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### **Who Were the Saigon Correspondents and Does It Matter?**

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## Introduction

### The Question

Who were the Saigon correspondents? Until now, everyone has had their own opinion, and much has depended upon each individual's view of the Vietnam War. The former U.S. commander in South Vietnam and the subject of much criticism in the press of that day, General William C. Westmoreland, has had little good to say about them. "Fifty-one percent were under twenty-nine," he asserted in 1972. "For the most part, they had little or no experience as war correspondents."<sup>1</sup> Peter Braestrup, a former bureau chief for the *Washington Post* in Saigon, disagreed with Westmoreland, but he had his own point of view. According to him, many so-called war correspondents in South Vietnam were anything but reporters. Instead, a high percentage of them were messengers, translators, technicians and cameramen, and back up staff members of all sorts, not journalists. Braestrup added that many legitimate reporters were on the scene for only short periods of time, often less than a week. This was just long enough to give their work at home some semblance of cachet but hardly enough for them to learn much about the war. Many other so called correspondents, Braestrup added, were not reporters at all but the spouses of correspondents. They took accreditation as journalists to gain access to the Saigon PX, which was open only to the military and to fully accredited members of the press. In the end, Braestrup said, fewer than one quarter of all the reporters present in South Vietnam were really working journalists.<sup>2</sup>

The public affairs officers who supported the press in South Vietnam had their own point of view. They split the Saigon correspondents very simply into “good guys,” “bad guys,” and “everyone else.” The good guys were well-seasoned reporters who would give official spokesmen room to explain themselves. Although sometimes critical of the war, they were fair. The bad guys were just the opposite. And after 1968, with the momentum of American withdrawals increasing, ever more of them were freelancers C independent contractors paid by the piece rather than salaried members of a news organization’s staff. Less expensive than their fully employed counterparts, most of these people supposedly lived for the lurid scoop because sensations sold. More than a few of them, so the story goes, were ne’er-do-wells and drug abusers who would not have lasted long without the military’s PX system and its low cost press support facilities in the field. The third group, everyone else, was there and did its job without drawing much notice from anyone.<sup>3</sup>

Until recently, assertions of this sort and others like them about the press in Vietnam and its make up have been difficult to test. Relying on the honesty and experience of the individuals making them, the authors of studies on the press in Vietnam, including this one, have taken some of them at face value. In doing so, however, each has wondered how close they were to the truth.

Who, indeed, were the Saigon correspondents? What were their ages and genders? Were they, in fact, mostly young and inexperienced? How many women were spouses rather than working reporters, and did it matter? How did the reporters compare with journalists in the United States and elsewhere? Were they older or younger, more or less female, Afro-American, Hispanic? Where did they come from? Did some parts of the nation predominate to the detriment

of others? How did they compare with more modern reporters? What about the freelancers? Were they as numerous and as bad as alleged? Finally, have changes in the fighting and reporting of modern war rendered the corps of correspondents who covered Vietnam a mere curiosity, or can it yet shed some light on journalists and journalism in wartime?

## **Sources and Methods**

This study seeks to answer those questions by resorting to a unique resource, until now unavailable to researchers. During the writing of the U.S. Army's two-volume history of military relations with the news media in Vietnam, the Army's Center of Military History uncovered a huge collection of correspondent accreditation files amassed between 1965 and 1973 by the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). Composed of forms reporters filed with the MACV Office of Information in order to gain access to U.S. official support in covering the war, it contained a wealth of information — not only the reporters' names, but also their ages, nationalities, and employers. In addition, there was material on the kind of work they did (whether they were photographers, reporters, cameramen, or technicians), their years with their current employer, their previous experience in journalism, and whether they had ever served in the military themselves.

The records were often incomplete or inconsistent. The questions asked on the forms for one year, (for example, the one on prior military service) were sometimes dropped on the forms for the next. In addition, a fire in Saigon had destroyed most of the records accumulated during the period prior to 1965. At least one box of records containing the files of over one hundred

reporters had also been lost somewhere within the military bureaucracy. Worst of all, it was virtually impossible to determine how long some reporters had stayed in Vietnam because the officers in charge of maintaining accreditation records routinely wrote dates in pencil and erased and replaced them every time a renewal occurred.

Even with its defects, however, the collection contained a wealth of basic information about 5,098 of the reporters who covered the war.<sup>4</sup> Those individuals represented the news media of some sixty-four nations and served more than sixteen hundred media outlets of all sorts. Hoping to use the information, the Center decided to put it on computer and set two researchers to work coding the material. In the end, the project was too ambitious. Filling forty-two large archive boxes, the records took well over a year to compile. Shortly after the work was done and before anything had been proofread for duplicates and misspellings, the main frame computer employed on the project was dismantled in a move. The database sat virtually untouched within the Center's files from that day to this, a span of close to fifteen years.

Opening the database at last, this study will remedy that, but only in part. Although it will allude from time to time to the European and Asian reporters who covered the war, time and space require it to concentrate mainly upon American reporters working for the American news media. Although a host of foreign born reporters also worked for the American news outlets, the Americans were the ones who received the most attention from the policy makers who ran the war and the ones most criticized for their work. In addition, these individuals are easy to fit into the context of their time because they are readily comparable to a description of the press corps in the United States in 1971 set forth by John W. C. Johnstone and Edward J. Slawski in their

landmark book, *The News People: A Sociological Portrait of American Journalists and Their Work*. The study also attempts to pull the Saigon correspondents closer to the present by setting them beside the journalists of the 1980s as described by Johnstone's and Slawski's, successors, David Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit in their book, *The American Journalist, A Portrait of U.S. News People and their Work*.

