September 2017 Editor: Mike Peters

SCRIBBLINGS....

News & Comment for, about and from members and friends of the military media operations community

Scribblings resumes after the summer break with the sad news that two of our members have passed on. Major Tim Wakefield and Major Richard Shields, were among the originals of the TA Pool of Information Officers and Media Operations Group (V,) writes Mike Peters.

TIM WAKEFIELD joined the TA Pool soon after leaving the Regular Army and the Welsh Guards. He was GSO2 Photographic in HQ British Army of the Rhine and a champion of the combined news team based at JHQ Rheindahlen. With the famed Gerd Medoch, a German national, who was brilliant at editing-in-the-can in the days of film and no Army studio facilities, plus a MoD civilian information officer and a civilian photographer he roamed the units of 1 British Corps finding news and pictures to send back to the UK media.

It was my privilege to work with that team in the early 1970s. From the ski slopes of southern Europe, to the wine harvests of the Moselle Valley, the marches at

Nijmegen in Holland and countless training areas and major exercises the team found and published many thousands of TV clips, radio tapes and Home Town News stories. Indeed, such was their renown the team often found that visiting VIPs would stop on the parade ground and speak to them before inspecting the troops.

With limited equipment: the Arriflex camera required constant re-loading of film reels in a cumbersome black out bag plus the Nagra sound recording equipment that required an umbilical cord to the camera and weighed 40 lbs, together with the standard issue Roliflex cameras the team set records for production. Tim was to fight hard for the team to be issued with a Nikon 35mm camera and eventually won his case.

The new camera went straight into use on the ski slopes and frozen lake at St. Moritz covering the Queens Dragoon Guards four-man bob sleigh preparing for the world championships. The results were great but marred by the overnight theft of the Nikon from the team vehicle. I donned my RMP hat for that incident and had to write the loss reports. We were granted a replacement along with a balloxxing.

Tim made great efforts to re-set up this team to join the Task Force going south to the Falklands in 1982. All was going well until the unknown factor played its hand. Gerd was not a British national and the idea for a military combat news team within the Task Force foundered in the Foreign Office. What might have been a tremendous opportunity to get military TV coverage of the operation was thwarted by a less than enthusiastic Government Information official.

Tim was to go onto work in the London film and video production industry before eventually retiring to Wales. He became Vice President of the East Glamorgan branch of the Welsh Guards Association and did much to help the veterans of the battalion so badly hurt in the Falklands conflict. Our sincere condolences to Toddy and the family.

RICHARD SHIELDS brought a huge experience of print journalism to the TAPIOs. He was a contemporary of your editor and the Club President, Hugh Colver, when all three worked at the award-winning Hereford Evening News. During his National Service with the Worcestershire & Sherwood Foresters, Richard, pictured right with Mike Glynn and Karen Moseley proved an excellent shot and helped train recruits in skill at arms.

As a TAPIO his missions included travel to Germany, Belgium,

Gibraltar and America. He was part of the Pool's highly successful team managing the media at the 50th anniversary commemorations of the D-Day landings in Normandy when the Pool deployed at a week's notice to take control at Arromanches and the other invasion commemoration sites.

His newspaper career included the Ledbury Reporter and the Welsh Observer, then as a Worcester Evening News sub-editor before he moved to Hereford to help launch the new Berrows Group adventure of the Hereford Evening News.

After a brief spell in PR at the Wiggin production plant in Hereford Richard worked as a sub-editor at the Hereford Times before taking over as editor at the Abergavenny Chronicle. In 1972, he returned to the Hereford Times and spent 18 years as editor, two spells of nine years, with a three-year gap in the middle.

In the 'gap period' he edited the Evening News in Worcester. During his second spell in the Hereford Times editor's chair, the circulation topped a record 40,000 a week. Typically, of Richard, he said: "I had a good team of people."

Richard was a keen member of the Guild of Regional Editors and used his military knowledge on at least one major trip of 20 plus editors visiting BAOR. Our deepest sympathy goes to his wife Anne and daughter Liz and family.

Pen & Sword Club opens Autumn Monthly Lunch programme with three top speakers.

The autumn season of the Pen & Sword Club's monthly lunches opens on September 12. The guest speaker is Professor Paul Moorcroft, right, who will provide an insight into US President Donald Trump and the current hot issues of Brexit via his latest book, *Countering the Security Threats to the West.* The first venue of the season is the Naval & Military Club (aka The In & Out Club) in St. James Square, London. The club will also host the Christmas lunch on December 13.

In October, the guest speaker will be former Defence Minister Sir Gerald Howarth and in November, the club welcomes an old hand in the media ops game, Lieutenant General Sir Gary Coward. Gary was British spokesman in the Balkans and has featured in many a debate on military and the media.

Dates for the Autumn events are:

September 12
October 11
November 14
December 13.

Details of the early 2018 programme will come soon and, so far, the club has recruited former member of Media Operations Group (V) and prolific author, Major Peter Caddick-Adams to speak in

February. Peter's book on Rommel and Montgomery provides insight into the way these protagonists of WW2 handled the media. Peter's in-depth examination of the Battle of the Bulge, Snow and Steel, is a must read – now out in paperback - and we look forward to his latest venture on the Battle for Normandy.

The September speaker, Paul Moorcroft, is an internationally respected expert on crisis communications, especially relating to military and security issues. He has been the editor of a range of security and foreign policy magazines, including Defence Review and Defence International.

He worked for Time magazine, the BBC and most of the Western TV networks as a freelance producer/war correspondent as well as later lecturing full-time (consecutively) at ten major universities in journalism, politics and international relations. He was a Distinguished Radford Visiting Professor in Journalism at Baylor University, Texas, and a visiting professor at Cardiff University's School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, Europe's leading journalism centre.

He has worked in 30 war zones in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and the Balkans, often with irregular forces. Most recently he has been working in Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine/Israel, Nepal, Sudan, Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka.

Paul is a former senior instructor at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, and the UK Joint Services Command and Staff College. He also worked in Corporate Communications in the Ministry of Defence in Whitehall. The Ministry recalled him for six months during the Iraq war in 2003.

Paul has been a crisis management consultant to such international blue-chip companies as Shell, British Gas, 3M, Standard Bank etc, as well as working for various government organisations, most recently the UK Department of Trade and Industry and the UK Ministry of Defence.

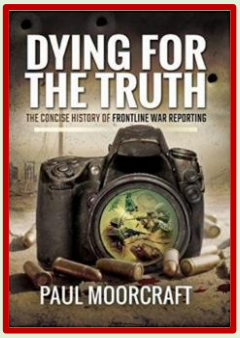
He is the author of a wide range of books on military history, politics and crime as well as four volumes of memoirs. A regular broadcaster (BBC TV and radio, as well as Sky, Sky Arabic, Al Jazeera, CBC etc) and op-ed/columnist for major international newspapers (the Guardian, New Statesman, Washington Times, Canberra Times, Business Day, Western Mail etc).

One of his recent books is *Axis of Evil: The War on Terror* (Pen and Sword, May 2005). His *Shooting the Messenger: The Politics of War Reporting* (Potomac, 2008, updated paperback, *Biteback*, 2011) was co-authored with Prof. Phil Taylor. *The Rhodesian War: A Military History* (with Dr Peter McLaughlin) was first published by Pen and Sword books in April 2008 and has gone into many international editions*. Inside the Danger Zones: Travels to Arresting Places* (Biteback) was published in 2010.

His *Mugabe's War Machine* (Pen and Sword) came out in 2011. *Total Destruction of the Tamil Tigers: The Rare Victory of Sri Lanka's Long War* was published by Pen and Sword in 2012. *Omar al-Bashir and Africa's Longest War* came out in 2015. He does charity work to help dyscalculics ─ *It Just Doesn't Add Up: Explaining Dyscalculia and Overcoming Number Problems for Children and Adults* (Tarquin, St Albans, 2015).

Paul, who lives in the Surrey Hills is also an award-winning novelist; his best-known non-fiction is *Anchoress of Shere* (Poisoned Pen Press*). The Jihadist Threat: The Re-conquest of Europe?* was published by Pen and Sword in 2015. This was shortlisted for the British Army Military Book of the Year 2016. *Superpowers, Rogue States and Terrorism: Countering the Security Threats to the West* (Pen and Sword, 2017) was quick off the mark to cover the security aspects of Brexit and the election of Donald Trump.

Dying for the Truth: The Concise History of Frontline War Reporting (Pen and Sword) was published in the same year. Paul was head of mission for the independent British observer group (50 observers) during the Sudan national election in 2010, and returned in January 2011 to observe the independence referendum in South Sudan. He also made a number of recent TV documentaries on the career and the democratic election (2008) of Mohamed Nasheed, the former president of the Maldives and a famed environmentalist. Paul is the director of the Centre for Foreign Policy Analysis, London, established in 2004 as a think tank dedicated to conflict resolution.



Embarrassment as just 14 people apply for 95 Army training places as military shrinks to lowest level for 200 years.

DAILY Mirror

Not a single course for new recruits across all UK Army bases has been filled to capacity in the last two years - and the military is now smaller than at the time of the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, writes Ben Glaze, 20 Aug 2017. An Army training course had 82 of its 96 places left unfilled as a recruitment crisis grips the military. Just 14 would-be troops signed up for the common infantry course at Catterick, the Army's biggest base. And not a single course for new recruits across all bases has been filled to capacity in the last two years.

The revelations expose the scale of the meltdown that has stripped the Army back to its lowest level since before the Napoleonic wars 200 years ago. It comes after Ministers controversially hived off Army recruitment to private firm Capita to cut costs.

Our military is now smaller than at the time of the Battle of Waterloo more than 200 years ago (Image: Hulton Archive)

Hundreds of places unfilled on British Army training courses as recruitment crisis mounts. Sources claim training centres have extra capacity "to meet fluctuations." Yet of 3,984 places available on 37 courses at Catterick, North Yorks, between July 2015 and June this year, just two thirds were filled – with 1,300 empty. The worst was a course that began on April 9 this year, attended by just 14.

And the trend extends to other areas of recruitment. Of a possible 960 places for Catterick's Guards infantry courses between June 2015 and May this year, almost half – 444 places – went unfilled. The numbers were almost as dismal at Pirbright in Surrey, which provides phase one training for the Army Air Corps, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, Intelligence Corps, Royal Corps of Signals, Royal Armoured Corps, Royal Artillery and Royal Logistic Corps.

Three in every 10 places at the base have gone unfilled since July 2015. In May one course dropped to 41% of capacity, filling only 39 of 96 places. And at Army Training Regiment Winchester, which trains standard recruits, more than a quarter of spaces were unfilled.

The admission came in a letter from Armed Forces Minister Mark Lancaster to Labour MP Stephen Doughty, who is campaigning over falling Army numbers.

The vacancies were on offer at Catterick, the Army's biggest base (Image: ALAMY)

Mr Doughty said: "Our brave men and women are at full stretch across the world and keeping us safe when terrorists threaten the home front.

"It's scandalous that ministers have threatened further cuts to our Army and taken their eye off the ball over recruitment. After failing them on pay, pensions and housing the Tories are letting down our Army yet again."

In his letter, Mr Lancaster insisted the number of available places "takes into consideration wastage, instructor to student ratio and separate sex courses."

The MoD said the number of places were not an indication of recruitment targets, insisting: "Recruitment levels are good. The Army has enough people to perform operational requirements." The Tories cut troop numbers to 20,000 after coming to power in 2010. They pledged at the 2015 election to maintain the Army's 82,000 strength, but axed the vow as numbers fell to 78,400.

UK military avoiding awkward questions?

Alistair Bunkall, Sky's Defence Correspondent wrote in early August: I interviewed the Chiefs of the Defence Staff, General Staff and Air Staff at the centenary commemorations for the Battle of Passchendaele in Belgium. They are the Heads of the UK Armed Forces, Army and RAF respectively.

It was interesting to hear their thoughts on that awful battle, and given the day, I didn't feel it was an appropriate moment to put them on the spot with questions about defence policy or current operations. And yet regrettably, I fear it will be a long time before I get that chance again, if at all. Until Monday, the Chief of the Defence Staff had done only two broadcast interviews with Sky News and the BBC, both on Remembrance Sunday last year. This is a traditional commitment going back years and it naturally focuses on remembrance rather than current affairs.

Since he was approved as the new Head of the Armed Forces in January 2016, Sir Stuart Peach hasn't given a single interview to a national newspaper.

Worse still, since he was approved as the new Head of the Armed Forces in January 2016, Sir Stuart hasn't given a single interview to a national newspaper. The Chief of the Air Staff is only marginally better - he has done one interview, with the Sunday Times last October.

It's a remarkable record of disengagement, more so when you consider that the RAF has been carrying out airstrikes, almost daily, during that time.

When the country is effectively at war, I believe the Head of the Armed Forces should be a visible presence on TV screens and in the newspaper pages.

It's a politician's job to explain why the country is involved in military action, but we look to the military leaders to explain how that action is carried out, especially in light of recent allegations that RAF strikes have caused civilian casualties in Mosul.

Last month, The Times reported the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Philip Jones, had postponed the annual Maritime Conference when he realised the media would be present. Chatham House, the hosts, refused to disinvite the media. "The system does not want the press," a source told the newspaper.

2017 was declared the 'Year of the Royal Navy' by the Ministry of Defence and yet we're into August now and the First Sea Lord hasn't given a single interview. "I admit that's strange," a naval source

conceded. By contrast, I have interviewed the Commander of the new aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, Captain Jerry Kyd, at least three times this year. He is a brilliant advocate for his crew and the Navy, and a good example of how the media can be used by military officers to their benefit.

I'm aware I risk coming across as a moaning journalist who feels he is being ignored, but I'm hoping to make a deeper point about communications and consequences of invisibility. Fear of the media within the military has been a feature of my years as a Defence Correspondent. It's like no other organisation I've come across. It is so different to the American system, which some might argue is too open, but the US military is much better at shrugging off bad news.

Captain Jerry Kyd, pictured below, is a brilliant advocate for his crew and the navy, and a good example of how the media can be used by military officers to their benefit.

British officers often seem paralysed by a fear of negative headlines and that can override any desire they have to speak openly about the good work they do.

The Armed Forces are in better shape than five years ago, there is much to celebrate - the new aircraft carrier, the cutting of steel on the new Type 26 Frigates, a successful campaign against Islamic State.

But there are also some awkward questions to be asked by the likes of me, about budgets, personnel numbers and morale - the military chiefs are the right people to answer them. Not doing so leaves a vacuum of information into which inevitably falls speculative and misleading stories. As well as operations in Iraq and Syria, the military is actively engaged in 27 foreign deployments. It's a very busy time.

Whether it be peacekeeping operations in Somalia or training missions in Ukraine, I wonder why the Chiefs aren't proactively championing the role the military is playing and, crucially, reshaping the image and value of the armed-forces in this post-Afghanistan era. They are the chief executives of their organisations.

Call me old-fashioned, but I think they could be heroes to some children. Senior soldiers, sailors and airmen that kids with adventurous imaginations aspire to be like. You couldn't ask for more noble role models. I'm not suggesting they should be celebrities, never. They genuinely have more important things to be getting on with than constant media engagements.

But is it unreasonable to think they should be household names? Respected figures who lead respectable organisations. The EU referendum and General Election haven't helped. Periods of purdah have prevented a small number of planned interviews and briefings taking place. Part of the blame must also lie with Downing Street, who have controlled the media agenda with an iron grip. For some that is a huge frustration, but sadly for the others, it's a convenient excuse.

THE CABLE Reporting on the foreign policy machine

Pentagon Forces Out Popular Press Spokesman

The US Defence Department has parted ways with a senior media adviser who had years of experience working with reporters, a move that is sure to aggravate the administration's already difficult with the press corps. The abrupt departure of Steve Warren, an Army colonel who established a rapport with Pentagon correspondents over the course of his career, coincides with broader complaints raised by journalists about how the department is providing information and handling media access to Defence Secretary James Mattis.

