also seems obvious that lying to the media - or to the American public using any conduit - is wrong. Lying is at cross-purposes with the Marine Corps' espoused "Core Values" of honor, courage and commitment. Current public affairs scholars and members of the media provide an

intellectual argument against lying to the public. They advocate dealing with adversity head-on through actions designed to provide the public affairs specialist with something that speaks louder than words.⁴⁸

For example, public affairs Marines on Iwo Jima practiced this practical form of public relations. They provided the media with information, stories and photographs about innovations and efforts taken regarding the care of wounded troops. The results were positive. For example, *The New York Times* in February 1945 ran a story about the Marine's use of floating blood banks.⁴⁹ Then, on 7 March 1945 it published a U.S. Marine Corps photo of new mobile blood banks (page 5) used while rescuing wounded Marines in the volcanic sands of Iwo.⁵⁰ The media also published stories and military photos about the Navy nurses aboard the first plane to land on Iwo Jima to evacuate the wounded.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Scott M. Cutlip, Allen H. Center, and Glen M. Broom, *Effective Public Relations*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994), 380 and 386.

⁴⁹ Warren Moscow, "Blood Boats Went With Iwo Invaders," *The New York Times*, 24 February 1945, 5.

⁵⁰ "Iwo: Blood Bank Comes to the Aid of Wounded Marines," *The New York Times*, 7 March 1945, 12. U.S. Marine Corps photo.

⁵¹ "Ensign Jane Kendleigh of Oberlin, Ohio, caring for a seriously wounded marine on island airstrip," *The New York Times*, 8 March 1945, 9. U.S. Navy Radiophoto via Guam.

The result was that the Marines were honest about the casualty rates, but were also able to show the American public that they were taking action without being soft on the enemy. They also managed to capture valuable space/time in the media even as action on other fronts, such as the rush for the Rhine and Berlin could have otherwise gotten more publicity.

CHAPTER 5

The Photo of the Flag Raising on Iwo Jima

“The raising of that flag on Suribachi means a Marine Corps for the next 500 Years.”

James Forrestal: To Lieutenant General H.M. “Howl’n Mad” Smith, U.S.M.C. as the Marines raised the Colors on Mt. Suribachi, 23 February 1945.⁵²

Joe Rosenthal, a photographer for the Associated Press, captured the image of five Marines and one Navy corpsman raising a flag upon Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima, on 23 February 1945. No analysis of the impact of battle for Iwo Jima and its impact on the Marine Corps can be done without an assessment of this now classic photograph.

Rosenthal had just arrived on Iwo Jima on L+4-Day (Landing Day plus four) and was traveling with two public affairs Marines when they encountered a third Marine, Staff Sergeant Lou Lowery. Lowery said that he had just photographed the flag raising upon Mount Suribachi. However, he encouraged Rosenthal to go up the mount with him anyway, because Lowery said the view from there would give Rosenthal a good vantage point from which to take photos of the battle.

⁵² Parker Bishop Albee, Jr. and Keller Cushing Freeman, ***Shadow of Suribachi: Raising the Flags on Iwo Jima*** (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995), 40.



Figure 3 This photo was taken by Joe Rosenthal's combat correspondent escort as Rosenthal snapped the picture which he referred to as the "Gung Ho" photo – the one he thought his editors would use. It also shows how the Marine escorts aided the media in covering the battle without interfering. USMC photo from the Marine Corps Research Center Archives.

The Rosenthal photo is interesting in that it breaks many of the journalistic rules for photography, to include photo composition. In journalism, photos are called photojournalism because they are supposed to aid in telling the story. Therefore, it is important to get "faces" so that readers can identify the

picture's subject. The theory both then and now is that readers want to see that the subjects are real people, like the boy or girl next door. Editors don't like anonymous photos. Details of a face also help tell the story: The wound on a Marine's cheek or the lines of exhaustion on a weary soldier's brow. Journalists are told to get the names of the subjects (which Rosenthal didn't, and there was much confusion later over the actual participants), but it is still important that the faces be clear. The Rosenthal photograph is more of a silhouette than a graphic action photo, and while it may be more artistic, art is not the preference of most hard news editors.

Rosenthal validates this claim. At the time the picture was taken, he believed that the photo the editors would choose would be a subsequent one that he had actually staged of the Marines gathered and cheering around the newly raised flag. As far as he was concerned, the one that the editor picked was just "one of many".⁵³



Figure 4: This photo was taken by combat correspondent Staff Sergeant L. Lowery and is of the actual first flag raising on Suribachi. Although most people think that the Joe Rosenthal photo was of the first flag, it was actually the second flag. Rosenthal and his Marine pa escort were not even on Suribachi when the first flag was raised. USMC official file from the National Archives.