There was also some hope, at first, of compiling a database of the journalists who covered the Persian Gulf War of 1991. The U.S. Central Command, however, had discarded most of the files required to do so. As a result, all that was possible was a much less complete database drawn from records that covered the three hundred journalists selected at various times to participate in the pools slated to accompany troops in the field once the war began. This compilation lacks the first names of some thirty reporters, skewing slightly its description of women in the war, and all information on ages and race. Even so, it is more than sufficient to make a number of interesting observations.

In order to make these comparisons, the study follows the definition of a journalist framed by Johnstone and Slawski: "*those individuals who have editorial responsibility for the preparation or transmission of news stories or other information C full time reporters, writers, correspondents, columnists, newsmen, and editors.*"<sup>5</sup> There is, however, one exception. The two researchers excluded freelance reporters because they considered them part time workers. Where this study has made comparisons with the data they generated, it has done the same. In other cases, where comparisons of the sort are of little matter, it has nonetheless included the freelancers. Few in number, they had the same status as regular reporters in Vietnam, and some of

their work, for better or for worse, had an important bearing of our understanding of the war. Johnstone also excluded photographers. It is difficult to conceive of the Vietnam war without its photojournalists, craftsmen like Horst Faas, Tim Paige, and Eddie Adams, who fixed for all time the images that Americans refer to when recalling the war.<sup>6</sup> In their case, however, the study has reluctantly followed Johnstone's lead. To have included the photographers along with the freelancers would have thrown comparisons with the control group categorized by Johnstone's definition into doubt.

A few words of caution are in order. The Vietnam Database is fairly accurate where it speaks of ages, genders, nationalities, employers, military experience, discipline problems, and so on. The details that are the basis for the study's treatment of these subjects were recorded in MACV's files either by the reporters themselves on their admission forms or in letters and memoranda deposited in the collection by the command's information officers. The work is less reliable when it speaks of time in country. First arrivals in Vietnam are not difficult to determine. They can be figured from the letters of reference filed with MACV by employers when a journalist applied for credentials. Most first departures are also easily determined. They are correct for reporters who spent only one tour of duty in Vietnam and never returned. They are also correct where one or two contiguous renewals are concerned. In those cases, the arrival date went untouched while the projected termination date was simply erased and replaced. Problems enter in only for reporters who left the country and then returned at a later date. In those cases, multiple erasures often occurred, and the dates for the final tour of duty are often all that is left. The files indicate, for example, that ABC correspondent Don North was present for only a few weeks in



1973, when he arrived to cover the end of American involvement in the war. In fact, the reporter has spent close to four years in country, from 1965 until mid-1968. The author has corrected for this in the case of some correspondents by comparing the news reports those individuals filed with the dates of accreditation for them on record with MACV and adjusting accordingly. If, for example, a reporter was particularly active in Vietnam between January 1965 and December 1966, the assumption has been that he or she was present through much of that time. With letters of reference defining the starting date, the departure date has been adjusted accordingly. In other instances, when a journalist was available by phone, the author called to obtain the correct dates. Even so, changes of the sort were possible in only a few cases. All things considered, the study has thus placed its greatest reliance on first arrival and departure dates, whether they have been adjusted or not, in determining how many reporters were in country at any one time. Since reporters were coming and going constantly, it is almost impossible to determine who was present anyway, and the arrival and departure dates on record at least approximate the number of journalists traveling to and from Vietnam at any one time.

In the same way, since travel to Vietnam was open throughout the war and coverage of the South Vietnamese military was possible without any reference to the Americans, the database provides only a partial profile of the corps of correspondents that covered the war. It cannot account for the reporters who flew to South Vietnam, interviewed contacts within the American and South Vietnamese communities, drew their conclusions, and went home after a week or two without ever entering into a formal relationship with the Military Assistance Command's Office of Public Affairs. In many cases, moreover, celebrity journalists such as CBS News anchorman

Walter Cronkite, who made a famous trip to Vietnam during the Tet Offensive, received all the courtesies the U.S. Command could muster without ever having to seek accreditation. Even so, the group that did become accredited is so large, its profile is so striking, and the trends the database reveals from the beginning of the war to its end are so consistent that it hardly seems possible that the addition of these transients, even if it were possible, would make much of a difference.

Over all, of course, if the Vietnam database both confirms and augments our picture of who the Saigon correspondents really were, it remains a work in progress. For in the process of reaching its conclusions it raises as many questions as it answers and suggests any number of lines for future research.

## **Who Were The Saigon Correspondents?**

### **1. The Corps of Correspondents**

The administration of President Lyndon Johnson considered instituting censorship of the press when American forces went to war in Vietnam in 1965, but it rejected the idea. Although the expedient was attractive, it would have been impossible to enforce. Even if the U.S. command in Vietnam could have taken complete control of the country's mail, communications, and transportation facilities, it would have had to enlist a team of censors fluent in virtually all the languages of the world to review the output of the Saigon correspondents. Beyond that, censorship is always voluntary on the part of the press, and there was no guarantee that the reporters involved would cooperate. Even if they did, should they choose to avoid the censors they had only to fly to Hong Kong or Singapore to file their stories freely. There was also the South Vietnamese government to consider. It had a bad record in its dealings with the press and would have to be involved in any censorship program that developed. No one doubted that its officials would exert their prerogatives with such a heavy hand that they might sour the American public and Congress on the war itself.<sup>7</sup>