The Cable is a Foreign Policy Magazine take on the news in Washington and the world, from inside the Beltway to beyond the pale. This report by Dan de Luce and Paul McLeary

Colonel Warren's career included a stint as spokesman for the U.S.-led military campaign against Islamic State and running the Pentagon press operation. He had been courted by senior officials after Donald Trump was elected president, and encouraged to retire from the Army in order to apply for a senior media advisor job at the Pentagon, a civilian position.

He is currently on what the Pentagon calls "terminal leave" until November. He was placed in that status in anticipation of assuming his civilian role. Dana White, the assistant secretary of defence for public affairs, played a key role in Warren's departure, current and former officials told Foreign Policy.
In an emailed statement, White said Col. Warren became ineligible for the position due to White House objections. His name "was put forth for consideration as a political appointee within OSD/PA once he retired," White said. "Unfortunately, the White House determined he was not a suitable candidate for the position."

White has worked as a publicist for Fox News, served as an adviser to Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), and held jobs with the defence giant Northrop Grumman and the Renault-Nissan Alliance before launching her own Washington-based consultancy.

Reporters covering the Pentagon have repeatedly appealed for more media events with Mattis, who has rarely held press conferences since taking office. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Joseph Dunford, has kept a low media profile as well.

Several reporters who had committed to travel with General Mattis to the Middle East were informed late Monday — just four days before they were to leave — that they had been disinvited from the trip. This follows a pattern that has become increasingly common under Mattis, where reporters who have completed their visa paperwork and made plans to take multi-day international travel were told they were no longer welcome, with little explanation.

Booting reporters off Defence Department trips at the last minute has infuriated veteran journalists covering the military. The Pentagon Press Association raised the issue on Tuesday in a meeting with department officials, which included White, the Pentagon's top press official.

Press relations have already deteriorated at the White House and the State Department in the Trump administration. Secretary of State Tillerson is often reluctant to speak to reporters while the and resident and his deputies openly castigate the news media as dishonest and untrustworthy.

Compared to the White House or the State Department, however, the Pentagon has had a less confrontational engagement with reporters since President Trump was inaugurated. That's partly because military and civilian press officers handle much of the media work, instead of political appointees.

The Pentagon also allows credentialed reporters unfettered access to much of the building, where they can walk into many offices to ask questions. And it also provides a dedicated press centre in the building.

While General Mattis has stayed away from on-camera appearances in the briefing room, he has developed the habit of showing up unannounced in the press centre, surprising reporters and public affairs officials alike, who scramble into the room when he's spotted. His most recent appearance was Monday, when he dropped in after picking up his dry cleaning, holding an impromptu on-the-record question and answer session.

Colonel Warren, a seasoned hand who worked as a public affairs officer for years, is well-liked by reporters for his sense of humour and blunt-speaking style. But when he3 served as the U.S.

military's spokesman in Baghdad, his straight talking caused friction with the previous White House, and rubbed some Pentagon officials the wrong way.

The Obama administration avoided using the word "combat" to describe the mission of U.S. troops advising Iraqi forces fighting Islamic State militants. But after a U.S. Army Delta Force soldier was killed in a raid in Iraq in October 2015, Warren refused to employ the euphemisms used by White House officials when he briefed reporters from Baghdad.

"We're in combat," Warren told reporters. "That's why we all carry guns. That's why we all get combat patches when we leave here. That's why we all receive imminent danger pay. So, of course it's combat."

One Man's Experience: a lesson in media

Speaking in the United States Air Force Commandant's Lecture Series, at The Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alaska American journalist, Joe Galloway, advocates trust and co-operation between military and media. Joe's experiences in Vietnam are highlighted in his real-life role of an embedded journalist in the film, We Were Soldiers Once…

I can think of no place more appropriate than the Air War College to share the following bit of personal data: I want you to know that I have personally been bombed, rocketed, strafed and napalmed by the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Marines, U.S. Army Aviation and the air forces of sovereign states of South Vietnam, India and Pakistan, and maybe a couple more I don't even remember now.

You will note that I am not an inconsiderable target and yet I am here today, unscathed, unscratched and ready to talk. I hold no grudges; I'm just eternally grateful that in those few instances some guys couldn't shoot worth sh*t. I hasten to add that in literally hundreds of other instances, when the chips were really down, close air support kept me and a lot of other more deserving guys alive.

My one enduring image of what air power really means is one that I have carried in my mind and in my heart for more than 30 years. In the Ia Drang Valley in November of 1965 I found myself with a battalion of the 1st Cavalry Division, surrounded by two regiments of North Vietnamese regulars, 400 Americans versus 2,000 enemy. We were clinging desperately to a small clearing called Landing Zone X-Ray.

On the morning of the second day we were under attack from three sides. Wave upon wave of enemy soldiers seemed to be literally growing out of the elephant grass. On the southeast perimeter, no more than 50 meters from where I lay, two platoons had been overrun and the line was wavering and cracking. The sergeant major came over, kicked me in the ribs and invited me to get up, make use of my M-16 and defend myself.

Our forward air controller, Air Force Lieutenant Charlie Hastings, set aside his rifle and spoke into his radio the code word Broken Arrow. It signalled: "American unit in danger of being overrun." With that, every available air resource in South Vietnam was diverted to our control. They came by the dozens and scores: Air Force, Navy, Marines. Old Spads, F-100's, F-4s, A-6,s. Charlie Hastings stacked them up over our heads in layers a thousand feet apart from 7,000 to 35,000 feet and they

literally built a wall of steel and napalm around us. It was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen in my life.

In the middle of all this dust, smoke and confusion a tragic friendly fire incident occurred: A Supersabre unloaded two cans of napalm right into the command post area. They burst no more than 15 meters to the right of the command group and one scared reporter. Several American GI's were engulfed in the flames. I helped carry one of them out of the burning grass and I can still hear his screams and feel the bare bones of his ankles where the flesh had cooked off rubbing in the palms of my hands to this day.

Then I witnessed something very important; something that placed it all in perspective: Lieutenant Charlie Hastings stood, heart-stricken and trembling, before the battalion commander and tried to apologize for the terrible error. The commander looked him in the eyes and said: "Don't worry about that one, Charlie. Just keep ‘em coming."

Charlie Hastings kept them coming and that air support was the difference between life and death for the rest of us. That day, just one day past my 24th birthday, I learned that war is a hard and terrible business. Mistakes are made, but you must put them behind you and deal with the job at hand.

By the way, Charlie Hastings served 30 years with the Air Force and retired a colonel three years ago. He's living the good life down in Arizona, trying hard to catch up on a list of Honey Do's that somehow accumulated over about 30 years. Charlie never forgot what it's like down there in the mud with the foot soldiers; and none of us ever forgot what it's like to holler HELP and have it rain down from the skies. Nobody ever won a battle or a war all by himself. It demands teamwork. If they teach you nothing else here and at the Army and Navy War Colleges, I pray to God they teach you that.

I was asked to give you my reflections on the Military-Media Relationship. That's awfully high-toned for someone who got his start covering Marine platoons in Vietnam in early 1965, worked his way up to Infantry companies and the occasional battalion-size operation and has always felt slightly uncomfortable with anything larger than that.

I will confess, right up front, that I am partial to the Infantry; always have been. Some might find that puzzling if not perverse; that a civilian reporter, given a choice, would choose the hardest and least glamorous part of any war as the part he wishes to cover.

But there is method in that madness, and I would recommend it to my younger colleagues who may one day be called on to cover war. There, in the mud, is where war is most visible and easiest understood. There no one will lie to you; no one will try to put a spin on the truth. Those for whom death waits around the next bend or across the next rice paddy have no time and little taste for the games that are played with such relish in the rear. No one ever lied to me within the sound of the guns.

There, at the cutting edge of war, you find yourself welcomed and needed --- welcomed by the soldier as a token that someone in the outside world cares about him and how he lives and dies; Needed for the simple reason that an Infantry company or platoon in combat always needs another set of hands to carry ammo or haul water to the wounded or to pick up a rifle when the chips are really down. There you earn the sort of friendship that cannot be acquired in any other field of human endeavour --- there you forge bonds that will endure for a lifetime.

A few years ago, I shook hands with one such battlefield friend and brother, agreeing on the terms by which we would jointly author a book. The lawyer who was negotiating the deal with the publisher asked to see the contract between us. We explained that there was no written contract; just that handshake. He looked horrified; we looked at him with pity. "You see," my buddy explained, "We have trusted each other with our lives; this is just a little matter of some money."

There is no secret in all of this. In every war, there are always correspondents who walk this road; men and women whose fear of death is overcome by a fear of never having known the truth of war. The numbers are always disproportionate and they grow more so as rules and pools and fools proliferate.

When I look back at the military/media experience in the Gulf War it is with sadness for lost opportunities on both sides of the equation. Because of poor planning, paranoia and over-control, the details of a great victory of American arms were virtually lost to history.
The crucial Army tank battles took place far from the lens of any camera; the Navy was over the horizon, out of sight and out of mind; and although the Air Force contributed all that nifty smart bomb film the vital human element of the Air Force story was largely missing, and we were left with the false image of a Nintendo War. The only thing the Pentagon had to hide in the Gulf was the finest military force this country has ever put into the field, and it did that very efficiently.

I am here to argue for more openness, more contact, more freedom between your profession and mine. In this one instance, I believe familiarity would breed not contempt but trust and respect. My knowledge of and respect for you was born on the battlefields of Vietnam, learned alongside men like Lt. Charlie Hastings.

That respect was reinforced by my experience in the Gulf, where I was the exception that proved the rule. There were around 1,000 correspondents accredited in the Gulf; 140 were permitted into the combat pools. There was precisely one reporter who went to war with a personal recommendation from General H. Norman Schwarzkopf in his hip pocket, and you're looking at him.

How this came to pass is just another war story. In 1965 in Vietnam I marched along some bad roads in the Central Highlands with a Vietnamese Airborne battalion and made the acquaintance of a young Army adviser, Major Norm Schwarzkopf. The battalion commander who taught Charlie Hastings and me some important lessons in the Ia Drang Valley in November, 1965, was a splendid combat commander named Hal Moore.

Long before that, Hal Moore taught infantry tactics to hundreds of young cadets at West Point, including one named Norm Schwarzkopf. He even persuaded young Schwarzkopf to choose the Infantry as his branch, against the best advice of his father who warned him that he would be forever giving up any hope of making the rank of general as a mud-foot Infantry officer.

I dealt fairly and honestly with both those men, as I have always tried to do with all men, and what goes around comes around. Life may be short but memories are long.

Thanks to that trust, I was sent down to the 24th Mech two weeks before G-Day. On my first night, there the Division CG called me to his TOC and pulled the cover off the battle map. What he said, as my eyes followed the arrows and the hair stood up on the back of my neck was this: I trust you

because Schwarzkopf trusts you; but more than that, I trust you because you're coming with me. I never heard a more compelling argument for operational security in my life.

During the days before G-Day I visited every brigade and battalion in the division; saw the preparations; checked on the OR rates of the equipment; ate a lot of really bad chow; got lost traveling at night in the desert about 14 times. Did a lot of listening and looking. And then we rode to battle together. I emerged from that experience with a damned good story of an American armoured division at war .... and with something far more important: A whole new crop of comrades-in-arms and friends-for-life. We had trusted each other with our lives.

My regret, and one that I believe is now shared by the more thoughtful military leaders today, is that there was not an experienced team of reporters, photographers and cameramen traveling with every Brigade which crossed the berm into Kuwait and Iraq; stationed with every Air Force squadron which saw action; and on the bridge of every Navy ship offshore.

Too much of the war either went uncovered, or the pooled dispatches and film took so long to reach the rear that the war was over and the stories never saw the light of day. More importantly, I think we will all have cause to regret the fact that a new generation of correspondents was not free to accompany a new generation of captains and majors of all the services to war ---- to learn the ropes, earn the trust and build the bonds that last a lifetime**.**

Some of you seated here -- the best and brightest of our nation's defenders --- are convinced that the press is your enemy. In any similar gathering of reporters there would, no doubt, be some who believe the same thing of you. This is a national tragedy.... and one that each of us has an obligation and a duty to do everything we can to repair and heal. There is more than enough blame and fault to go around, but that is not the point. Somehow my mind keeps going back to what my old friend General Hal Moore tried to explain to that lawyer: once we have trusted each other with our lives .... everything else is small change.

Since Vietnam, I've thought long and hard about the relationship between your profession and mine -- professions that the founding fathers of this nation thought so important that they included specific definitions of our duties and responsibilities and rights in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

A generation of officers emerged from that searing, bitter, orphaned war looking for someone to blame for the failures manifest in our nation's defeat in Vietnam. Many chose to blame the media: Walter Cronkite lost the war; Dan Rather lost the war; Peter Arnett lost the war.

By choosing the easy way out they obviated the painful need to carefully examine the root causes of our failure to win. By placing full blame and responsibility on the press they could avoid delving deeper, peeling to the underlying layers of the onion and exposing the more important failures of political leadership at home and military leadership right down the chain of command from the Joint Chiefs to the commander, U.S. Forces Vietnam and on down to Corps and Division.

How much easier it was to simply shoot the messengers. This red herring was dragged through the O'Club bars of a thousand posts for a decade and more after the end of the Vietnam war. It became

an article of faith for a generation of officers, and that led directly to the over-control and the spin control that allowed the Gulf War to be fought in a near-vacuum. Note that I say NEAR VACUUM, because nature abhors a vacuum.

For all the faultless planning and flawless execution of the plan, for all the success at locking the media out of the loop, locking them up in hotel briefing rooms far to the rear, in the end it was two very public television events that had much more to do with shaping the end of that war than all of the actions on or above the battlefield. Those two events both occurred three days into the war.

One was Gen. Schwarzkopf's Mother of All Briefings, a masterful exposition of what had occurred and why. Near the end of that briefing, flush with the feeling that he had knocked the ball over the fence, the general was asked a simple question: Have you achieved your objectives? He sang beautifully about how he had not wanted this war, had hoped to avoid fighting it, didn't like seeing people dying in combat, and, yes, he supposed that his prime objective, the liberation of Kuwait, had been achieved. In short, my old friend allowed his bullfrog mouth to overload his tadpole ass.

An hour later his phone began ringing with calls from the White House: Wasn't it time to begin working out the cease fire? No, said the general, he was still 48 or more hours away from completion of the plan; his tanks were still engaged heavily with units of the Republican Guard; the 24th Mech was only now pulling into place to close the sack behind the enemy in the Euphrates Valley. The voice on the phone responded, "General, that's not what you just told a worldwide TV audience of more than two billion people."

In the field, the commander of the 7th Corps armoured phalanx had not heard Schwarzkopf's briefing. Gen. Fred Franks now knows that he should have had his TOC wired to receive CNN and he should have had a smart iron major sitting there monitoring it minute by minute. If he had done that, he would have known that the war plan he was following had just accelerated from late middle game to end game. When he supervised the rewriting of Field Manual 100-5, the successor to Air-Land Battle, Gen. Franks was careful to include that recommendation for the benefit of the next generation of commanders.

The second very public event was the broadcast of film of the so-called Highway of Death and its scenes of miles and miles of shattered and burning wreckage strewn along Highway 8. With the help of J-STARS imagery and the on-the-ground first-hand knowledge of a young Army major who months before had driven that highway and made careful note of the natural choke points, the Air Force had hit those choke points at the head and tail of the long retreating column of Iraqis fleeing Kuwait City.

The film of the Highway of Death, unanalysed, gave the impression that thousands and thousands of Iraqis, innocent and guilty alike, had been slaughtered. Even General Colin Powell believed that what had happened was a turkey shoot, and, in his words, Americans don't indulge in turkey shoots. He increased the pressure on General Schwarzkopf to conclude arrangements for an immediate cease fire.