The famous Rosenthal photo, as it has come to be known in the minds and hearts of the public, also embodies an error-in-fact -- a journalism taboo that can cause a budding public affairs Marine to flunk an assignment or even the Basic Journalism Course at the Department of Defense's Defense Information School at Fort Meade, Maryland. The Rosenthal photo was, and often still is, portrayed as the first flag raising on Mount Suribachi. In fact, it was the

second flag raising. The first, a smaller flag, was raised by a different group of Marines earlier in the day and photographed by Staff Sergeant Lowery. However, the

⁵³ Albee, *Shadow of Suribachi*, 65.

Rosenthal photograph was identified at the time of printing as being the first flag raised during what had been a battle publicized as having some of the fiercest fighting ever seen by U.S. Marines.

Those two journalistic faux pas - generic/unidentifiable Marines and a sailor and the mistaken identification of the photo as being about the first flag raised during a hard fought battle - combined to put the photo on a 'higher level.' This picture went from being one of specific Marines fighting a specific battle to being an image emblematic of all the hard fighting American servicemen of World War II, as well as the fighting spirit of the U.S. Marine Corps as a whole.

However, several factors helped propel the Rosenthal photo beyond the front pages of the 25 February 1945 newspapers. First, the photograph was immediately recognized by President Franklin D. Roosevelt as a symbol for the war effort. He, thus, immediately made arrangements for its use as an advertisement for War Bonds.

Another factor in the success of the Rosenthal photo is that one of his two combat correspondent escorts, Sergeant William Homer Genaust, a cinema photographer, showed the same image, but did so on 16mm film. Although Genaust would lose his life later during the fighting in

the northern part of the island, his film is still often used by documentaries and other World War II related movies. Thus, most people immediately identify it as Rosenthal's famous still photograph brought to life. Few viewers reflect upon the fact that it would take immense technological effort to bring a still photo to life.

Genaust's work, thus, helped to keep both the Rosenthal photo and the Battle of Iwo Jima alive as an icon of military fortitude. This fact is attested to by a letter from the United States Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association to the then Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Paul X. Kelley, which asked that the Commandant and the Marine Corps press for recognition for Genaust's work.⁵⁴ They cite a showing of Genaust's 16mm footage to an audience of approximately 1000, most of whom mistakenly thought still photographer Rosenthal had also taken this footage of the flag raising! The letter's signers complained to the commandant, "It is our belief that the Marine Corps, by its silence, has contributed to this mass ignorance. Marine and civilian publications have

⁵⁴ Harrold A. Weinberger, USMCR (Ret.), Undated letter to General Paul X. Kelley, Commandant, USMC regarding "Recognition for Sgt. William Homer Genaust, USMCR KIA" in the Marine Corps Research Center Archives, Marine Combat Correspondent Collection as related to USMCCCA conference resolution passed 24 September 1983.

published scores of stories about the flag raising...all credited Joe Rosenthal."⁵⁵

The impact of Rosenthal's Iwo Jima flag raising picture has been recognized by the photographic world. In addition to winning the Pulitzer Prize, they have viewed it as being historic. *Photo America*, a leading magazine for photographers in the year 2000, called the Rosenthal photograph an icon (an image so powerful that it can create a stereotype that can far outlast its actual subject).⁵⁶

There is no question that the Rosenthal photo has aided in creating the public's passion for and support of the Marine Corps. It has been recreated in everything from monuments to postage stamps. Still, Marine public affairs has been instrumental every step of the way. From escorting Rosenthal, to getting the photo transmitted by wire to the Associated Press, Marine PA has helped ensure that the photo has been available for publication. Yet, at the time of the snap shot, the Marine Corps did not recognize the photo's importance. Instead, public affairs personnel were only doing their duty. Since then, Marine public affairs has ensured the picture's continued iconic

⁵⁵ Weinberger, 2.

⁵⁶ David Schonauer, Editor-in-Chief. "Icons and Meaning," *American Photo*, May-June, 2000, 68-72.

effect by using it as a symbol for the 50th Anniversary of World War II. They have even gone to the extent of providing the Genaust 16mm footage to the motion picture/television industry to ensure that the image endures in the contemporary era where action videos receive more of the public's attention than still photos. In fact, the Rosenthal photo would not be an icon today without the active cooperation of the Marine Corps in the form of public affairs.

CHAPTER 6

Lessons For Today

“T is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world.”⁵⁷

George Washington’s farewell address to the Houses of Congress, Jan. 8, 1790.

Contrary to popular belief, aversion to war didn’t start with Vietnam. Immediately after the Battle of Gettysburg, President Lincoln was faced with draft riots in New York City that threatened the war effort. It was felt that, surely, a more noble cause than saving the Union and Emancipation could be found. The American public’s abhorrence of war and it’s killing also caused it to delay entry into World War I, and the cost of that conflict influenced U.S. policy in the inter-war years up to Pearl Harbor.