In the end, the policy makers settled upon a system of voluntary cooperation that promised to preserve legitimate military security without doing damage to either the press or the war effort. Upon arriving in Vietnam, correspondents would seek authorization from the South Vietnamese government to cover the war. Receiving a Government of Vietnam press card B usually a

rubber stamp process B they would move on to the MACV Office of Information. There they would fill out a “Correspondents Data Sheet” that would require a modicum of personal information: an address and phone number, an estimate of length of stay, and so on. The reporters would then submit a picture, present letters of referral from their employers certifying their status as correspondents, and agree to withhold certain categories of information when reporting the war until commanders issued a go ahead. Finally, they signed a letter of release stating that they would not hold the U.S. command responsible if they were killed or injured while riding one of its aircraft. In return, MACV agreed to provide them with access to official briefings on the war, reserved seats on a small airline that connected South Vietnam’s major military bases and cities with Saigon, permission to use the American military’s Post Exchange in Vietnam, and the right to purchase accommodations for a small fee at a series of press support facilities strategically spotted around the country.<sup>8</sup>

The rules the reporters agreed to were straight forward. They banned all mention of future plans, operations, or air strikes; rules of engagement; the amounts of fuel or ordnance moving to front line units; intelligence activities or methods; aircraft taking off, en route to, or returning from targets; and so on. Information officers made it clear that all who observed the rules would experience no difficulty covering the war. Anyone who broke them, however, would lose that right either temporarily or permanently, depending upon the offense.<sup>9</sup>

Over the years, well over 5,100 reporters moved through the system. Of them, the names of 5,098 remain on file. Ninety percent (4,584) were men and ten percent (514) women. They represented some sixty-four nations, but of those only sixteen fielded more than twenty reporters

over the war's entire course, and only six besides the United States dispatched more than one hundred. They were all either major American allies or, in the case of South Korea and Australia, troop contributing countries. (See Figure 2.) A third troop contributing country, the Philippines, also showed intense interest. Given its size and relative wealth, the sixty-seven reporters its media sent represented a substantial investment in war coverage. Less than half of all the individuals accredited, 43.7 percent or 2,231, were Americans. Of them, 1942 were male (86.9 percent) and 289 female (13.1 percent).

As Braestrup suggested, not all of these individuals were genuine reporters. Of the 5098 accredited to cover the war, at best 3811 (a shade less than 75 percent rather than the 25 percent Braestrup had asserted) were actually engaged in what Weaver called "the preparation and transmission of news stories" as reporters, freelancers, and editors. Of them, 1742 were American citizens working for American news outlets. Another 209 non-Americans also worked for the American media, making a grand total of 1951 reporters. Fifteen hundred and nine members of the group were male and 232 (13.3 percent) female. By contrast, of the 303 reporters designated to participate in news pools during the Persian Gulf War, 155 were true reporters (51 percent). Of them, at least 16 (10.3 percent) were women. Most were American citizens. Although the number for the Gulf War looks small, it puts the women of that war ahead of their Vietnam counterparts. It took almost three years, until January 1969, for the women in Vietnam to even approach the 10 percent level. That being the case, the disparity between males and females in both wars is still striking since women constitute more than half of the American population.<sup>10</sup>

Another of Braestrup's contentions, however, is even less solid. Over the whole war, only

sixty-two of the 232 American females were spouses. Of them, twenty-seven had more than one year of experience with their current employers when they arrived, eight had between three and twenty-one years, and six were editors. For the sake of simplicity, with only thirty-five women remaining, this study will treat all as bona fide journalists. It will note, however, all instances where a disproportionate number of spouses might threaten to skew conclusions.

Among the non-reporters could be found dozens of documentary film producers, an assortment of book writers, over 350 still photographers and television cameramen, a scattering of clerical staff members, well over 200 radio and television technicians, and some eight combat artists mostly employed by the military. For a graphic breakdown of the news outlets everyone worked for see Figure 3.

Although the reporters of many American news organizations obtained accreditation to cover the war, those of the nation's East Coast predominated in Vietnam. Counting only newspaper reporters who were present in 1971 in order to preserve some sense of proportion, the database shows that 45.41 percent of them represented journals in the Northeastern section of the nation. By contrast, Johnstone and Slawski found that 36.3 percent of the nation's total press corps in 1971 was located in that region, which held, according to the 1970 U.S. census, no more than 24.3 percent of the nation's civilian workers. As for the rest of the country, there was a closer parity between the Saigon press corps and the journalists of the Midwestern states. Twenty-six percent of the correspondents reported for the newspapers of the region, which contained 28.7 percent of the U.S. labor force and 22.7 percent of its journalists. The numbers for the West Coast were even closer. The region employed 16.9 percent of the American work force, 16.3 of its journalists, and

16.4 percent of the Saigon correspondents. A wide disparity, however, characterized the South. It contained 30.1 of the nation's workforce and 24.7 percent of its journalists but was represented in Saigon by only 12 percent of the correspondents.<sup>11</sup> (See Figure 4.) The preponderance of Northeastern reporters in Vietnam would be even greater if journalists employed by America's news magazines, television networks, and wire services were counted. Almost all were headquartered in the Northeast, either in New York or Washington.

Does it matter that the Northeast predominated in the reporting of the War? It did to President Richard M. Nixon and his closest advisers. They believed that the region's intelligentsia and news media played an agenda setting role for the nation and that they opposed both the president's vision for the future of the United States and his approach to the war. Wielding a free hand in selecting, presenting, and interpreting the great issues of the day, Vice President Spiro Agnew charged, they had thwarted the nation's attempts to achieve internal peace and stability by concentrating on bad news to the detriment of the good.<sup>12</sup>

Interviewing a broad range of journalists from across the country, Johnstone and Slawski found that the news organizations of the Northeast were indeed influential. Most of the reporters they encountered named news outlets in New York City as the ones they relied on most in their work. Eight out of the top ten journals cited by those individuals as exemplars of fairness and reliability were likewise in the Northeast. The *New York Times* ranked first among them.<sup>13</sup>

The situation, however, was hardly as simple as Agnew made it appear. For if the *Times* and other journals in the Northeast often opposed the president's policies, 89 percent of the nation's 2,144 daily newspapers nonetheless backed him for reelection in 1972. If the media of the