Had there been even one or two reporters and cameramen on the ground, to take a first-hand look at that highway, we would have known then and there that the Highway of Death was, in fact, a Highway of Dead Toyotas. That when the choke points were closed and the column ceased movement all the drivers and passengers instantly knew what was coming, and instantly got out of their vehicles and beat feet out into the desert. That the casualties in the great turkey shoot were perhaps no more than 150 or 200 killed.

By locking out the media, by cutting them off from timely communication of their reports to the rear, the commanders in Riyadh and Washington had perhaps taken a certain amount of revenge for perceived sins of the media in covering Vietnam, but they had without doubt outsmarted themselves. A perfect example of what our British cousins call: Too clever by half.

I've since made a couple of other deployments, including Korea and Haiti, and closely watched the deployments to Somalia and Bosnia. Some of the lessons learned in the Gulf seem to be being applied with a good deal more foresight and planning by the new generation of commanders. There have been bobbles and missteps on both sides but nothing that I consider fatal.

But there is still that underlying suspicion: Your peers tell you that I, and people like me, are YOUR enemy. My peers tell me that you, and people like you, are MY enemy. The correct answer to both groups is: Bullshit! I much prefer to MAKE my own friends and enemies the old-fashioned way. I EARN them, and I am proud of them. I stubbornly refuse to inherit them. And I recommend that course to you as well.

What I am telling you is that familiarity far more often breeds respect and friendship. Because of my experience in battle in Vietnam, when I was younger and skinnier and much dumber, I have been given the honor and privilege of open access to your tightly guarded world.

When I boarded a Huey and flew away from Landing Zone X-Ray in the Ia Drang Valley on 16 November 1965, 1 left knowing that I was alive to tell this story only because 79 young Americans had given their lives to save mine, and in that same effort 130 others had been shattered by terrible wounds. I knew that I owed them, and those like them, a lifelong

obligation to try to understand their world and to tell their story to a country that too easily forgets the true cost of war.

Someday, some of you in this room will wear stars and carry the heavy responsibility of high command. Inevitably the day will come when you must lead your young lieutenants and captains into the horror that is war. When that day comes, or in the days before it comes, the phone will likely ring and some public affairs puke will be on the line asking you how many media pukes you want to take with you. When that day comes, the right answer is: yes sir, yes sir, I'll take three bags full, but send me the brightest and best ones you have.

Then farm them out with your lieutenants and captains and let them go to war together. The experience of war will create bonds between them that cannot be broken; the young reporters will learn to love the soldiers and airmen just as you and your lieutenants have learned; and in the end 99 percent of the coverage that flows from this experience will be entirely positive.

I want you to do this because it is right, and I ask you to do this so that there will be others like me 30 years down the road who know and love your profession and can translate it for the American public. I ask this because my time as a combat correspondent has, sadly, come to an end. All these years I have been free to go to wars, to do the really dumb stuff that I always tried to conceal from my mother and my insurance agent, because I had a strong, loving wife at home to take care of our young sons if anything ever happened to me.

She had all the ticket punches of a military wife, eleven moves in 22 years, sudden disappearances of her husband for long periods of time, living with the knowledge that a phone call or a knock on the door could bring news that she was a widow. She handled it all perfectly. Last January, after a brief, brutal battle with cancer, my wife, Theresa died. I am now trying to be father and mother to two boys, 16 and 18, and I find I am no longer free to grab my rucksack and my helmet and instinctively head for the sound of the guns. My obligation and promise to her and to our sons must take precedence.

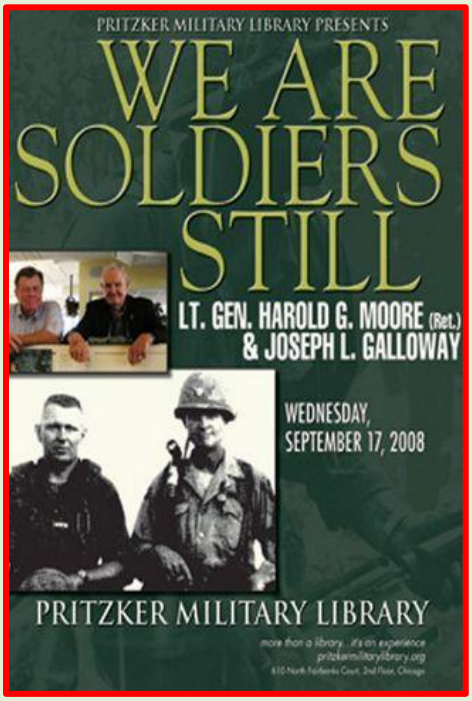
I thank you and all those like you for sharing your world with me. You have shared the last two sips of water in your canteen on a hot jungle trail; you've shared the only cup of hot coffee in a hundred miles on a cold desert morning in the Euphrates Valley; and always you have shared what is in your hearts.

Your world, your profession, has given me the best friends of my life and both the greatest happiness and greatest sorrow I have ever known.

I would leave you with these lines from Rudyard Kipling in which he tried to explain his relationship with the British Army. They explain something of what I feel:

I've eaten your bread and salt,
I've drunk your water and wine;
The deaths ye've died I've watched beside,
And the lives that ye've led were mine.

Joseph L. Galloway, was one of America's premier war and foreign correspondents for half a century, and retired as the senior military correspondent for Knight Ridder Newspapers. Before that he held an assignment as a special consultant to General Colin Powell at the State Department. Early in 2013 he was sworn into service as a special consultant to the Vietnam War 50th Anniversary Commemoration project run by the Office of the Secretary of Defence



A native of Refugio, Texas, Joe spent 22 years as a foreign and war correspondent and bureau chief for United Press International, and 20 years as a senior editor and senior writer for U.S. News & World Report magazine.

During 15 years of foreign postings—including assignments in Japan, Indonesia, India, Singapore and three years as UPI bureau chief in Moscow in the former Soviet Union—he served four tours as a war correspondent in Vietnam and also covered the 1971 India-Pakistan War and half a dozen other combat operations.

In 1990-1991 Joe covered Desert Shield/Desert Storm, riding with the 24th Infantry Division (Mech) in the assault into Iraq. He also covered the Haiti incursion and made trips to Iraq to cover the war there in 2003 and 2005-2006.

The late Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf who first met Joe in South Vietnam when he was a brand-new Army major, called the Texan "the finest combat correspondent of our generation---a soldier's reporter and a soldier's friend." Joe is co-author, with Lt. Gen. (ret) Hal Moore, of the national bestseller "We Were Soldiers Once - And Young" which has been made into a critically acclaimed movie, *We Were Soldiers,* starring Mel Gibson.

The book *We Were Soldiers Once - And Young* is presently in print in six different languages and more than 1.2 million copies have been sold.

Where does the ADF's deep-seated resentment of the media come from, and how did it manifest in Afghanistan?

Courtesy of: THE CONVERSATION

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) has long been wary of the media's power to derail its promotional narratives and damage careers in the process. But there was nothing irrational about its members' determination to keep the fourth estate at bay in Afghanistan, Australia's "longest war". It was driven by what the ADF would argue was the evidence of history.

Writing in The Drum the Australian Broadcasting Corporation defence correspondent Michael Brissenden ascribed the scant media coverage of Australia's war in Afghanistan to the Australian Defence Force's "irrational fear of the media". But where did this fear begin, and what did the Australian media learn from the Afghanistan experience?

While the Australian military's aversion to the media has deep historical roots that one can trace back through both world wars, it was the conflict in Vietnam that entrenched its antagonism towards the fourth estate.
Like their colleagues in the US, the Australians were convinced that the media had lost them a war that the military had been poised to win. Specifically, they alleged that in turning domestic opinion against the conflict, the media had "maligned the troops after so wholeheartedly supporting them" and so played a central role in stirring up public resentment against them.

Australian war historian Jeffrey Grey has pointed out that these charges are groundless, a product of the Australian tendency to evaluate the experience of the Vietnam War as if it was identical to that of the US: Contrary to the ADF's accusations, the Australian media faithfully backed the military in Vietnam.
Australian reporters have, as journalist Tom Hyland notes, "created and sustained a consistently positive image of the ADF in action" and thereby "bestowed on the military a repository of enormous goodwill". Despite this, by the end of the Vietnam War, distrust of and disdain for the media had soaked deep into the ADF's cultural tissue and now comprised one of its key cultural norms.

Our "memories" of the war are shaped and coloured by American responses to the American experience: Photojournalist Tim Page.

Regular operational experience from Grenada in 1983 to the Balkans in 1999 brought the US military to the realisation that its hostility to the media was not only ill-founded but counter-productive. US commanders discovered that they needed the media to furnish a credible account of their deeds for a domestic audience and to project compelling images of US power to their adversaries.

The media were not a threat to the military but an asset.

By contrast, until their deployment to Afghanistan, the ADF had few opportunities to revise their experiences of and review their relations with the media on operations. Consequently, the military arrived in Tarin Kowt with the old hostilities towards the media intact.

A recent working paper examining the experience of embedding reporters with the Australian military in Afghanistan published by the army's think-tank, the Land Warfare Studies Centre, conceded that there was still an "institutional aversion to media" within the ADF and a "lingering bias" against its organisations and practitioners.

The fact that the ADF was in Uruzgan province in the first place, that its force strength was rarely greater than 1550 troops and the nature of the tasks it performed there further heightened the military's sensitivity towards any media presence. What happened in Uruzgan was not central to the broader military outcomes of the struggle in Afghanistan. The war's centres of gravity were further south, in Helmand and Kandahar, and further east on the border with Pakistan's lawless frontier provinces.

Australian forces in Afghanistan were based mainly in Tarin Kowt, away from the war's key battlegrounds. While Special Forces flew in and out of Tarin Kowt targeting Taliban commanders and bomb makers, the bulk of the Australian troops were busy laying down infrastructure, capacity building and undertaking mentoring operations with the Afghan National Army's frontline forces, preparing them to take over security in the province.

In this context, what the ADF's personnel were doing in Afghanistan was less important than how they did it. While fulfilling their mission, their principal responsibility was not to the Afghans or the International Security Assistance Force, but to the history of the organisation they served. They had to be seen to be serving in the great traditions of their Anzac forebears.
As a result, the ADF regarded the media not as a link between the troops and the home front but as a potential threat to its reputation management strategies.

As the war progressed, the troops were increasingly bemused by the lack of coverage of their deeds in Afghanistan and what they perceived as public indifference to the conflict.
While the media failed to commit the resources necessary to adequately cover the war, the greater responsibility for the lack of news from Afghanistan lies with the ADF and their political masters. Neither were prepared to risk the damage that bad news from the frontline might inflict.

Where politicians reacted by micromanaging the release of information and damming the flow of news from Afghanistan, the ADF's response – for the greater part of the war – was to bring as much of the nomination, gathering and production of news about the war in-house, to control the media by taking over its role and functions.

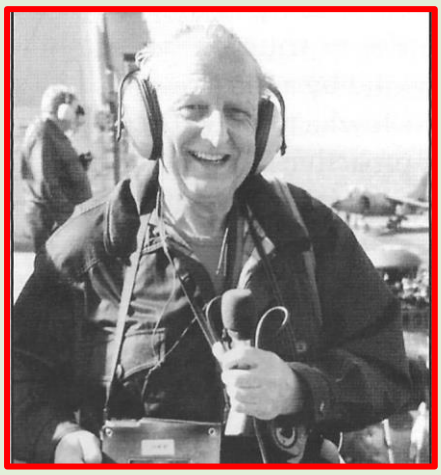
As a consequence, despite the frustrations of its own personnel, the ADF would not tell. Despite the efforts of some dedicated reporters, the media could not tell. Ministers from both major parties refused to release information from Afghanistan and so the public never knew what was happening there. If, as is now clear, Australia's longest war has also been its worst reported, the key question for commentators and the public is less "why?" than "where to from here?"

Professor Kevin Foster was educated in the UK, Canada and Australia and received his Ph.D. from Monash University where I have taught since 1995. In 2008 he edited What are we doing in Afghanistan? The Military and the Media at War (ASP 2009) and later The Information Battlefield: Representing Australians at War (ASP 2011).

Drawing together the insights from these edited collections, his most recent monograph, *Don't Mention* the War: The Australian Defence Force, the Media and the Afghan Conflict (Monash UP 2013) offered a comprehensive analysis of how the Australian media covered the war in Afghanistan and the forces that prevented them from reporting on the nation's armed forces at war. His current research focuses on Social Media and the Military, a research project funded by the Australian Army Research Centre, the Photographers of Australia's Military History Section during the Second World War, and Australian photo-magazines from 1939-45.

MoD PR - 'could do better'

The current crop of stories about military and media relations sent Scribblings delving into the past and our team could not resist the following tale which ties in strongly with our coverage of the 35th anniversary of the Falklands War. Written by Harold Briley OBE, this story appeared in the last edition of the TAPIO journal, Despatches in 1995. Harold, a journalist for over 50 years, 30 of them with the BBC in radio and television, the remainder with newspapers, magazines and public relations, was a newspaper defence correspondent in the 1960s and BBC World Service Defence and Aerospace Correspondent in the 1980s.



He covered revolutions and wars, including the Falklands Conflict, filing from 70 countries around the world. Now living, appropriately, in Battle, he takes a retrospective look at his encounters with the Ministry of Defence and the British and various foreign forces, re-affirming what he's always felt: The British Armed Forces are by far the best in the world - but their PR could be better!

HAROLD MACMILLAN sipped his sherry in Number Ten Downing Street, gazed above my head into the middle distance, and mused about a possible new wonder weapon, fired from a moving platform which the enemy would never be able to detect. In my Army service, I had been a Royal Artillery Surveyor specialising in sound-ranging and other technical means of detecting enemy weapons.

But I could not fathom out what Harold Macmillan was going on about ... until a few weeks later when the United States announced the Polaris missile submarine. The Prime Minister had secretly negotiated the acquisition of Polaris to become Britain's independent nuclear deterrent. I had failed to exploit Harold Macmillan's clue and missed a great scoop.

By mistake, though, I had unwittingly enjoyed a similar scoop' a year or two earlier. My newspaper had totally trashed a story I had written about a Defence White Paper, carrying the ridiculous front-page headline*: Blue Steel to be fired from submarine*. They had mixed up the British firing of a missile at Australia's Woomera rocket range with a story about scrapping an old submarine. Years

later, courtesy of Admiral of the Fleet Sir Julian Oswald, I was one of the few journalists to join a Polaris submarine on patrol to interview the captain and crew to tell the world about one of my most interesting assignments, describing their life, on guard under the sea.

Journalistic scoops, especially in war, emerge from a combination of good luck, good judgment, good timing, good contacts, and occasionally even from tipoffs from MoD public relations officers. The most praiseworthy campaign for the British Forces in my time was the Falklands Conflict, yet it produced the worst public relations. As the BBC's Latin America Correspondent, I was the first person to file on the Falklands invasion, followed by several hundred broadcasts.

Fourteen months earlier, in 1981, I had gone on a recce trip to the tip of South America to the Beagle Channel and the Falkland Islands, in preparation for hostilities I feared might happen. I interviewed the Governor, Sir Rex Hunt, about Argentina's sovereignty threat, and went to San Carlos by seaplane, rowing ashore by boat where, the following year, my good friend, Commodore Michael Clapp, masterminded the landing of British troops

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Whenever thereafter I met anyone from the Task Force, I would joke with them, saying: What Kept You?' In 1981, when hardly anyone had heard of the Falklands, the islanders said to me 'Tell them in Britain about us. Get us put on the map!'

Before the conflict, I had been forced out of Argentina by death threats from the military regime's kidnap murder gangs for reporting on their internal Dirty War', in which thousands of people, including many journalists, disappeared - kidnapped, tortured and killed. I switched my base to Rio de Janeiro but went back to Buenos Aires in February 1982 where I found the British Embassy astonishingly complacent, saying what wonderful relations they had with Argentina! The Ambassador was holding a reception for British soldiers who had just completed a joint mountain climbing expedition with Argentine soldiers.