Today’s media often criticizes military operations as being too restrictive. John J. Fialka complains throughout his book, *Hotel Warriors: Covering the Gulf War*, about the slowness caused by both the censorship process and the pool system. Experience with contemporary journalists indicates

⁵⁷ “George Washington on Foreign Affairs,”
<http://www.lva.lib.va.us/k12/plans/psd98/foreign.htm>, 7 March 2001.

that they believe that during World War II censorship was less stringent and that pooling of the media's resources wasn't used, thus, showing that they, like contemporary service personnel, have short memories. Fialka's analysis of Desert Storm seems to validate this perception. It cites a protest by Michael Gartner, president of NBC News, which said, "Here's something you should know about that war [sic] that's going on in the Gulf: much of the news that you read or hear or see is being censored.... There is no excuse for this kind of censorship which exceeds even the most stringent of censorship of World War II."⁵⁸

However, it is unsafe for members of the civilian media to go unescorted on the battlefield. They are not now trained for combat or the battlefield environment. As more time passes since the last national conscription and fewer members of the media have served in the military, this reality only worsens. The media is unfamiliar with the military and its structure, both on a macro and a micro level. In time of combat, it would be disruptive and dangerous to all involved to have the media wandering around looking for directions. Both Desert Storm's and today's media do not know whether or not the service personnel they are talking to are really qualified to

⁵⁸ Fialka, *Hotel Warriors*, x

answer their questions or if they are just talking from the hip. Both the media and the Marine Corps are best served by a public affairs escort who can ensure that the subject-matter expert is the Marine chosen for an interview.

The civilian media is no better prepared today to go to war than it was at the start of World War II. Military Public Affairs had to escort the media then to ensure their safety as well their access to knowledgeable sources. The civilian media in WWII learned to accept this condition because they saw military public affairs as being able to smooth the way and speed up the process as opposed to being a hindrance.

Gaining this acceptance was aided by the fact that the public affairs Marines were themselves trained journalists who could "talk the talk" and empathize with the civilian journalist's deadlines and filing requirements. As both trained journalists and true Marines, combat correspondents were able to bridge the schism between the civilian journalist and the military. In reality, there was not less censorship or control in World War II; rather, these public affairs Marines used their journalistic training to minimize its impact and thereby make it more palatable to civilian reporters.

The Marines on Iwo Jima did many things to gain the media's trust and cooperation: media boats to shuttle press and products, assistance getting products (such as film) processed and delivered to their respective outlets, and the provision of story ideas and photographic support to help them get published.

Today, the same opportunities are available to gain the media's goodwill. In the future, journalists, especially major networks, are going to show up on the battlefield with satellite dishes and other portable communications gear. The military needs to recognize prior to the outbreak of war that this will require help from intelligence, communications, and general engineering to ensure it doesn't impact a unit's security, communications, or electrical grid. Not allowing any accommodation will result only in alienating the media. Finding a means will result in the "press's" better acceptance of other conditions placed upon them.

As in World War II, units will need to be prepared to feed and berth the media. Rosenthal's photograph of the second flag raising on Iwo Jima wouldn't have become an icon if the media had stayed on Guam. Likewise, it would not have been reasonable to have expected Rosenthal to have provided his own tent and food for 30 days. Conversely, by

providing him with food, shelter, and escort, the Marines influenced his work in a positive way as they saw a unit or action that needed coverage.

Common sense dictates that we recognize that the military, the media and the America people have changed since World War II. World War II was in a different era, just as it was a different kind of war. The Marine Corps no longer specifically recruits journalists to work in public affairs. Instead, the Corps takes officers and enlisted Marines, most of whom are inexperienced in journalism but show an aptitude for writing, and gives them journalism/public affairs training. Most go to the Defense Information School, but others learn "on-the-job" at their base's Public Affairs Office. As a general rule, most do not even choose public affairs/journalism as an occupation, and therefore, do not go in with an affinity for, or in some cases, even a liking for the media. While they may be able to "talk the talk" after completing training, most of these new public affairs Marines lack the credibility and established readership that the WWII combat correspondents brought to the job.

The Marines did not hide - or hide from - the ugliness of war on Iwo Jima. Instead, they used public affairs to shape the information battlefield by ensuring the media

understood the character of the battle. Nor did the media give the Marine Corps a free ride. They carefully examined the need for the battle and even said that mistakes were made that cost lives. However, in the end, both the Media and the American public came to respect the Marine Corps as they had never done before. By being honest and forthright in showing the true nature of war, but also with the determination and steadfast belief that the war was needed to defend America, the Marine Corps prevailed on this front too.

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Major Ben H. Owens

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