Northeast, moreover, tended to oppose the war, their viewpoint was hardly universal even in the Northeast. *Newsweek* was critical of the conflict almost from its start, but *Time* and *Life* came relatively late to that conclusion, and *U. S. News & World Report* was sympathetic to the war almost until its end. As for the nation's television networks, they supported America's involvement in the war up until the Tet Offensive of 1968. After that, they raised questions, but always carefully, in order to alienate as few members of their viewing audiences as possible.<sup>14</sup>

If the influence of the Northeast on the formulation of a political agenda for the United States can be argued, the close resemblance of the Saigon correspondents as a group to the press corps of the nation is nonetheless clear. Except for the South, which was under represented in Vietnam just as it was in the United States, they constituted a fairly reasonable cross section of American journalism. The same would hold true during the Persian Gulf War (See Figure 5). Even though the South was better represented, the Northeast again dominated.

As for the influence of regional groupings of reporters on the U.S. political agenda, it remained as difficult to assess in 1991 as it had been in 1971. When researchers David Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit surveyed American journalists on how they viewed their work, they asked their subjects straight out what they conceived their role in agenda setting to be. Only five percent ranked the process as extremely high in their roster of personal values. Forty-one percent rejected it outright.<sup>15</sup>

As Figure 6 shows, if sheer numbers are any indicator, the print media played the most prominent role in the reporting of Vietnam by a margin of almost two-to-one. Even so, that effort was spread over a multitude of outlets while those of the broadcast media were concentrated



mainly in the three television networks. Indeed, of 501 American journalists working for U.S. broadcast media in Vietnam, 408 worked in television. Of those, 283 (69.3 percent) were employed by CBS, NBC, or ABC News. By contrast, the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, two of the most influential newspapers in the United States and the most diligent in covering the war, fielded 33 and 46 full time staff reporters respectively. If either employed freelancers, the database fails to register them.

Whether the disparity had much effect on public perceptions of the war is open to debate. Johnstone placed considerable confidence in indications arising in the 1960s that the American people relied more upon television than the print media for the information it received. In that light, he expressed concern that their primary source of news was staffed in 1971 by a relatively small number of journalists, some 7,000 out of a 69,000 person news force.

As far as the Vietnam War was concerned, Johnstone's apprehension was probably misplaced. Among many other indicators, a Harris poll released in 1967 found that 31 percent of the people questioned in one survey said that television coverage moved them to oppose the war. Two out of three responded yes, however, when later asked if television made them more inclined to "back up the boys in Vietnam." Obviously, public opinion on the subject was much more complicated than commonly believed.<sup>16</sup>

Writing ten years after Johnstone, David Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit added their own insight to the question. In a study updating Johnstone's initial research, they indicated that many more journalists contributed to the public's news supply than just those working in television. "Several studies of media organizations and content suggest," they said, "that much of what

television presents as news actually originates with the large daily newspapers and news services such as the Associated Press.”<sup>17</sup>

The database does not deal with questions of influence, but it does show (in Figure 3) that the proportions in the number of journalists committed to the war by the American and European print and broadcast media differed. While the number of American print reporters in Vietnam was roughly double that of the American broadcast media, the two figures were closer together where the Europeans were concerned. Although it would not be apparent for some time, a trend was already gaining momentum that would make television preeminent where news of war was concerned.

It would, indeed, culminate during the Persian Gulf War of 1991, when the proportion of television reporters designated for media pools would exceed that of print reporters by 43.81 to 35.05 percent. The increased overhead required to support broadcast coverage B cameramen and sound technicians with all their impedimenta B took up considerable space. As a result, where in Vietnam close to 75 percent of those accredited to cover the war were genuine journalists, the number of journalists on the pools in the Gulf ran at only 51 percent. Whether the reduction had any effect on the quality of news coverage in the Gulf can never be determined. The war was too short to provide an answer. At the least, it affected the coverage of those members of the print media who would have had spaces on the pools if the broadcast media had been in lower profile.

Figure 3 suggests that the news media of the world expended greater effort in covering the war than the United States. What that chart measures, however, is the number of news organizations that sent reporters to cover the war. When just reporters, editors, and freelancers are

counted, the American effort actually exceeds those of all nations combined. American media outlets sent 1951 reporters to cover the conflict while the rest of the world sent 1848. The disparity seems even greater when the efforts of those countries that sent the most reporters are broken down by year and compared with those of American news organizations (Figure 7).

## **2. Length of Stay**

Although lengths of stay in Vietnam are difficult to determine because of MACV's problems with record keeping, reporters who spent less than one month are easy to find. If the letters of reference they presented to gain accreditation fail to show a time limit, the command's accreditation files themselves contain clean copy with unerased dates. Over all, as a result, it seems clear that of the 3811 bona fide journalists present in South Vietnam, 1843 (48 percent) spent less than 31 days in country. Of those, according to the Minister-Counselor for Public Affairs in Saigon between 1964 and 1968, Barry Zorthian, a large but undeterminable segment was present less than a week. Out of a total of 838 Western European journalists, 543 (over 64 percent) spent 31 days or less in South Vietnam. By contrast, of 342 Japanese reporters covering the war, some 115 (about 34 percent) were in country for less than a month. The Korean record was about the same. Of 173 reporters, 58 (34 percent) spent less than 31 days in Vietnam. The American contingent fell into a middle range. Out of 1742 American citizens employed by American news outlets, 767 were short timers, 44 percent.<sup>18</sup>