General Leopold Galtieri– pictured above as Commander in Chief Argentine Forces visiting occupying troops in the Falklands - promised me an interview but did not deliver. Instead, I interviewed the Head of the Malvinas Department, Senor Blanco. I asked point blank: Do you intend to invade the Falklands?' He replied: 'Good God, No!' Six weeks later, they did.

By then I had returned to Buenos Aires, alerted by the movements of the Royal Navy ice patrol vessel, HMS Endurance, which I had previously arranged to join in Montevideo for what was to have been its very last voyage to the Falkland's before being scrapped. When told Endurance was not coming for me I caught the next plane to Argentina. So, I was in the right place for the invasion itself and for three months of frenetic activity.

Ministry of Defence public relations was a disaster in the eyes of the British media, as detailed in the book *Gotcha* by a BBC colleague describing the war not with Argentina but between the MoD and the Press. What perplexed me from my vantage point in enemy territory as a fan of the British forces, was the MoD's refusal to allow foreign journalists on the Task Force, even a token group of news agency and other correspondents, say Americans, South Americans, and from the European Union, to report first-hand on what was wonderful publicity for the British forces - for their professionalism, stamina and courage, carrying out what, by any standards, was a superb military operation so far from home, against such colossal odds. MoD attitudes only alienated vast hordes of journalists, instead of creating lasting goodwill.

By contrast, the Argentine Military went out of their way to brief, even if inaccurately, hundreds of journalists who flocked to Buenos Aires, from all over the world. The Argentines allowed us uncensored use of telephones so there was no impediment to filing our stories, though I had three plain clothes police 'minders' throughout, allegedly guarding me from kidnap.
What impressed me after the conflict was the remarkable rapport the British forces established with the Falklands people, with whom I still have close links and many friendships. I speak with experience when I declare how grateful the islanders were for the job the forces did, and the sacrifices they made.
Afterwards, the forces were still creating goodwill, helping farmers with work on their farms, teaching the children to swim, and guarding against Argentine aggression. In my six visits to the Falklands, I have never heard a bad word spoken about the British forces - only praise. It has been very different in many other countries where I have seen so much ill-will created by foreign garrison, occupying, or peace-keeping forces.

One outstanding example of pragmatic PR was the way the Army briefed the Falklands people, especially the children, about the dangers of thousands of Argentine mines and of vast quantities of unexploded ordnance of all kinds in the aftermath of war. I remember with respect an impressive PR officer, Major John Quinn of the Royal Engineers, who helped to develop a scheme for the children in which they were enrolled as helpers, called 'Bomb Disposaleers'. They had talks at their schools from army officers, learned a lot about mines of all kinds, and were awarded beautifully scrolled certificates, inscribed with their names, in which they promised not to touch anything suspicious but always to contact the bomb disposal engineers.

Fingers crossed, what a fantastically successful scheme that has proved. No Falklands child has been injured by exploding mines, though sadly, some RE officers were. Another valuable PR scheme was the appointment of a wildlife protection officer in the Falklands to limit ecological damage. I remember a Falklands farmer, complaining about low-flying aircraft, declare: 'I've never before seen sheep sheared by helicopters!

Another great Falklands quote at a difficult time came from a MoD information officer, Tim Downes, when I told him about how the farmers were puzzled that so many sheep ran over the cliffs and drowned. 'It's so tough out here', he ruefully declared, 'even the sheep commit suicide!' Tim was droll company visiting the wintry Byron heights radar station and, later on, the Armilla patrol through the Strait of Hormuz during the Iran-Iraq War.

A question often put to me by military public relations officers is 'What is good PR?' Judged by its potential for recruiting, as it often is, this seems to me a narrow-minded criterion. I sometimes did not qualify for media trips as a BBC World Service Correspondent broadcasting world-wide. A very senior PR officer once said to me 'There are no MPs interested and no votes in the BBC World Service'. How wrong he was!

I found all over the world, from Northern Ireland to Hong Kong, from Northern Norway and Canada to the Antarctic, from NATO headquarters, in ships at sea, aircraft, and army camps, the British forces do listen to BBC World Service. The BBC is also widely respected by foreign forces listening to find out what is going on in their areas. When I climbed aboard a giant United States aircraft carrier in the run-up to the Gulf War, its thousands of personnel were tuned in to the BBC. The Admiral of the US Sixth Fleet told me they always listened to find out the truth.

By the Gulf War, the MoD had learned its lesson and revised its public relations set-up, doing a much better job, under Hugh Colver, right, then Chief of Public Relations, having been at No.10 Downing Street Press Office during the Falklands Conflict. The circumstances were very different. The MoD were not in sole charge controlling communications as in the Falklands. Many other countries were involved, promoting their own PR.

Journalistic communications were superb in what became the first war to bring the front line alive on television sets back home. After interviewing the British Commander, General Sir Peter de la Billiére, in Saudi Arabia, and setting off across the desert in search of a telephone, I found a BBC colleague with a satellite telephone on a lorry from where I could telephone direct to the BBC! How different from the hours I had to wait to phone from Latin America or from the Iran and Nicaraguan Revolutions only ten years earlier, or the Indo-Pakistan War 25 years ago. That required a daily trip up the Khyber Pass to Kabul to put television film on the plane to London.

When I left the BBC, I received many messages of goodwill from my friends in the forces, from former Defence ministers, and from Hugh Colver, from what he called the Ministry of Defence which you have come to 'love and hate'. Admittedly, I often expressed exasperation when the MoD refused me help, falling back on that frustrating phrase 'We can neither confirm nor deny...'even for positive stories helpful to the forces.

One particularly difficult story to stand up in the middle of the night was Iraq's super gun - did it exist and had Britain helped to supply parts? Well, other sources enabled me to tell the world it did. As well as the MoDs sometimes negative attitude, I have happy memories of many stories when I had unstinting help - accompanying Michael Heseltine to the 40th anniversary of the Far East War when I met so many veterans, ex-prisoners-of-war and widows, whose fantastic stories of survival and endurance made me feel humble; George Younger in the Falklands and in Oman, always so helpful and courteous; Tom King in the Soviet Union and at the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Narvik when he kindly gave me a lift back on what he called a record for the journey from Northern Norway to my home in Orpington; Lord Carrington, always helpful and wise at the MOD, the Foreign Office and in NATO.

Generals Sam Cowan, Peter de la Billiére and William Rous were all especially helpful communicators. Willie Rous even once got world-wide publicity through me on the Army's good work for the environment, especially for the Natter-Jack toad, creating shell pothole habitats on firing ranges for a disappearing species. That's real PR!

Thirty- five years after I, as a young soldier, manned a surveyor's sandbag observation post, with my theodolite and Bren gun, at Lo Wu on the Hong Kong border, as hordes of battle-hardened Chinese troops rolled up, the Army took me back to the same spot, now manned by the Gurkhas in splendid monsoon-proof concrete quarters. In Hungary, a British Army attaché provided me with a world scoop about the first withdrawal of Soviet forces from East Europe.

The Royal Navy took me to sea off the Falklands, in the Atlantic, the Pacific, the South China Seas and in the Ark Royal to Australia's Bicentennial, where Captain Hugh Rickard was one of the most effective public relations officers I ever encountered, and his boss, Captain Anthony Provest, a Falklands veteran, one of the most approachable and conscientious.

I travelled so far with the Royal Air Force in Hercules aircraft, that when it completed its one-millionth hour in RAF service, they invited me on the special commemorative flight. I also interviewed pilots air-to-air from a refuelling plane flying along the Kuwait border after the Iraqi invasion. I am grateful for the scrupulous regard and standards the British forces have for the safety of journalists in their care in dangerous situations. So different from some foreign forces I've been with.

In retirement, I work voluntarily for several charities for the blind and handicapped world-wide, for Iraqi refugees in Iran, for the Shackleton Memorial Scholarships in the South Atlantic, and I still keep in occasional touch with the MoD. I've been back in peace to places where I reported war - to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, Nicaragua and Iran, Argentina and the Falklands, where I interviewed Margaret Thatcher at the grave of Colonel H Jones VC at San Carlos.

I have offered my services to the TAPIO Pool but so far without success. Maybe the call will yet come! There is much to be done to resolve the incompatible aims of the Armed Forces and journalists and cement relations as I argued in lectures to the Staff Colleges. As Co-Editor of the Falkland Islands Newsletter, campaigning to keep the Falklands free from Argentine claims, I am still waiting for the promised MoD trip in Endurance in the Falklands and to the Antarctic. It will be good PR. Perhaps, one day the phone will ring...!

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

A Reporter's Anguished Farewell to Afghanistan

During four years based in Kabul, a Journal foreign correspondent watched the capital become a battle zone. By Jessica Donati The Wall Street Journal Aug. 18, 2017

Security forces stand next to a crater created by a massive truck-bomb explosion in front of the German embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, May 31. Photo: Rahmat Gul/Associated Press

When I moved to Kabul four years ago, the Afghan capital was better known, among foreign visitors, for its parties than for its bombs. A surge in U.S. troops and foreign aid had fuelled an expat lifestyle of heavy drinking and carousing. The wild behaviour had mostly subsided by the time I arrived in 2013, but a handful of bars, restaurants and at least one brothel still catered to foreigners.

Contractors, diplomats and aid workers—plus a few journalists and the occasional fortune-seeker—dined in garden restaurants, where forbidden wine was served in teacups. Some places even offered beer, at $10 a can.

That all changed in early 2014, when the Taliban attacked a popular Lebanese restaurant known for its free chocolate cake. A suicide bomber blew himself up at the door, opening the way for gunmen with AK-47s who executed 21 people one by one, including a friend of mine. It all took about 15 minutes. I was a few blocks away, listening from a balcony, wondering why there was no return fire. No one survived.

As my tour here for the Journal winds down, Afghanistan's long war—confined for years to the countryside—has spilled into the capital. Since 2014, most venues catering to foreigners have closed. Embassies and contractors are confined to heavily fortified compounds. The U.S. embassy deems the five-minute drive to the airport so risky that it shuttles staff there by helicopter.

As the walls have reached higher, insurgent attacks have grown bigger and bolder. In May, a huge truck bomb exploded outside the German embassy, killing more than 150 people—the worst such attack since the US led invasion in 2001. The blast shattered our bureau, about 100 yards away, blowing out windows and cracking a wall. I was in the shower at the time, and as the ground shook, I thought: The house is going to fall down, and I'll be climbing out of the rubble without any clothes on. How did we get here?

The Obama administration's military surge ended in 2012, but local forces weren't prepared to take over. The Taliban swept through rural areas, and an Islamic State insurgency took root, capitalizing on popular frustration with a government often seen as dominated by brutal former warlords.

President Donald Trump has reportedly said that the U.S. is losing in Afghanistan, but changing course presents difficult choices. He could dispatch more U.S. troops, which might prevent further setbacks but probably wouldn't alter the conflict's underlying dynamics. Despite a dramatic escalation in U.S. airstrikes in Afghanistan—now up to levels last seen in 2012, U.S. military data shows—casualty and attrition rates among Afghan forces remain near record levels.

Or Mr. Trump could choose to leave, which experts say would cause the Kabul government to quickly collapse, much as the Soviet-backed regime did after Moscow withdrew in 1989. Life in Kabul has only grown more tense since the 2014 attack on the Lebanese restaurant. A fraud-marred presidential election that year nearly tipped the country into civil war and ended only when the U.S. brokered an unhappy power-sharing deal between rivals Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah. Almost a third of Afghan cabinet positions remain vacant, including defence minister.

The weakness of the Ghani government is obvious in the provinces. Highways built with foreign aid are now front lines; Taliban flags flap on roads less than an hour's drive from U.S. military headquarters. Heading out of Kabul one morning, we were caught in a Taliban ambush. Our driver executed a miraculous U-turn, saving us from the hailstorm of bullets, and we retreated with holes in our tires. The huge truck bomb outside the German embassy in May had been a long time in coming. Several massive bombs had already struck the capital, though not the fortified embassy district.

At our bureau, which we share with the Washington Post, a spray of glass hit Sharif Walid, one of the Post's Afghan reporters. Toryalai Omari, a Journal driver, administered first aid to stop the bleeding. He had worked in a hospital before discovering that the pay was better for driving around

foreigners. At a nearby hospital, we pushed through families clustered outside, waiting for staff to emerge with updated lists of the dead. The wards were packed with maimed office workers, using tubes to breathe through their burned throats. The attack deepened my own depression after years of covering the endless war. Our Afghan staff proved tougher, after decades of conflict.

Taliban militants in Herat province, Afghanistan, May 27, 2016. Photo: Allauddin Khan/Associated Press

One of our drivers, Nassim Faqirzada, told us that when civil war erupted in the 1990s after the Soviet withdrawal, a rocket killed his sister and her family at lunchtime. Nassim had been headed to join them when another rocket struck a group of people yards ahead of him. He was covered in their blood as he carried a survivor to hospital.

Back then, most members of our Afghan staff were living in Pakistan as refugees, along with millions of their countrymen. Our two local reporters had fled across the border as children. Ehsanullah Amiri wove carpets for $100 a month to help support his family, while Habib Khan Totakhil studied in a madrassa in the ultraconservative tribal areas. Our cook wrinkled his nose when we asked him about the Taliban, recalling how they shot his uncle dead in front of him as a child.

Now the war is closing in again. Last summer, Ehsanullah was covering a protest when a suicide bomber detonated in the crowd, killing more than 80 people. Weeks later, our other Afghan reporter, Habib, lost one of his best friends in an attack on the American University in Kabul. In October, our driver Toryalai, who had lost one brother to a Soviet bomb 25 years ago, lost another to a sniper. In January, two days after I had dinner with him, the long-time ambassador of the United Arab Emirates was killed in a bombing at the Kandahar governor's compound. He had told me of his concerns about the trip but said that cancelling would be poor form.

Dunkirk - a film that divides its audiences

DUNKIRK is a name to conjure much in the British psyche. So, perhaps, it was not surprising that the recent film by Chris Nolan attracted a great deal of attention. As I understand it, not only in the UK, but in the US where it would be legitimate to think that the story would have limited appeal. Not so: I am assured. In the UK opinions seem roughly divided, 50-50: you either loved it or it left you cold because of its limited ability to tell a complex story or the many factual gaffes – the longest crash landing on a beach in history and with the wheels down: the sparse mention of our allies and the strange scene which depicts French soldiers being turned away from a ship. Scribblings looks at how the story of Dunkirk provokes comment and how the media gets the blame for fostering the spirit of the time.

Battered British Used Pen to Create Dunkirk Spirit and Prevail in War

An extract from Pennsylvania's The Morning Call, one of the top 100 largest circulation daily newspapers serving a nine-county region of eastern Pennsylvania and western New Jersey in the United States - by Richard K Brunner.

THE MORNING CALL

…… in April 1941, George Orwell wrote: 'The Germans have now sunk the British navy several times over in their published pronouncements . . . When things are going badly our own Government lies in a rather stupid way, withholding information and being vaguely optimistic.

……As Americans pause to remember two paramount 20th-century military victories — V-E Day and V-J Day — it is well to recall how government and media propaganda contributed to these victories, often by inflating home-front morale. Sixty years on, many battles have become national myths that survive to sanctify the 'finest hours' in the darkest days of the Second World War.

One of the most potent of these myths is 'Operation Dynamo,' the evacuation from Dunkirk harbour. This flotilla of mercy — the rescue of British and French troops between May 26 and June 4, 1940 — was mainly responsible for 'The Dunkirk Spirit,' a beacon of hope for dispirited Britons in the early dark days of the war.

'Operation Dynamo' was a grand name for a salvage-rescue mission, the unhappy postscript to the ignominious rout by German might of Belgian, French and British forces in Flanders, that left 338,226 troops with their backs to the Strait of Dover. A gloss-over by most British and many American newspapers, assisted by the government-regulated BBC, successfully re-incarnated Dunkirk into a famous victory, welcome balm to Winston Churchill's fledging premiership. Although four-fifths of the British army was saved, it sustained 68, 111 casualties and left nearly all its guns, tanks and other vital materiel in enemy hands. Six destroyers were sunk and 26 damaged. The RAF lost 474 aircraft.

Churchill, briefing the House of Commons, represented the operation as a 'colossal military disaster,' but few paid much notice. Anthony Eden, secretary of state for war, took a different line. 'The British Expeditionary Force still exists not as a handful of fugitives, but as a body of seasoned veterans,' he told the nation on June 2. 'There is no braver epic in all our annals.'

But it would be wrong to credit a campaign by a perfidious government for transforming a forced embarkation into a victory celebration Mostly, the press and the BBC did that. 'BLOODY MARVELLOUS, trumpeted the Daily Mirror. At a remove of 60 years, this idiomatic appears offensive, given the amount of British blood left on Dunkirk's wide sandy beaches. The Sunday Dispatch saw God's hand at work. Dunkirk, it pointed out, followed a National Day of Prayer.

Moreover 'the English Channel, that notoriously rough stretch of water which has brought distress to so many holiday-makers in happier times, became as calm and smooth as a pond …. and while the smooth sea was aiding our ships, a fog was shielding our troops from devastating attack by the enemy's air strength..

Across the Atlantic, beguiled by Churchillian rhetoric, the New York Times waxed purple: So long as the English tongue survives, the word Dunkirk will be spoken with reverence. For in that harbour, in such a hell as never blazed on earth before … the rags and blemishes that have hidden the soul of democracy fell away.' This, on June 1, 1940.

A day later, Ed Murrow, right, from London, told CBS listeners in America that, *There is a tendency . . . to call the withdrawal a victory and there will be disagreement on that point.

Drew Middleton, the AP correspondent on the scene, decried hearts and flowers pap the British newspapers fed its readers. Given such glorifications, it took little to persuade anxious Britons that Dunkirk was a 'bloody miracle,' and that something remarkable actually had happened to brighten the fortunes of war. Listening to BBC archival tapes of those days of May and June 60 years ago, one can understand why.

A BBC correspondent describes the 'tired, battle-stained and blood-stained British solders' coming ashore at an undisclosed Channel port on May 31: 'Even when a man was obviously on the verge of collapse from sheer fatigue you could still tell by his eyes that his spirit was irrepressible. And that is a thing that all the bombs in Germany will never crush.

Playwright J.B. Priestley's Sunday night radio talks ignited the fires of patriotic fervour. His eulogy to be 'Gracie Fields' — a ferry steamer, not the singer — illustrates how the myth of Dunkirk took shape. On his June 5 broadcast, he salutes this intrepid craft, far from safe coastal waters, consumed by the inferno of German bombardment. But now', look, this little steamer, like all her brave and battered sisters, is immortal. She'll go sailing proudly down the years in the Epic of Dunkirk, and our great-grandchildren, when they learn how we began this war by snatching glory out of defeat, and then swept onto victory, may also learn how the little holiday steamers made an excursion to hell and came back glorious.'

Whether attained by an amalgam of newsprint, BBC voices, and government work, 'The Dunkirk Spirit, historian Arthur Bryant wrote, was a kind of miracle. not only restored a British Army. it revived the nation's soul Britain was herself again:

Whether the pen is mightier than the sword is arguable. However, in creating *The Dunkirk Spirit,' the British pen prevailed over the German sword. National nostalgia runs deep; and when born of despair, embraced as myth, and marinated in time, such nostalgia begets a legend that transcends any reality.

THE CONVERSATION

Dunkirk was a victory for morale but ultimately a humiliating military defeat

By Gerard Oram July 20, 2017

For Britons, Dunkirk is one of the proudest moments of World War II. The evacuation of 338,226 troops and other personnel from the beaches of northern France – which took place between May 26 and June 4 1940 – was an act of stubborn defiance by a plucky island nation against Hitler's blitzkrieg. It was a victory snatched from the jaws of defeat. Yet this was anything but a military success. Quite often we now forget the catastrophic defeat that led to "Operation Dynamo".

On May 10, 1940, the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) – totaling approximately 400,000 at the height of the campaign and commanded by Lord Gort – was deployed in Belgium, alongside its allies, as part of a defensive line against German invasion. But by May 13, German units had pierced French defences and crossed the River Meuse near Sedan, close to the Belgian border in northeast France.

Within a week, German panzer divisions had reached the French coast south of Boulogne, trapping the BEF and the French 1st Army in a small pocket around the channel ports, cutting them off from the main Allied force. The German advance to the English Channel between May 16 and May 21, 1940. The History Department of the United States Military Academy

The British retreat to Dunkirk was controversial. But poor planning, intelligence, leadership, and communications had left the Allies in a desperate situation.

Prime Minister Winston Churchill had promised the French that the BEF would play its part in a coordinated counterattack against the German flank. However, Lord Gort was preparing to evacuate his troops, apparently with the blessing of the secretary of state for war, Anthony Eden. To escape annihilation, the BEF staged a fighting retreat to the coast, and rescue plans were hastily made, including appeals for owners of "self-propelled pleasure craft between 30 and 100 feet" to contact the Admiralty.

Covered by rear-guard actions by both British and French units, exhausted troops converged on Dunkirk. Naturally, there was panic and chaos on the beaches. The town and port were bombed and time was running out. Discipline was often tested: historians have found anecdotal evidence that order was sometimes restored through the severest of measures, with guns being trained on troops by their own officers and men.

French involvement

Crucial time was bought by those covering the retreat. At Lille, the French 1st Army fought German forces to a standstill for four days, despite being hopelessly outnumbered and lacking any armour. The French forces forming a perimeter defence around Dunkirk were all either killed or captured.

British forces covering the retreat also paid a high price. Those who were not killed in the fighting became prisoners of war. But even that was no guarantee of safety. At the village of Le Paradis, 97 British troops who had surrendered were massacred by the SS. At least 200 Muslim soldiers of the French army met with the same fate.

As the quays of Dunkirk had been destroyed, evacuation had to take place from the shore itself, justifying the foresight of the Admiralty to co-opt the small ships. Troops were transported by these small craft to larger vessels of the Royal Navy and French Navy under frequent harassment from the Luftwaffe. Remarkably, however, Hitler was persuaded to halt the advance on land in favour of air strikes against the men on the beaches. The limitations of isolated air operations and the deteriorating weather that reduced the number of sorties (missions) flown probably saved many British and French lives.

The BEF was rescued, but this was far from a victory. More than 50,000 men had been lost (killed, missing, or captured) and an enormous number of tanks, guns, and trucks had been left behind, too.

Men of the 2nd Royal Ulster Rifles awaiting evacuation at Bray Dunes, near Dunkirk, 1940. Imperial War Museum/Wikimedia

Victims of spirit

The spirit of Dunkirk – the pride that the British people felt after the successful rescue of the country's men – had its own casualties, too. The crucial role of the French army has subsequently been forgotten. The RAF, criticised for failing to cover the troops on the beach adequately, actually sustained huge losses of its own, as did both the British and French navies. German errors – particularly the aforementioned halt order – that allowed the escape to happen are understated.

Dunkirk has become the focal point for this moment in history, but other rescue missions took place that are not as well remembered. In total, over 558,000 British, French, Polish and Czech personnel were rescued from the beaches of northern France between May and June 1940 – an additional 220,000 to those who were evacuated from Dunkirk. Most significantly, the role of the "little ships" has come to dominate the story of Dunkirk. Though these 861-pleasure craft and fishing boats were essential to the operation's success in the shallow waters around Dunkirk, they were less significant in evacuations elsewhere. The boats are often viewed as an integral part of the people's war, even though most of these ships were crewed by Royal Navy personnel, not civilians.

The Daily Express, May 4, 1940.


Daily Express

TENS OF THOUSANDS SAFELY HOME ALREADY

Many more coming by day and night

SHIPS OF ALL SIZES DARE THE GERMAN GUNS

Tired, dirty, hungry

Gracie goes to America

Dunkirk was in essence a defeat, but there was a victory in the impact it had on the country's morale and national identity during the war – which was largely shaped by the British media. As novelist J.B. Priestley put it in his BBC radio broadcast of June 5, 1940: What began as a miserable blunder, a catalogue of misfortunes and miscalculations, ended as an epic of gallantry. We have a queer habit – and you can see it running through our history – of conjuring up such transformations. Out of a black gulf of humiliation and despair, rises a sun of blazing glory.

The Era of Whatsapp Propaganda Is Upon Us

***The future of fake news is messaging apps, not social media. And it's going to be even worse** says Nic Dias: a senior research fellow at First Draft News, a nonprofit research organization His research foci include the use of bots to gain disproportionate voice on social networks. Story appeared in Foreign Policy magazine on August 17, 2017. Image credit: Justin Sullivan/Getty Images*

In some places, the future of misinformation is already here. A hoax about child-napping con artists led to the beating of two people this spring in Brazil. A rumor about a salt shortage last fall sparked panicked rushes to markets in several Indian states that turned fatal. And fabricated poll reports sowed doubts about the electoral standing of candidates ahead this month's elections in Kenya, where the result is disputed and dozens have been killed in protests.

When fake news has violent consequences, journalists have a duty to set the record straight as quickly as possible. But the details of these rumors — who was behind them and why — are particularly murky and likely to remain that way. That's due to one seemingly trivial detail: In all of these cases, the misinformation made its way to readers via the messaging service WhatsApp.

Closed messaging apps like WhatsApp and Viber continue to grow in popularity worldwide. And as the popularity of Facebook and Twitter as news sources shows signs of stagnating or declining around the world, messaging platforms are increasingly becoming a means through which users learn about the wider world. A recent YouGov survey of over 70,000 people in 36 countries found that 23 percent of respondents "find, share, or discuss" news using at least one messaging service. In Asian and Latin American countries like Malaysia or Brazil, that number is closer to 50 percent, and WhatsApp is almost as common a source of news as Facebook.

Messaging platforms have yet to provoke much discussion among misinformation and disinformation researchers (myself included) in the West, who have been trying to devise best practices for responding to viral rumor and disinformation campaigns. But these simple apps deserve attention as the dark future of misinformation and disinformation.

Unlike Twitter or Reddit, messaging apps are not designed to be public squares where users can mingle with millions of strangers. They began as cheap, data-lean alternatives to SMS texting or as ways to send private, encrypted messages.

Most of these apps restrict users to one-on-one chats with contacts in their phones or to private group chats with no more than 500 friends of friends. While a conversation with hundreds of participants certainly doesn't feel too private, these groups chats are still closed in the sense that everyone in them must be invited by an existing member, and there's no way to know whether a group exists unless you're a part of it.

Furthermore, with a few exceptions, there are no trending lists or social feeds providing input from outside a user's network. Some mobile messaging companies have recognized the potential for their apps to deliver creative or editorial content, offering features through which users can subscribe to one-way chats with publishers. These are not a public forum, though; users can like messages and see how many each has been viewed, but only the publisher can post messages to subscribers.

In short, barring a few exceptions, all activity on these platforms that exists outside one's immediate network is completely invisible. On apps with end-to-end encryption — like WhatsApp, Telegram, or Viber — ostensibly not even the platforms themselves can always see what's being discussed by users.

It's for this reason that some who have been paying attention to messaging platforms call them "dark social."

The obscurity of messaging apps poses obvious problems for journalists trying to quickly find and debunk falsehoods on these platforms. To begin with, it's harder for journalists or others trying to combat misinformation to identify just what is circulating on these platforms in first place. But even when a rumor has been pinpointed, it's harder to take the first and necessary step in the fact-checking process of identifying the original source of a piece of content.

Hoaxes on messaging services often don't come with citations or hyperlink; rather, they're commonly standalone media or blocks of text, sometimes attributed to official sources. ("The next [Richter] scale of earthquake will be 8.2. News From NASA. Plz forward the message as much as u can" is one typical example from India.)

Unattributed or falsely attributed images, videos or text can be searched on Google. However, where the original instance of the content cannot be found by Google's web crawlers — like in cases where

the content originated on the messaging platform itself or has been edited — journalists are left at a dead end.

These apps also have features that complicate matters for anyone looking to spread false information. It's harder for actors to synthetically boost their message as they have, say, using bots on Twitter. To send someone a message on these platforms, you must have their mobile number stored in your phone or at least know their exact username. The prominent messaging apps also require users to sign up with a valid cell phone number, verified via a text message or call, in order to access their phone's contacts to send messages.

To be sure, circulators of disinformation could easily buy a list of phone numbers or scrape online telephone directories, and there are ways for the highly motivated to bulk purchase internet phone numbers or SIM cards, as well as ways to automate group and message creation. However, most messaging services enable users to flag spammers. In addition, WhatsApp and Viber have announced spam-detection measures that supposedly prevent accounts from sending too many unwanted messages.

The more likely way for malicious actors to engineer virality on a messaging platform would be to simply coordinate with like-minded others who are already using these apps and have cultivated large networks. Similar tactics are reportedly being used by the Indian People's Party (BJP), which is preparing for the 2018 election by training 100 volunteers to distribute messages via at least 5,000 WhatsApp groups. To be clear, this is not a suggestion that the BJP is using these methods to spread disinformation — but it's easy to see how those with nefarious intentions could use these tactics for their own ends.

It seems likely that, absent involvement from mobile messaging companies themselves, the immediate fight against hoax and propaganda on their platforms will involve crowdsourcing. And indeed, creative uses of crowdsourcing to get around the barriers of messaging apps have already begun to emerge in countries awash with WhatsApp hoaxes. As reported by the Nieman Journalism Lab, Colombian political news site *La Silla Vacía* has begun encouraging their readers to submit screenshots of the WhatsApp messages they suspect to be hoaxes. Then, after fact-checking a hoax, they request that its submitter share another screenshot showing they've forwarded the fact-check to their contacts, thereby targeting the social circles from which the hoax spread. WhatsApp tips are similarly being accepted by fact-checking groups in India and Brazil like BoomLive and Boatos.

But fact-checking, by its very nature, will always be one step behind misinformation and disinformation. In addition, journalists must utilize every proactive option available. That means educating the public on how to question and verify online content through new media literacy programs, and replenishing the deficit of trust in journalism that creates an appetite for unverified reports in the first place and thwarts any attempt at their correction. Both will require a daunting commitment of time and resources. But the future of misinformation and disinformation is coming, and we need to begin preparing now.

Thirty-five years on…and the Falklands conflict still sparks differences

For those of the British military media operations community who were directly involved with the Falklands War it is, perhaps, a sobering thought that it was 35 years ago this year that we embarked on what many club members still regard as" our war." The majority of the Ministry of Defence and Services press officers in post in 1982 were old hands from Northern Ireland but few had experience of handling the media under global scrutiny with all the UK's Armed Forces and the nation directly involved. So, this year not only sparked memories of those difficult and, for some, dangerous times, but it brought comment on the current apparent lapse in the politico/military/media relationship, writes Mike Peters.

An in-depth examination of the UK media ops side of the story was told five years ago in the Pen & Sword Club's journal of record, The NetWorker, which is still available on the club website. It is well worth returning to Edition 14 and its first time telling of the story from the point of view of the Minders who went south and battled shot, shell and political calumny and those who manned the barricades on both sides of the media and media divide back home.

There is, today – perhaps - a better understanding on all sides of what happened in 1982. Some of it was bad but there was also a lot of good and it set the scene and established some best practice for future conflicts. It is sad that in this edition of Scribblings we have placed at the top of our reporting a story from Sky News which asks the pertinent question - why are media and military relations once again at a cross roads.

Scribblings publishes this month some of the stories, which have appeared over the summer, that have provoked comment on this war of another generation. But, we also take a different view of 1982 when the military and the media's photographers captured the action and the pathos. There were press cameramen, and an MoD civilian photographer, Paul Hayley, representing Soldier magazine. And, we should not forget that the Imperial war Museum tasked Linda Kitson, with the role of war artist.