It seems plausible that many American short timers might have arrived as members of the news teams that accompanied Presidents Johnson and Nixon during their various trips to South Vietnam. The officer most intimately involved with MACV's public affairs throughout the war

and the chief of the MACV Office of Information in Saigon between 1967 and 1969, Maj. Gen. Winant Sidle notes, however, that reporters who accompanied the president were accredited solely by the White House and never counted among the reporters assigned to South Vietnam. While other reporters who traveled to South Vietnam to cover the fact finding missions of secretaries of state and defense did have to sign in, their number was relatively small.<sup>19</sup>

The same can be said for those reporters who appeared in South Vietnam for a few weeks to cover breaking events such as the Tet Offensive of 1968, the U.S. Incursion into Cambodia of 1970, the South Vietnamese invasion of Laos in 1971, or North Vietnam's Easter Offensive of 1972. Although their presence could be significant at times, it cannot account for the hundreds and hundreds of correspondents on MACV's books who arrived, spent a week or two, and then departed. During the most newsworthy military operation of the war, the effort to defeat the enemy's Tet Offensive of 1968, for example, five American short timers sought accreditation during February, ten during March, and nine during April, twenty-four individuals in all out of a total of sixty-four Americans who arrived during that three month period.

The presence of the short timers was beneficial to their employers but not necessarily to either the American military or the American public. From the standpoint of the news media, particularly small local journals and broadcast outlets, brief visits to South Vietnam gave their reporters a measure of credibility on the war without incurring the great expenses involved in maintaining full time correspondents in the field. For the U.S. mission in South Vietnam, however, these individuals were a source of concern. In charge of coordinating the U.S. mission's relations with the news media between 1965 and 1968, Zorthian believed that he could make a good case for the

war, but that the conflict was complicated and took time to absorb. To his mind, the short timers were not around long enough to gain an honest picture of either the war's successes or its failures. With little chance to travel into the field, they instead gathered what impressions they could, drawing upon the nightly MACV briefings B the often contentious "Five O=Clock Follies" B and the word of other reporters, whose own conclusions were sometimes half-formed or poorly drawn.<sup>20</sup>

The ultimate loser was the American public, for as reporters well experienced with the war understood, information originating in Saigon from whatever source was always suspect. As the war lengthened and institutions hardened, they noted, Saigon became a trap for the press. "The lies are told at the rear," UPI correspondent Joe Galloway observed. "The lies are told by the headquarters people. They're told in briefings, the Five O'Clock Follies, . . . sort of like a pen full of mad dogs chewing on each other." Galloway believed that the situation would right itself if reporters spent more time in the field with the troops. "There's a certain honesty that operates out there on the cutting edge," he said, A. . . if you're there, you're sharing the risk, and you share the truth of it."<sup>21</sup>

Galloway to the contrary, reporting from the field, even brilliant reporting, was not enough. Someone needed to pull the many diverse and complicated elements that comprised the war into an understandable whole. Yet even if some reporters had the inclination, only those with long deadlines B the relatively few writers for such journals as *The New Yorker*, which fielded 8 reporters; *The New York Times Magazine*, 4; *Time*, 54; *Life*, 29; *Newsweek*, 55; *U. S. News & World Report*, 18 B had the time. The majority of the Saigon correspondents had to file every day,

whether the war was heating up or slowing into one of its periodic lulls.<sup>22</sup>

The nature of the war itself added to the effect. There was no front line in Vietnam and therefore no way that a reporter could be certain action would occur. In one typical month in 1968, American military units in South Vietnam launched fifteen thousand small unit operations, but only seven hundred made any contact with the enemy.<sup>23</sup> Under the circumstances, the wire services, which function as all purpose chroniclers for their subscribers, fielded enough reporters to cover breaking events anywhere in South Vietnam. AP had a turnover of from 9 to 11 reporters per year and UPI from 11 to 16. The same was true for the television networks, whose reporters had to film action if they were to satisfy the demands of their very visual craft. (See Figure 8.) It was relatively rare, however, for the rest of the Saigon correspondents, even the long timers and the members of mainstream news organizations, to spend extended periods with the troops. It would not have set well with their employers, who spent large sums maintaining them in Vietnam, if they had returned from lengthy stays outside of Saigon with little or nothing to show for the time. The result was plain to see. According to Sidle, at one point in 1966, when well over four hundred reporters were accredited to cover the war, public affairs officers in Saigon calculated that fewer than 35 percent of the corps of correspondents ever went into the field.<sup>24</sup>

In the end, the phenomenon had a double effect. As the *New York Times*'s Jack Raymond remarked, some reporters concentrated on what they had, playing up the sights and sounds of battle and exaggerating relatively commonplace engagements into "descriptions worthy of the Battle of Iwo Jima." The rest simply made do. They congregated in Saigon, where MACV held morning and evening briefings and where all the news finally came to rest. The reporting that

resulted, as Sidle noted, because of its official origins, tended either to be neutral on the war or to support the official point of view.<sup>25</sup>

The tours of duty for American correspondents who stayed for more than one month in Vietnam varied broadly. Some reporters B Joe Fried of the *New York Daily News*, Bud Merick of *U. S. News & World Report*, Peter Arnett of the AP, to name just a few B held on for years. Others were gone within sixty or ninety days. Over all, the average ran at 218 days.

The women often remained longer than the men. Female writers for popular magazines averaged only 206 days in country, as against 433 for the men, and male and female journalists employed by newspapers stayed virtually the same amount of time, 354 versus 341 days respectively. Among the rest, however, women employed by news magazines remained 429 days, compared with 382 for their male counterparts. Female radio reporters averaged 452 days versus 394 for the men. Much the same spread was apparent among television reporters. The women outstayed the men by 383 to 334 days. The largest interval, however, came in the wire services, where the average woman spent 526 days in Vietnam while the average man went 440. In general, the average stay for the 847 male reporters who covered the war long term was 374 days. The average for the 160 females was 403.