Military photography has advanced rapidly in recent years. The kit that was so lacking in the last millennium is now available and electronic news gathering and the internet have revolutionised war reporting. The right equipment is necessary but it is always those behind the lens who capture the moment.

We were asked not to photograph British casualties….

As official photographer for Soldier magazine, Paul Hayley, right, was given unprecedented access to cover the Falklands conflict in the front line. Many of the images he took became iconic - perhaps the most famous being the victory shot on Mount Tumbledown, showing soldiers celebrating moments after the surrender was announced.

Interviewed by the Yorkshire Evening post's Neil Hudson, Paul said: "I was with the men of 7 Platoon, G company, 2nd Battalion, Scots Guards when, at 11.22anMonday June 14, I heard the words: "Check fire, check fire, check fire, the enemy are surrendering in droves and putting up white flags.

"Everyone started jumping about and celebrating. I knew I had to get a picture and immediately started pulling them into place — I ended up almost throwing them about, which was quite difficult for someone who was nine and-a-half stone and 5fi 8, moving 6ft-plus guardsman who'd been fighting all night and had also lost eight their men."

Huddersfield-born Paul had joined Soldier magazine in 1971. It was a career which took him all over the world — to Kenya, Belize, Canada, Northern Ireland, Cyprus, Beirut, the list goes on. However, it was the Falklands which has stuck with him.

"For years I've carried that stuff around with me. I always wanted to do a book, I took about 2,500 photos during my stint, which isn't a lot by today's standards — these days, a photographer will take a thousand pictures covering a wedding — but I always wanted to put them down in a book. I asked the Ministry of Defence for permission at the time and was refused.

"At the 30th anniversary, I went back to them and this time they agreed. There are about 400 pictures in the book and about 10,000 words. ***One Man's War,*** is a fascinating insight into the conflict. Many of Paul's images were used in an exhibition at the Imperial War Museum, Manchester.

Said Paul: "I went down on the QE2 with 5 Brigade and landed on June 2, just after Goose Green, the first major battle. I knew the score, I was reasonably fit, but it was very new to everyone. Although I'd experienced live firing on ranges in Kenya and places like that, it wasn't live firing with an enemy who wanted to kill you. I remember during one battle, the soldiers got told to just keep walking forward because if they went down they wouldn't get back up and listening to this, I thought, 'yeah, right' but when I watched them, they did keep walking, you could see the tracer rounds passing them.

The image, below, made front pages around the world and became one of the defining portraits of the conflict I good job he took it when he did, too. "Within seconds of me taking that picture, a snow storm rolled in and you couldn't see a thing.

"I was at the battle for Tumbledown. I went up onto the start line, where soldiers were waiting for the off Argentinians were shelling our positions so I went and sat back in a trench. I sat for a while with Angus Smith, chaplain of the Scots Guards. The trench was gradually filling with cold water. Suddenly, there was a crump sound of a shell exploding and just after, some shrapnel dug into the ground t between us. I put my hand in to get it and burned my hand. It was red hot and if it had hit either of us, it would have taken a leg off.

The near miss was a stark reminder of the reality of war, although at the time he refrained from capturing some of the more grotesque aspects of it. Commenting on his decision to self-censor, he said: "When I arrived at Darwin the second day and walked towards Goose Green, they were still clearing the battlefield, picking up body parts and so on but I never thought that taking pictures of those things was the right thing to do.

"When you see things like that, it strikes you that this is for real. Maybe I should have taken pictures of it but what point would that have served? We were asked not to photograph bodies so people did not get upset back home, although there was no censorship as such, I kind of self-censored. There is nothing clever about photographing a dead body. It's there and it ain't moving.

"I do feel now I wish I had photographed some because there is no historical record of them, but at the time I didn't think that. When you see people being killed, you do not want to put their families through any more anguish by taking the picture of their loved one. Does a mother really need to know her son's back was blown off when he died? I was living with the soldiers, eating with them, which

was different to other conflicts, such as Vietnam, the photographers came for a day or two and could remain totally impartial and detached. When you live with someone in a war zone, you suddenly become very close.

"So, do some images resonate more than others? "There was one of a pig, which kept rubbing itself against an unexploded RAF bomb. "Every time it did, we would all retreat. It was a lucky pig, considering rations were low. I remember photographing a load of napalm recovered in storage after Goose Green; the Skyhawks screaming in at very low altitude; I was also there when SAS commander Colonel Rose flew in to negotiate a ceasefire. "

Speaking with Scribblings in 2017 Paul also provided some of his photos and added: "These images (above and below) express my own emotions at the time of taking or my empathy with the people. Look at the eyes of the prisoners waiting to hand in their weapons in Stanley.

Above: **"The breaking dawn image of the soldiers walking to the helicopter – a massive story in one picture - carrying the Scots Guards wounded on Tumbledown being casevaced. Two journalists walking back from the aircraft having delivered their copy to the pilot. They pilot asked him to drop it at any of the ships in San Carlo. The single SAS trooper walking right to left across the image towards Tumbledown and Stanley. After taking this shot I ran forward to give the pilot two days' worth of films to drop off at any ship which would take them. A lot going on in one picture.**

"Look at the lone Gurkha, below right, on air-watch near Darwin, like me - alone, cold and wet but vigilant, watching for the next thing to happen.

"Remember that in 40 years every image will be of interest to the historians and the public - not just the present-day money shots. The hardest things in covering the Falklands was surviving the weather - the elements were the worst thing.

“Day to day living, finding food, trying to find out what was happening and where - and then trying to get there. All those tasks seemed impossible sometime, but I just had to do them all, each day. I had no briefings from MoD of what was required from me and nothing from the editor of Soldier from leaving the building before sailing. No accommodation or allocation of transport - even if there had been any roads.

“Having no feedback. It is only fair to get feedback on your hard work. Had it even been looked at, let alone being used. I had no communication from the Soldier Magazine office at all during the whole time I was away. Not even a signal once in Stanley. Without communication, you will just have to motivate yourself into believing you are doing the right things.”

"I was lucky to go and even more lucky to come back. I'm proud of the book and glad to get it out of my system. “Paul’s book costs £95, available from www.paulrghaley.com and then clicking on 'books'.

‘The drawing of the Sir Galahad is one of my worst – I was too overcome by emotion’

Speaking to the Daily Telegraph, Linda Kitson, the official war artist appointed by the Imperial War Museum explained her appointment. “The Museum see the work and match the artist up to the job. I was 37 and was hired because I do fast drawing – I resist the word “sketch”. My drawings are a reaction to what is there, without time for embellishment. They usually took about 20 minutes, because everything was moving around, jeeps and helicopters – you could only give an impression of them.

“There was little chance to familiarise yourself with the subject. I would draw Gurkhas in a dugout command post one day and the next day it would be blown to smithereens.

“My drawing of the Sir Galahad hanging in the Imperial War Museum is one of my worst because I was overcome by emotion – all the ghosts of the Welsh Guards I’d got to know.

"I suppose I did stand out a bit because I took a huge tin trunk with enough paints, inks, and pencils to last years. It needed men to carry it but I think they thought helping me was less boring than the rest of their duties. I also had a stool and a 7ft parasol.

"A sergeant made me a camouflage armband which held the five types of drawing implement I could work with. Freezing fingers were a problem. It was bitter. I had five layers of clothing. Royal Marines were distributing ladies' tights. These huge burly men!

"I managed to get about 100 drawings back on the QE2, but I worried – they were my babies. Carrying the rest around was a nightmare so I would get them back to HQ and put them in a trunk with a note saying: "If anything happens to me get these back to the Imperial War Museum".

Camera at Sea – illustrates professionalism, under fire, and in peace time

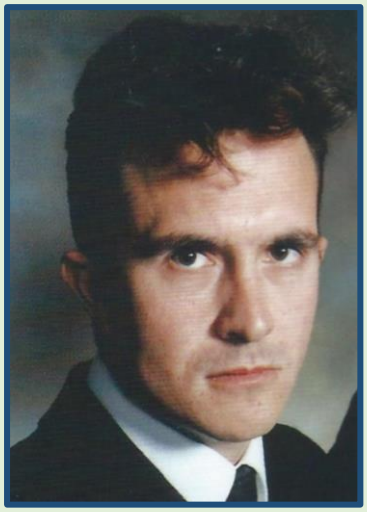
The Royal Naval Photographic Branch was formed in 1919, when its primary purpose was to assist gunnery trials and analysis. Since that time, it has remained an important unit within the RN and its task has broadened into the realms of air-to-air/sea photography, reconnaissance work, wartime reportage and press relations photography.

The illustrated historical section of Neil Mercer's book traces 80 years of the Branch's development to the present. An exceptional colour portfolio includes the work of over 50 Naval photographers serving around the world. The author's access to these archive photographs and his thorough research combine to make this book the most authoritative account of a unique part of the Royal Navy.

Neil, pictured below is an Associate Member of the British Institute of Photography. He joined the Royal Navy in 1983 and transferred to the Photographic Branch in 1987.

After specialising in aerial and fast jet photography for ten years he left the service in 1997 to read Law at university. Neil wrote and photographed Fleet Air Arm in 1994 and the acclaimed book on the Fleet Air Arm's Harrier aircraft entitled The Sharp End in 1995.

Caught Unawares



In common with the entire world, the Royal Navy was caught unaware by the sudden flare-up of the Falklands Conflict, which many believed was concerned with a group of islands somewhere off Scotland, writes Neil in a chapter devoted to the 1982 war. Responding to the situation, he says, the truly British spirit of overcoming the impossible was demonstrated throughout the Service — nicely reflected in RNAS Culdrose photographic section's contribution to the emergency.

Recognition material was urgently required by the fleet travelling south, because little material on the Argentinian military was available for Command briefings. LA(Phot) Brian Jones was working over Easter leave in 1982 when the urgent requirement for Argentinian aircraft pictures was passed to the section. After recalling LA(Phot) 'Bernie' Pettersen, the two photographers obtained models of the Super Etendard, Mirage, Pucará and other Argentinian aircraft from the recognition cell.

Echoing the work of the Aircraft Recognition Cell during the Second World War, a black backdrop was arranged in the section while the aircraft were suspended from pieces of thread. Eight-point views of each plane followed — the results of which were printed forty times onto 12" >< 10" ortho film and dispatched as viewgraphs to each ship in the Task Force.

Rather more prepared were the photographers attached to the Commando Forces News Team, who were kept busy before departure reproducing intelligence material relating to the potential invasion, notably the coastline views collected by Colonel Ewan Southby-Tailyour RM on his now-famous sailing expedition around the Islands.

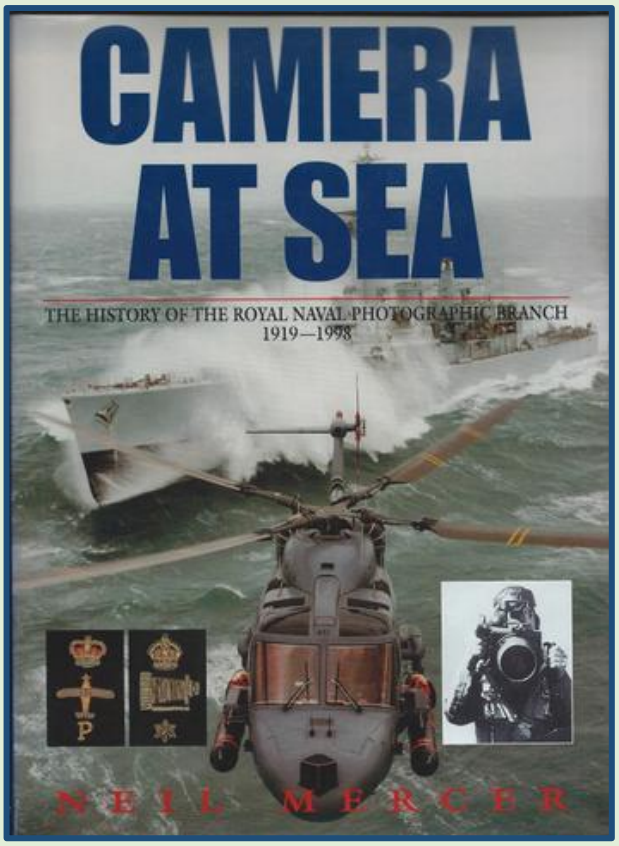
PO(Phot)s Alastair Campbell and Roger Ryan sailed for the Islands in the SS Canberra, whilst PO(Phot) Pete Holdgate and Sgt. Dave Munnelly of the Commando Forces News Team departed on board HMS Fearless. After consolidating the massive build-up of forces on Ascension Island, the Task Force sailed south as diplomatic efforts failed to resolve the deadlock.

No contract photography will ever satisfactorily replace the RN photographer at sea. On-the-spot access, competence and experience in naval ways are demonstrated in the shot, below, the actual moment the surrender of South Georgia was signed by the Argentinian Captain Alfredo Astiz in the wardroom of HMS Plymouth. LA(Phot) Nigel 'Darbi' Allen recorded this scene on 20 April 1982, which was witnessed by Captain Young RN of HMS Antrim. Captain Nick Barner RN of HMS Endurance \and Major Guy Sheridan RM.

Whilst off Ascension Island, the military planning continued, exploring several options until the decision was taken to force a bridgehead in San Carlos Water. Captain Dave Nichols RM, leading the Commando Forces News Team, deployed with his team who were allowed complete autonomy in their task once ashore — an enlightened decision that allowed them to accompany various units of the Royal Marines as they 'yomped' across the campaign field.

With 35mm camera equipment jammed into two old respirator bags, and armed with an Armalite rifle and 9mm pistol, PO(Phot) Holdgate transferred with 40 Commando RM to landing craft just after midnight on 21 May. They then held off the beach until Naval Gunfire Support and Special Forces had neutralised an Argentinian observation point on Fanning Head. Landing on Blue Beach at 0430

hours, the Royal Marines dug in for the expected air attacks and patrolled the area while larger contingents of men and supplies were landed.



The News Team had previously borrowed a very large Union Jack Battle Ensign from HMS Fearless, and took this opportunity to run up the first British flag on the Islands for press photographs, in the settlement manager's garden at San Carlos. The flag itself was taken down only two hours later because another Argentinian observation post overlooked the site, but this historic photograph was transmitted (by Martin Cleaver of the Press Association) straight to London, and was personally shown in the House of Commons by the Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher.

The expected air attacks materialised shortly after the beach-head was established, turning San Carlos Water into ‘Bomb Alley’ as the Argentinian Air Force passed home its attacks with great bravery against the mass of shipping in the narrow inlet. The attacks would regularly come in at around I 0 a.m. and 2 p.m., so PO(Phot) Holdgate would go out onto the end of the small jetty with his Nikon F2 and 135mm lens, recording the low-level jets as they attacked the ships.

The day before the landing to retake the Falkland Islands, the decision was taken to disperse the raiding force in case of air attack. Accordingly, landing craft were used on 20 May to cross-deck Royal Marines from 40 Cdo from Canberra to HMS Fearless, producing an opportunity for 'Al' Campbell's Hasselblad camera’

Well known photographs from this time include the Mirage fighter seen between the masts of HMS Fearless, the bombing of HMS Plymouth and the sinking of HMS Antelope. However, the Argentinians had spotted the concentration of activity around the dug-in Headquarters at San Carlos and called in an air attack from north to south, which duly arrived while he was on the jetty. He recalls, 'It was coming straight for me, so low that I could clearly see up the intakes (of the Skyhawk) and the pilot's face.

“I could hear people calling my name behind me, but everything went into slow motion as the two bombs came off the aircraft'. Two parachute-retarded bombs landed in the water at the landward end of the jetty, about 30 metres away from the photographer, who watched in amazement as the parachutes settled in the water. Fortunately, the aircraft had been so low that the impeller fuses on the bombs were not wound in sufficiently to 'arm' the bombs, which were later destroyed in controlled explosions.”

After the initial landings, PO(Phot) Holdgate and Sgt Dave Munnelly detached to cover some of the other newsworthy events of the conflict on land, including the aftermath of the Battle for Goose Green, when the prisoners were led away with the gorse still on fire. After photographing the burials of the dead, the team travelled to Teal Inlet and on to Mount Kent with 42 Cdo RM, accompanying LA(Phot) Roger Ryan who was attached to the unit. The briefing for the assault on Mount Harriet followed, which began at 0030 hours on 12 June

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Pete Holdgate remembers the sheer volume of fire from the defenders, especially the tracer, because for every round seen burning there were at least another four bullets in the air unseen. Moving to join 45 Cdo RIVI, who had launched a simultaneous attack on Two Sisters, the News Team finally marched into Port Stanley, 'liberating' a Falklands Islands flag from an Argentinian prisoner en route. Rounding up the members of Juliet Company RM, the unit which had originally been forced to surrender during the invasion as Naval Party 8901, photographs of the now-victorious unit were taken with the Island's flag.

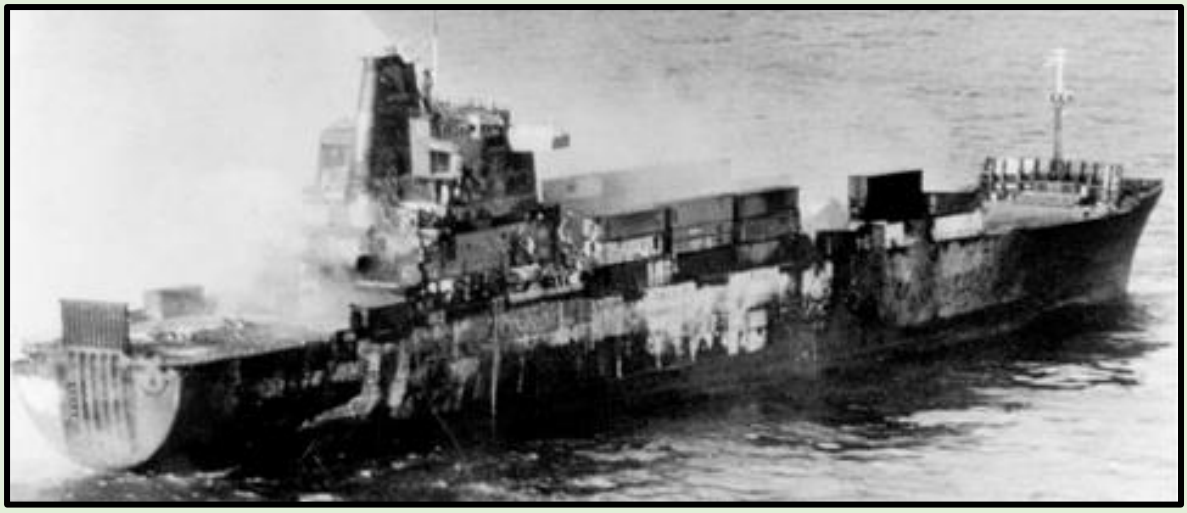
The defeated army was disarmed at Stanley Airfield and pictures were taken of the prisoners, who called out 'Bobby Charlton' and 'Jimmy Greaves' to the photographers as they worked. in retrospect, those who were fortunate enough to go ashore produced the most memorable images of the conflict, particularly the professionals attached to the Royal Marine units, who accompanied them throughout. Director Public Relations (Navy) (DPR(N)) photographic staff had less opportunity to go ashore, whilst the operational requirement to keep the high value camera assets away from air attack meant that the photographic sections on HMS Hermes and HMS Invincible only saw the conflict through the reconnaissance pictures they dealt with.

Processed on board every day, this reconnaissance was carried out by Sea Harrier F95 cameras fitted with short focal-length lenses. The interpretation of these photographs was greatly hampered by the lack of RN Photo Interpretation (PI) officers in the Task Force. (This deficiency was again highlighted during Adriatic operations 14 years later, when it became clear that the PI specialisation had degraded still further).

LA(Phot) Rick Toyer was on board the landing ship HMS Fearless to record the first landing of a Sea Harrier, which was short of fuel after combat, and also recorded atmospheric shots of HMS Plymouth n fire in San Carlos Water.

When the Atlantic Conveyor, below, was sunk two photographers were on board, fortunately both escaped unscathed apart from the loss of all equipment. At home, the Branch tested two reconnaissance pods for Lynx and Sea King helicopters, the Vicon and Vipa 2, which were acquired, tested and dispatched in six days. Neither was ever used in anger — the Vipa 2 was also never seen again, and is believed still in transit

Due to the Exocet missile threat, HMS Hermes spent three months outside the Total Exclusion Zone, in which time the photographic section provided news for the Ship's Company, reconnaissance film processing and record coverage.



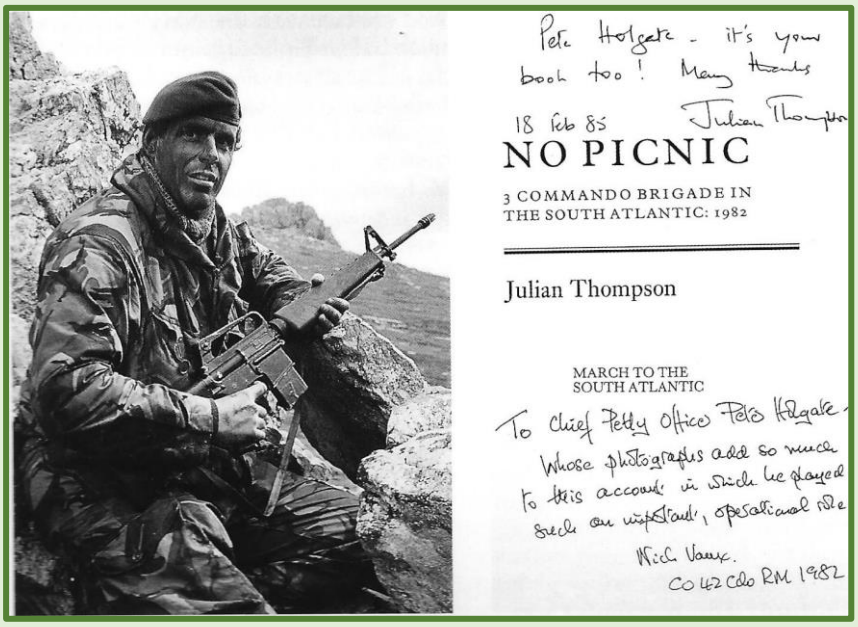
The return of the Task Force from the Falklands was a great celebration, and naturally ships' companies were keen to acquire photographic records of the great undertaking that they had experienced. On board HMS Hermes, the section quickly ran out of the privately-purchased 'rabbit' paper, a worrying discovery as there was clearly a great market to be tapped.

Fortunately, Captain Lyn Middleton RN was rightly persuaded that it was good public relations to meet the demand for pictures to the Ship's Company, so the section sold every sheet of paper on board before arrival in Portsmouth — a great achievement.

Even after purchasing all the paper to return to the MoD and after all this legitimate hard work, there must have been sufficient funds to give each section member 'photographer's back'; an unusual medical condition suffered by RN phots on ships through the ages as they lift heavy sacks of money. This dreadful affliction still 'curses' some of those unfortunate enough to serve on aircraft carriers today.

The personal bravery of the Commando trained Branch ratings in the Falklands Conflict demonstrated the advantages of the trained professional photographer in the field — PO(Phot) Pete Holdgate is pictured here on Mount Kent days before the 42 Royal Marine Commando night attack on Mount Harriet.

Reproduced on the right are comments regarding PO(Phot) Holdgate's role from Major-General Julian Thompson RM and Nick Vaux, the Commanding Officer of 42 Commando RM during the conflict.



Just as in 1982, the Royal Navy is being cut to the bone – this time there won't be a war to halt it

By Con Coughlin, Defence Editor The Daily Telegraph

April 5 marked the 35th anniversary of the Royal Navy's Task Force setting sail to liberate the Falkland Islands, when a vital element in the mission's ultimate success was the Royal Marines' ability to conduct amphibious landings under fire. In a conflict marked by many acts of individual and collective heroism, the highly dangerous landings under cover of darkness on beaches around San Carlos on the night of May 21 1982 proved to be a pivotal moment in the British victory.

By daybreak, the 4,000 men of 3 Commando Brigade had been safely put ashore, enabling them to establish a secure beachhead from which Brigadier Julian Thompson, the commander, was able to launch his campaign to capture the capital, Port Stanley. But this decisive operation might never have taken place, and the history of the Falklands campaign have a very different outcome, if the then Conservative government had had its way, and scrapped the Navy's fleet of amphibious landing craft as part of proposed defence cuts.

As Mr Thompson, below, now a retired major-general, recall: Sir John Nott, the then defence secretary, was keen to reduce the Navy's fleet of landing craft, as well as its three Invincible-class aircraft carriers. So, in November 1981, just six months before the outbreak of the Falklands war, Sir John dispatched Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Leach to break the bad news to Mr Thompson. "Sir Henry came into my office at 3 Commando headquarters to tell me that Britain would never do another amphibious assault again," said Mr Thompson.

Fortunately for the Task Force, there was no time to implement the planned cuts before the Argentines invaded the Falklands, and the rest, as they say, is history. Given the vital role both the Marines and their landing craft played in securing victory, it seems remarkable that the Royal Navy should be actively considering similar cuts.

Sir Michael Fallon, the Defence Secretary, has declined to comment on reports that the Navy is planning to reduce the Marines' strength from 7,000 to 5,000, thereby removing the frontline role of one of its three commando units. The Navy is also said to be giving serious consideration to decommissioning a number of landing craft vital for maintaining our ability to mount amphibious landings.

If this really is the case, then the Government, just like its Conservative predecessor, could be about to make a grave miscalculation. North Africa, the Baltics, the Gulf, South East Asia – these are just some of the potential hotspots where it is entirely conceivable that British forces might be required to make amphibious landings at some point in the future.

The reason Navy chiefs find themselves in this invidious position is the intense pressure they are under to cut costs to meet the Government's spending targets. There are many senior officers in other parts of the military who believe the Navy is paying the price for its folie de grandeur in pressing ahead with the construction of the two gargantuan Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers, when smaller and less expensive versions, such as the Invincible-class carriers used to such good effect during the Falklands campaign, would have been a better option.

The cost of the carriers, currently estimated at £6.2 billion, has created an enormous hole in the Navy's budget. The Senior Service is suffering severe manning problems, raising concerns that it will not be able to crew the Prince of Wales, the second carrier under construction,

when it enters service in the early 2020s. Financial constraints have also raised questions about whether there will be sufficient funding to build the new fleet of Type 31 multi-role frigates.

In their defence, senior Naval officers argue that they are the victims of years of underfunding. When Philip Hammond served as defence secretary in the previous government, he confided that the Navy had been underfunded to the tune of £250 million a year since 2010, a significant sum that goes some way to explaining the Navy's current difficulties. But it is unlikely that Mr Hammond will be willing to redress the imbalance now that he controls the Treasury's purse strings.

Recent reforms to military spending have devolved responsibility for administering budgets to Service chiefs, which is why Sir Michael is arguing it is the First Sea Lord who is ultimately responsible for how he spends his budget, which covers both the Navy and Marines.

As the Navy's main priority is to make the new carriers fit for purpose, it is no surprise Navy chiefs are looking to make savings at the expense of the Marines, who, despite their prowess, are often treated as the Navy's poor relations. But as the Falklands experience shows, the national interest is not always best served when vital military decisions are taken simply on the grounds of financial expediency.

theguardian

One of Britain's leading novelists, Julian Barnes, recalls for The Guardian how the conflict unfolded back home

In April 1982 I took over from Clive James as the Observer's television critic. I anticipated a cosy period of acclimatisation: a new American soap called Dynasty was soon to start, followed by the year's main event, the stirring quasi-warfare of the World Cup in Spain. Instead, at coffee time on the Monday morning of my second week, ITV brought us the real thing live: the departure of a British military force to recapture a piece of colonial territory 8,000 miles away. The day was calm and blue at Portsmouth; two aircraft carriers towered over the waterside houses as tugs chivvied them out to sea; farewelling sailors lined the ships' edges; all was done with Royal Tournament precision.

Then the fleet steamed off into misty long-shot, while the helicopters strapped to the decks shrank to polished beetles. It looked rather good on television, this war that would doubtless be called off before the equator was reached. Little did we guess that these were the last sunny, honest, unspun images we were likely to get for some time; or that the Falklands war would turn out to be the worst-reported war since the Crimean.

While our armed forces defeated the Argentinians, the Ministry of Defence was putting to rout the British media. All the significant news, good or bad, was announced or leaked from London.

Reporters in the south Atlantic had the sour experience of hearing "their" news being broken for them on the World Service. Reports were censored, delayed, occasionally lost, and at best sent back by the swiftest carrier-turtle the Royal Navy could find. When relations between the press and the navy on board the Hermes were at their worst, Michael Nicholson of ITN and Peter Archer of the Press Association prefaced their bulletins with the rider that they were being censored. This fact was itself censored.

In the age of image, the Falklands war remained image-free for much of its length - no British pictures for 54 of the 74 days the conflict lasted - and image-weak thereafter. Don McCullin, our greatest living war photographer, was refused accreditation (so was Roddy Llewellyn, no doubt for different reasons). While the task force was at sea, there was only "radio vision": the voices of Brian Hanrahan and Michael Nicholson embellished by stills. And when the action on land began, the images were limited and controlled. Official factoids were grudgingly provided by the Ministry of Defence spokesman Ian McDonald, a man with the delivery and charisma of a speak-your-weight machine.


THE Sun

QE2 IS SET TO SAIL FOR WAR

We told you first

GOTCHA

Our lads sink gunboat and hole cruiser

UNION BOYCOTTS WAR

£50,000 BINGO! Today's lucky numbers are on Page 20

So, the war, instead of being experienced back home as a continuous narrative, was a succession of jump-cuts, of sporadic sound- and vision-bites. The words that endure: Gotcha, Yomp, Rejoice, I Counted Them All Out and I Counted Them All Back. The still pictures: a library shot of the Belgrano, a yomping marine with a Union Jack attached to his radio aerial, the camouflaged face of Max Hastings, the reconstructed face of Simon Weston.

The vision-bites: departure of the fleet, Harriers leaving the deck, the Sheffield ablaze, helicopters at Bluff Cove blowing life rafts to the shore with their rotors, burial of the dead at Goose Green, Argentinian prisoners with P&O cruise labels around their necks.

Nor did these sequences always come in the correct order. If bad news couldn't be hidden, it was certainly repositioned: thus, the estimate of casualties at Bluff Cove was covered by heartening shots of the QE2 returning home. Given this vacuum, and the trifling official opposition to the war (Michael Foot, "inveterate peacemonger", in his self-applauding phrase, led a traditionally bellicose Labour party), a head of toxic jingoism built up. Driving round Nottinghamshire at the time, I was amazed that such a high proportion of the population owned Union Jacks. The bull frog tendency of the Tory party was in full croak. In pubs, it was wise to avoid discussion with learned readers of the Sun. It is still a surprise that the newspaper actually withdrew that Gotcha headline. Later editions led with the much more caring and concerned question: "Did 1200 Argies Drown?"

Every so often, you would shake your head and think that it couldn't, at this late stage of the 20th century, be happening like this. Or at least not for this reason: perhaps it was all about mineral reserves of incalculable wealth in the Antarctic, which we would lose unless we retained the Falklands? But no, it really was as simple as Borges said it was: two bald men fighting over a comb. Moralising aggression was the dominant public tone, and Brian Hitchen, editor of the Daily Star, was probably right when he said:

Most people would have been pig-sick if there hadn't been a fight." And for once, no one could stop us. This wasn't one of those measly pinko UN combined-ops; it wasn't putting down Commie insurgents; this time, the Yanks damn well couldn't tell us to stop. It was one-on-one, us-and-them,

everyone else out of the ring or off the pitch. And when the referee - Alexander Haig, as it happened - tried to blow the whistle, nobody took any notice. After all, what had been happening domestically for the last couple of decades - a slow downward drift, squabbles with Europe, lack of respect out there? Well, we'd learn them respect. This was our war, and we were jolly well going to have it.