Unlike the figures for short timers, those for long time correspondents are open to question. Some of the reporters departed before their accreditations had expired, others renewed for longer periods. The departures were not recorded, and the erasures that often accompanied tour renewals removed sometimes extended periods of service from the files. Even so, many records were not altered at all either because the reporters involved departed for good when their

accreditations expired or because they filled out new forms when they returned. In addition, where male and female times in country are concerned, the errors favor neither group but overlap on both, leaving little reason for why the statistics on women should indicate longer stays if that were not the case. Indeed, the figures show that for newspaper and magazine writers the women were present for shorter periods than the men, something that would not occur if the database were biased in favor of women.

Over all, the average time in country for American newspaper, television, radio, news magazine, and wire service correspondents declined after 1968 (See Figure 9). By 1972, it came to just under four months. The figure gives some credence to assertions by MACV's public affairs officers that as the end of the war approached, news organizations began to funnel reporters into Vietnam for just long enough to enhance their resumes with the title "war correspondent." While there may be some truth to the allegation, the database suggests that at least part of the effect resulted from the arrival of senior reporters on temporary assignment whenever major events occurred. Of the 101 journalists who arrived in 1972, the year the enemy's massive Easter Offensive occurred, forty-five were present thirty-one days or less. The average for these short timers was 37.84. Twelve had between four and eleven years of experience with their employers. Nine more had between twelve and thirty-four. Among the most senior were editors from the *Baltimore Sun*, *Ebony*, and the *Armed Forces Journal*. By contrast, the 56 remaining reporters had an average age of only 31.64, but they remained in country an average of six months, almost the same amount of time as reporters in 1970.



### **3. Women and Minorities**

Given the extra time they spent in South Vietnam, if women were trying to use the war to break into journalism, they might have been better off at home. In 1971, the only year in the period in which statistics for the U.S. press are available, males outnumbered female journalists in the United States by a ratio of four-to-one. Circumstances were only slightly better in Vietnam. Of the 102 American reporters who covered the war in that year, 28 were women, a ratio of 3.64 males to 1 female. During earlier periods in the war, however, the spread between the two genders was much greater (See Figure 10). During 1966, for example, it was better than ten-to-one (137 to 13).<sup>26</sup>

Appearances, however, can deceive. For as the American role in the war wound down and the pace of American troop withdrawals grew, the American news media pulled back as well. When they did, the number of male reporters declined but that of the females held firm. It may have been because the women were more tenacious than the men, but it seems far more likely that women were merely less expensive to employ. In any case, the percentage of women accredited to report the war rose steadily.

Since sixteen of the twenty-seven female reporters present in South Vietnam in 1971 and ten of the twenty-one present in 1972 were the spouses of male reporters, the percentage of working females was probably lower. How much so, however, is impossible to determine. Although six of the spouses in 1971 had less than one year of experience with their employers when they arrived, the other ten put down from one to five apiece. Fourteen of the seventy-five new male reporters in country at the same time also had less than one year of experience. Among the women

present in 1972, three spouses and five non-spouses had less than one year of experience. Of the remainder, the six spouses had fourteen cumulative years among them while the six non-spouses had fifteen.

If the figures are skewed somewhat by the presence of non-working spouses, opportunities for women still appear to have been better in some journalistic specialties in Vietnam than in the United States. Although the ten women reporting for American newspapers and news magazines in 1971 constituted 25 percent of that work force, a figure roughly on a par with the percentage of women reporting for newspapers in the United States, females in the broadcast media were ahead.. The eleven women employed as reporters by radio and television outlets in Vietnam made up 36.6 percent of the Americans present in that occupation, a figure far larger than the one for the United States, where only 10 percent of broadcast journalists were women. In the same way, the ratio of male to female reporters in the wire services was more than six-to-one in the United States, but it ran at only 2.5 to one in Vietnam.<sup>27</sup>

It would be nice to say that the Vietnam experience foreshadowed trends that were just beginning to gain momentum in the United States. Over the long run, however, only modest gains for women occurred over the years that followed. By 1982, the number of females in journalism had grown in the United States from 25 to 34 percent, but little further forward motion occurred over the decade that followed. Although the percentage of women varied by news medium in 1992 from one-fourth in the wire services and television to nearly one-half in weekly newspapers and news magazines, females still constituted only 34 percent of the total work force. As a result, when the Persian Gulf war began, they played only a minor role on the pools.<sup>28</sup> Three out of the 10

reporters assigned to media pools in the Gulf by news services such as Cox or Knight Ridder were women, as were 2 out of the 14 reporting for news magazines. Nine of the 67 reporters working for the broadcast media were women but only 1 of the 25 newspaper and 1 of the 25 wire service correspondents was female. Many more women were present at the scene in Saudi Arabia but bureau chiefs selected mostly men for the pools.

If female reporters exercised a small but persistent presence in South Vietnam, Afro-American, Hispanic, and Asian reporters were there as well but in even shorter supply. Although Blacks constituted over 11 percent of the American population in 1971, only 3.9 percent of the nation's news personnel were Afro-American. Overall, there were very few of them in main line news organizations and virtually none among the so-called journalistic elite. Slightly more than one percent of journalists at the time reported Hispanic origins, even though 4.7 percent of the American population was of Hispanic descent. There was no count of Asians at all.<sup>29</sup>

Blacks came to about thirteen percent of the American troops fighting in South Vietnam, but they amounted to only 1.3 percent of the Saigon correspondents. In all, some forty-four of them traveled to Vietnam at one point or another, but ten were Africans. Among the thirty-four Americans who came, eighteen men and six women were reporters. They worked for a variety of news outlets, from the U.S. television networks to major newspapers, but twenty-five percent of them were employed by the black press (See Figure 11). In an era where racial integration was still gaining momentum, this was an improvement over the United States, where one-third of black journalists were employed by black news organizations.

There were more Hispanics than blacks among the Saigon correspondents, some sixty-two

in all, but most were from Spain and Latin America. Only seven were American citizens employed by American news outlets, and of them only five were genuine reporters. None of the Americans were women. A small group of eleven Asian Americans were also present. All classed as reporters, but five were spouses.<sup>30</sup>

No information on race is available for the Gulf War correspondents, so there is no way to determine the position blacks occupied in the reporting of that conflict. The names of four Hispanics, however, were identified among those of the 303 reporters designated for the pools. Of those individuals, only 1 was a reporter. Some nine Asians were also present. Three were reporters, but two of them were Japanese working for Japanese news outlets. The third was an Asian-American reporting for NBC News. Given the light representation of minorities in both Vietnam and the Gulf, it is tempting to agree with Johnstone that America's journalists tend to be drawn primarily from the nation's established classes rather than from people on its fringes.<sup>31</sup>

#### **4. A Cultural Divide**

The average age of all the reporters who covered the war was just short of 36. The average for the Americans was 36.5. On the whole, about 21 percent of the Saigon correspondents were under the age of 26, twenty-one percent were over 44, and the rest fell in between. Within those ranges, the reporters were little different in age from the officers commanding the troops. U.S. Army Captains ran from 24 to 30 years of age. Majors ranged up to about 38. Lieutenant Colonels were between 38 and 44.

As the war lengthened, Barry Zorthian noticed that the new reporters arriving in Vietnam

seemed to be getting younger. No one kept formal tabs on the trend, but by the end of Zorthian's tour of duty in 1968, the average age of newly arriving correspondents had indeed dropped by three years, from 39.4 to 35.6. Over the next three years it fell three more, to 33.2. (See Figure 12.) By that time, the percentage of young reporters covering the war was higher than the percentage working in the United States, and the proportion of older reporters was lower. (See Figure 13.) War is a young person's pursuit, so the saying goes, but junior reporters were also less expensive to hire than their more senior counterparts. In effect, as older journalists moved up or on, news managers saw to it that younger people took their places.<sup>32</sup>

The new arrivals were different. For one, they were better educated. Slightly more than 58 percent of all journalists in the United States in 1971 had college degrees, and 86 percent had attended college for one year or more. The average, however, had been driven up by the younger journalists in the group. Ninety-three percent of its members under twenty-five possessed either an undergraduate or a graduate degree or had spent from one to three years in college. Those from 25 to 34 ran a close second. The database takes no account of educational levels among the Saigon correspondents, but it seems safe to assume that much the same profile applied to the young reporters working in South Vietnam. As Barry Zorthian observed, reporters were constantly arriving fresh out of journalism school, with little if any experience.<sup>33</sup>

The young reporters differed from their elders in a second respect. Learning their craft during World War II, the Korean War, and the early years of the Cold War, when good feelings had characterized military-media relations, the older reporters tended to be, if rarely subservient, at least deferential to government. In contrast, their juniors were the products of an era of chaos and

growing dissent at home. Even if they had not participated actively in the antiwar movement they had been influenced by its values.<sup>34</sup> In addition, those under 25 were not much older than the draftees fighting the war. They affected the same hair styles, used the same slang, and those among them who worked in television sometimes even played rock and roll music as a background in their reports.<sup>35</sup>

The presence of the older reporters both in Saigon and on editorial staffs in the United States posed a counterpoint to the reporting of these individuals. As the war progressed, the seniors also returned to Vietnam every time a crisis such as the Tet Offensive or the Laotian Incursion occurred, effecting temporary increases in the average age. (See Figure 14). Even so, as discontent with the war increased in the United States, the mood made its way to Vietnam, and the tenor of reporting changed. Well aware of the contradictions and dissembling that had dogged official justifications of the war from its beginning and fed up with more of the same, many of the younger reporters and an increasing number of their elders experienced what correspondent Sidney Schanberg termed “a hardening of viewpoint” on the war. The military, for their part, reciprocated, pulling into a shell of their own.

It was in this context that the freelancers gained their reputation as the worst of all the reporters covering the war. The development is puzzling because there were never very many of them present, and their number declined as the American withdrawal proceeded. (See Figure 15.). In all, a total of only 224 freelancers (4.78 percent of the Saigon correspondents) covered the war, and of them only 146 were Americans. Eleven or almost 5 percent, did suffer disaccreditation, but their violations involved infractions such as disorderly conduct, failure to pay bills, or the

falsification of credentials. None were ever formally disciplined for violating MACV's ground rules for the press by revealing information of value to the enemy.

This is not to say that the freelancers were never a problem. Don Luce and Michael Morrow, for example were ejected from South Vietnam for indulging in anti-war activities in defiance of the nation's government. Their infractions were nonetheless political in nature rather than violations of military security. In another case, activist reporter Richard Boyle was accused of fanning a mutiny among American troops in the field. In that instance, however, the reporter had already been ejected from South Vietnam for participating in an anti-government demonstration. He had reentered the country via Cambodia without papers and became, on that account, an illegal alien rather than an accredited reporter.<sup>36</sup>

Although freelancers such as these left considerable debris in their wakes, others performed professionally and well. One of the foremost authorities on Vietnam in the world, Bernard Fall, classed as one of them, and there were others. In the end, the reporters' main problem was not so much what they wrote as how they worked and where their stories appeared. As American withdrawals proceeded, U.S. troops took on fewer and fewer combat missions, leaving the task to the South Vietnamese armed forces. Oriented toward U.S. forces rather than those of the South Vietnamese, staff correspondents remained increasingly in Saigon. The freelancers lacked that luxury. Working for several news organizations at a time, they were often in the field trolling for whatever details they could find. To MACV's public affairs officers, whose own ranks were thinning, it must have seemed as though they were everywhere. Adding to the effect, the sensations uncovered by the few received wide play in the major media while much of the more routine work

of the many often went unnoticed. For while most had at least one major news outlet in their portfolios B *Life*, UPI, the *Detroit News*, the *Boston Globe*, Multimedia B much of their routine work appeared in small, regional publications B the Elyria (Ohio) *Chronicle Telegram*, for example, or the Albany (New York) *Times Union*, or the *Granite State Gazette* (Vermont)B periodicals that rarely attracted the attention of either policy makers in Washington or public affairs officers in Saigon.