The fact that the rest of the world viewed the war as a bizarre and brainless squabble between nostalgic imperialism and nostalgic fascism was irrelevant; we didn't care what the rest of the world thought, except to imagine that it was impressed. ("What did you make of that war?" I asked a Swiss friend recently. He paused, frowned, and went into maximum-politeness mode. "I thought it was . . . ridiculous," he replied.) The fact that we'd been trying for decades to offload the islands, with the ardent Thatcherite Nicholas Ridley presenting a leaseback solution to the House of Commons only two years previously, was forgotten.

The fact that we'd traded with the junta, welcomed its leaders and sold arms to them, but now realised that it was a filthy dictatorship after all, was swallowed without a burp. The fact that there were a mere 1,800 islanders, and that their way of life was preserved at the cost of 1,000 British casualties and 1,800 Argentinian ones did not seem a grossly stupid and expensive way of conducting foreign policy; it proved that freedom is indivisible, tyranny will be defeated, and the wishes of the loyal locals sovereign. Oh, and the fact that we're now trying to get rid of Gibraltar has absolutely nothing to do with the case.

The Falklands war was the making of Mrs Thatcher, and therefore has enduring consequences. But the episode of war itself has remained enclosed, separate, unreal, without consequence. Are the British any more attached to the islanders than they were before? Do we give the location a thought except as a place of battle and burial? Do we think of a future solution, or have we simply decided that there is no longer a problem? By the end of the 1980s, the estimated cost of the action and its aftermath had reached £2m an islander, but everyone seems to have stopped counting long ago.

Dr Johnson, seeking to prevent an earlier Falklands conflict, wrote: "It is wonderful with what coolness and indifference the greater part of mankind see war commenced. Those that hear of it at a distance, or read of it in books, but have never presented its evils to their minds, consider it as little more than a splendid game." His truths persist. Television and football kept hovering round the edges of that distant war of 1982, and their values bled into it. Match of the Day with deaths?

One of the first significant moves by the briefly regnant Argentinian governor of the Malvinas was to promise a free colour television set to every island home in time for the World Cup. (Transistor radios in exchange for vasectomy seemed to work, so why not tellies for sovereignty?) And do you remember who first brought news of the ceasefire to viewers on BBC1? Not Mrs Thatcher, not Ian McDonald, not Brian Hanrahan. No, it was David Coleman.

A major comms offensive by Russia?

Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union are engaged in a major comms offensive that ranges from spreading fake news to trolling opponents on social media, warned Jonathon Owen of PR Week.. Public affairs companies, lobbyists, politicians, academics, think tanks and NGOs are among the tools being used in an attempt to influence the political debate in Europe and the US, the report claimed.

"In what is increasingly becoming a battle over the use of soft power and information, Western institutions have been losing ground and must take action in order to meet the challenge," said the report. It added: "Western governments, NGOs, donors and the general public need to become more aware of the challenges they now face and must take action in order to protect and strengthen their domestic institutions and societies, while enhancing support for human rights in the former Soviet Union."

The report draws on the views of a number of experts from around the world, who examine issues as diverse as Russian propaganda in Finland and Sweden to pro-Russia groups masquerading as independent voices. While countries like Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan have been "particularly active in attempting to promote themselves internationally in a positive light," other states, such as Armenia, have concentrated on engaging with their diaspora.

As for Russia, it "seeks to proactively change the international ideological and political environment through its use of broadcast media, both through an overt and covert online presence and through its support of organisations and institutions in Europe and beyond that share their values," according to the report. It is part of a concerted effort to "manipulate international narratives" by exploiting comms channels provided by the media, advertising, social media, and sympathetic organisations, it argued.

Governments and regulators in the West need to "track the spread of misleading and untrue content emanating from Russian sources, working with civil society to rebut it where appropriate," recommended the report. They should also: "actively monitor online threats to Western-based critics of regimes in the former Soviet Union" and strengthen rules over lobbying, "including looking to expand the scope of the UK's statutory register and delivering the proposed formal EU lobbying register."

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is investing £14 million in supporting public service and independent media operating in the Russian language, including projects in the Baltic States, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

PRWeek understands that the FCO is working with the EU and the international community to restrict the Kremlin's ability to use disinformation and propaganda, as it has done during its occupation of Crimea and destabilisation of Ukraine. An FCO spokesman told PRWeek: "The Kremlin uses a range of powers to pursue their policies – including propaganda and disinformation. Managing this is a long-term priority for the UK, and we will continue to work with international partners to effectively constrain their effects. The best defence against disinformation is a free, wide and varied media landscape and we are investing heavily to support public service and independent media operating in the Russian language."

The Greatest War Photographer You've Never Heard Of….

Very few women went to Vietnam as journalists, and even fewer as dedicated war photojournalists. In fact, for most of the 1960s, there were only two: Dickie Chapelle, who was killed by a grenade in 1965, and Catherine Leroy.

Of the two, Catherine Leroy was widely considered the most daring photographer in Vietnam. She almost certainly spent the most time in combat — in part because she had no money, having traveled from her native France to Vietnam as a freelancer in 1966 with no contracts and a short list of published work. Living with soldiers meant that she could eat rations and sleep in the countryside.

Leroy faced no shortage of sexism. After she parachuted into combat during Operation Junction City, in early 1967, rumors circulated that she had slept with a colonel in exchange for permission.

In fact, she had earned her parachutist license as a teenager, and had already jumped 84 times. Still, she developed a reputation as a photographer quickly, selling photos to The Associated Press and U.P.I.

At one point during the Tet offensive, in early 1968, she was captured by the North Vietnamese Army while with the French journalist Francois Mazure. There was a young lieutenant that they could converse with in French. They explained that they were journalists and would do no harm, so the soldiers decided to let them go. But first she persuaded them to let her take photos, saying that it was important because only one side of the story was being seen. The photos ran as a cover story in Life magazine, which she wrote herself.

Catherine never promoted herself or her work, which is one reason she remains largely unknown among the war photographers of the day (though not forgotten: In 2015, the writer and filmmaker Jacques Menasche completed a documentary about her career, "Cathy at War" But she was one of the Vietnam War's most lauded photojournalists, winning Picture of the Year from the George Polk Awards and, for her later work in Lebanon, the Robert Capa Gold Medal. Later in life, Leroy ran a vintage clothing website. She died in Santa Monica, Calif., in 2006.

The War that never was

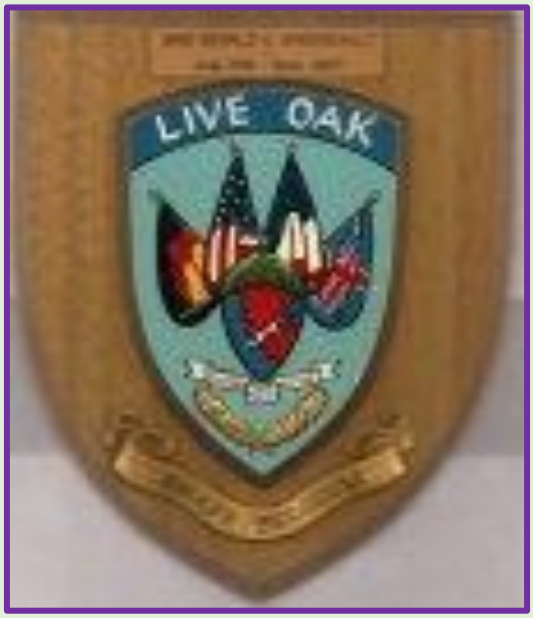
Dermod Hill, former Deputy Director of Public Relations (Army) pictured right, recalls for Scribblings an episode in his association with the military and Exercise Live Oak. He writes:" In recent years' media operations have tended to mean the real thing in the real place. Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Bosnia, the Somali coast, the Persian Gulf. All are, or were, operations conducted in the context of major political pressure, mass media presence, and fragile public opinion. But during the Cold War, the aggressive stand-off of the world's nuclear superpowers, media ops were often a matter of simulation and make-believe as indeed were the wars.

I experienced them both as a civilian Information Officer attached to BAOR, and as a Territorial Army soldier on exercise in Germany where, to the fury and despair of the local population, whole German town centres often lay inches deep in mud after a tank regiment had passed through.

On one occasion, the barrel of Chieftain Tank swung round and demolished the entire front wall of a house as it trundled in the dark tactically up the High Street.

These giant autumn exercises culminated with Exercise Lionheart 84 which involved 131,500 personnel, the biggest since World War Two. War games on this scale could be fun as well wet and uncomfortable for a press officer. Where else could you encounter a Lynx helicopter pilot willing to let you hop aboard while he under-flew pylon wires with acrobatic daring then landed in a wurzle crop to check his map? The farmers hated it, but the compensation by DamCon or Manoever-Schaden was reputedly very consoling.

But the strangest of all these make-believe wars were those associated with Live Oak, the tri-partite organisation based within, but separate from, the NATO military HQ complex at Mons in Belgium. Live Oak was dedicated to contingency plans to force access to Berlin should the Russians again attempt a blockade as they did in the aftermath of World War Two. The command organisation was surprisingly large for such a single task and filled a whole office block.



This was partly because it was the only military activity which fully involved the French, one of the original occupying powers in Berlin, but which had unilaterally pulled out of the integrated NATO military structure in the 1960s. For a press officer, the elaborate nature of these Live Oak exercises was astonishing. The more so because it was conducted under a cloud of secrecy and no real press were involved at all.

The job was to artificially represent the media dimension. These simulations took two forms. Each year there was a major paper exercise which involved not only military headquarters, but diplomatic and political departments at the highest level. For two weeks, in a scenario of mounting tension and escalation, all run from the Mons HQ, decision-making was provoked in the capitals of the three participating nations (France, USA and UK) on how to handle the growing crisis. All this was by signal traffic alone with high classification.

Once a year the exercise took place live on the ground in Germany. As one of a small mixed military-civilian group of exercises 'players' I assembled in Wolfenbuttel, a town in the old 1st Armoured Division area closest to then East German fortified border and where the brigades were trained to bear the first brunt of a Warsaw Pact armoured thrust.

For three days, we participated in the exercise, usually grilling the high command in mock press encounters. But the high point was when an armoured probe was assembled and ordered to force access to the East German routes to Berlin in a scenario involving both ground and air forces. A real convoy of American, French and British troops lined up and, in the middle of the night, proceeded along an empty motorway which had either been closed for the occasion, or was a partially built autobahn not yet open to the public. The convoy was suddenly confronted and blocked by a massive demonstration of supposed enraged East German civilians, all in fact British soldiers in civvy clothes, carrying anti- western placards, chanting and provoking the convoy.

Above, army helicopters with powerful 'night sun' searchlights, swept the area below. The atmosphere was extraordinarily real, even surreal, and the mental pressure on the soldiers was palpable. Presumably that is what training exercises are meant to be.

The war in Germany never happened. Even the Wall later came down. But in the strange world of the military field exercise, the war happened over and over again. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why in reality it never did!

Editor's note: My experience on Live Oak was in the aftermath of the Falklands War. Amazingly, and suddenly, media ops people were being listened to with avid attention. But, for some, the message had not gone through. For a number of years, I played on Exercise Live Oak at SHAPE and recall an RAF officer proudly announced to the exercise desks that one our aircraft had just bombed a flak emplacement that had the temerity to fire on his planes. I quickly slipped in a radio snippet from the Orange media announcing that Allied Terror Flyers had bombed a school. And killed children! That's not fair or true. We hit the guns, he cried. My reply: All's fair in love and war. Don't expect the enemy will not react and they will use, if not manipulate and abuse, the press. In today's media ops parlance, I think that that means a kinetic effect was turned around by a non-kinetic response – even if it came from the wrong side.

Live Oak – a Cosmic Top Secret

Fifty years after the erection of the Berlin Wall, NATO has released hundreds of formerly classified documents that shed light on how the Alliance and its member states managed the fallout of that event and the wider crisis surrounding Berlin. A key concern of France, the United Kingdom and the United States, and of the Atlantic Alliance as a whole, was to keep access to West Berlin free under all circumstances, while avoiding tensions from escalating into a wider conflict. To this end, the three Western Allies, as well as NATO, began to develop contingency plans and other measures.

In the night of 12 August 1961, the Cold War took a turn for the worse, extending the Iron Curtain into the very heart of a divided Europe. This move by the government of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) to stem the large-scale exodus of East Germans to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) through Berlin was not an isolated event. It was part of a broader plan to foster East-West tension in and around Berlin.

In 1948-1949, the Soviet Union had first tried to force a change to the Berlin four-power status agreed with France, the United Kingdom and the United States at the Potsdam conference in 1945. Its attempt to blockade the city failed and in 1958, USSR leader Nikita Khrushchev made another attempt to force the Western Allies to withdraw their forces from Berlin's Western sectors and accept the demilitarisation of the city. The Soviet Union now threatened to sign a separate peace treaty with East Germany and change the city's status unilaterally and irreversibly, while keeping the pressure on through the threat of force.

In 1948-1949, Allies were unprepared and had to resort to a challenging yet successful airbridge to break the Soviet blockade and re-supply West Berliners. In 1961, however, Allies were much better prepared to confront the Soviet ultimatum. Created in April 1959, a trilateral – France, UK and US - secret contingency planning staff codenamed *LIVE OAK* had worked on developing military measures to keep the road, rail and air corridors between the Federal Republic of Germany and West Berlin open at all times.

LIVE OAK was then led by General Lauris Norstad, as NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR) and Commander-in-Chief of the United States European Command (USCINCEUR). In 1961, *LIVE OAK* moved from its original headquarters at US European Command in St Germain en Laye near Paris to NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) near Rocquencourt. That same year, West German military personnel joined LIVE OAK in a liaison capacity.

The move to the SHAPE compound aimed to ensure that LIVE OAK's tripartite planning was synchronised with that of NATO's own planning (Berlin Contingency or BERCON Plans and associated Maritime Contingency (MARCON) Plans). It was also intended to facilitate a transfer of command responsibility from LIVE OAK to NATO, should a crisis over Berlin escalate into a wider conflict in Central Europe. Following France's withdrawal from NATO's integrated military command in 1966, LIVE OAK and SHAPE moved to Mons in Belgium.

Both the LIVE OAK and NATO contingency plans were developed under strict political control and remained under the close supervision of the ambassadors exercising that control on behalf of Allied capitals. The Washington Ambassadorial Group (WAG) oversaw *LIVE OAK plans* and the North Atlantic Council (NAC) supervised NATO's plans. Contingency plans were complemented with political, economic, psychological and public diplomacy measures designed to convey Western resolve and deter hostile action.

This close supervision by political authorities helped to ensure that any threatening moves by the Soviet Union or the GDR would be responded to firmly, but prudently. It also ensured that the interests and prerogatives of all Allies would be protected, not just the four LIVE OAK nations if tensions escalated or conflict ensued.

To mark the 50th anniversary of the 1961 Berlin crisis, NATO declassified and released to the public some 370 documents from this period, many formerly classified at the highest level - *Cosmic Top Secret*. These documents shed light on the protracted and sometimes tense exchanges of view among NAC ambassadors on the hypothetical circumstances under which the Alliance as a whole would have had to take over the protection of Western access to West Berlin from LIVE OAK.

It is a testimony to the prudence and firmness embedded in the LIVE OAK and NATO contingency plans that Berlin never became the trigger of a general conflict in Europe. The Berlin Wall came down on 9 November 1989 and the Cold War came to a peaceful end. *LIVE OAK* was disbanded on 2 October 1990 on the eve of Germany's reunification. All the arrangements and plans for the protection of Western access to, and for the defence of, West Berlin ceased to exist.