In the end, rather than the freelancers, the reporters who lost their privileges for misconduct, breaking the law, or security violations have the strongest claim to the title “Bad Guys.” In all, there were seventy-two of them, sixty-two males and ten females. Fifty-four were reporters. As a group, they were young: average age 31.9 for the males and 29.8 for the females. Sixty-four were punished for infractions that had little to do with their journalistic functions. A number, including one bureau chief, went down for illegally supplementing their incomes by trading dollars for piasters on the Saigon black market; others for failing to pay their bills, writing bad checks, assaulting public affairs officers, or fabricating journalistic credentials to gain accreditation. Most of these people were expelled permanently from the country.

The remaining eight were guilty of security violations that could, in theory, have endangered allied lives. Six were Americans and two were Europeans. All were reporters. One was a television correspondent, two worked for American newspapers, and the remainder were wire service reporters. All were full time, staff correspondents employed by major news organizations. They spanned a range of ages from 25 to 50, but their average age at the time of their infractions was over 35. The experience of three in journalism is unknown but the remaining five had a total of



48 years among them with their employers. Most had extensive experience of the war, an average of 443 days in their first tours alone. Two, at least, were on their second or third.

Since the wire services were the most aggressive of the news organizations covering the war and all but three of the eight discredited were their employees, it is tempting to attribute most of the security violations to an exaggerated spirit of competition. In fact, although competition surely figured in, it would be a mistake to make too much of it. The timing of the violations shows why. They were clustered in two groups: four at the beginning of the war in 1966, three at the end in 1972, and a single instance in 1968. The spread of so many years between infractions suggests that the vast majority of reporters, after several initial misunderstandings, learned quickly to work within the rules and asserted their competitive instincts elsewhere.

Why, then, after years of compliance, did the spate of violations in 1972 occur? Youthful inexperience was not the only reason. Although the increasing flow of young reporters into South Vietnam and all the intellectual baggage they brought with them may have contributed by heightened tensions between the military and the news media, the database shows clearly that the three guilty parties were seasoned reporters with long service in Vietnam. The oldest was 42 years of age in 1972. He took his first accreditation in 1965. The next was 37, with his first arrival dating from 1967. The third was 35 and arrived in 1968.

The third of the three, Richard Pyle, the AP bureau chief in Saigon at the time, makes the point that he had not done anything wrong. Instead, he notes,

Two AP reporters covering the NVA Easter invasion in I Corps wound up together with SVN troops' defending the My Chanh river defense line north of Hue. They reported by phone that SVN [the South Vietnamese] had launched a counter-attack and made contact, and under the rules there was no reason NOT to report it. But SVN command in Saigon refused to lift the embargo. I told our desk to abide by that. I was called to the bureau to

discover the reporters . . . had persuaded a desk editor to file the story on grounds the embargo had been lifted >at the scene.' The SVN [South Vietnamese] briefer, LTC Hien, was livid, wanted to throw both of them out of the country. I couldn't let that happen, so I told Hien it had been my decision to file the story. He knew that wasn't true, and they weren't going to expel an AP bureau chief, which made him even madder. I was benched for a month, and Hien lectured me endlessly. In the final analysis, [the] SVN were right C it was a clear violation of the rules.<sup>37</sup>

If Pyle could cite extenuating circumstances, excuses are harder to come by where the other two senior reporters are concerned. Neither was taking the blame for someone else. And given their ages and time in country, it is unthinkable that either was so green or impulsive that he had failed to realize what he was doing.

Combining their cases with that of the two reporters working for Pyle, it seems clear that a breakdown had occurred in the basic spirit of cooperation and communication that had made MACV's Guidelines for the Press so successful in the past. Although a few reporters had indulged in outright acts of defiance in the past C revealing the existence, for example, of a news embargo on the South Vietnamese incursion into Laos in 1971 that hid nothing from the enemy C none had ever claimed that an embargo had been lifted de facto and "at the scene." Instead, flailed both by the Nixon White House and increasingly by officers in the field for their supposed disloyalty, these reporters and others like them during the final years of the war had encountered generals who would no longer give interviews, staff officers who declined to respond to the most innocuous of questions, and official dissembling at the highest levels on a range of topics that stretched from the so-called "light at the end of the tunnel" to the supposedly secret wars in Laos and Cambodia. By the time of the enemy's Easter Offensive of 1972, as a result, the patience of the press was wearing thin, and many reporters had lost faith in the word of official spokesmen. Under the circumstances,

a collision of some sort was inevitable. That it took the form of news stories revealing troop movements in advance was probably for the best. As Barry Zorthian would note, by 1972 and 1973 the enemy had so penetrated the South Vietnamese government and armed forces that there were no secrets anyway.

The skepticism of the Saigon correspondents persisted long after the Vietnam war ended. In a 1990 study examining journalists' perceptions of the adversarial role of the press toward public officials, researcher Jian-Hua Zhu found that the generation of reporters who had covered Vietnam (those between the ages of 31 and 44 in 1983) remained not only distrustful of government but were becoming more so. By contrast, their older colleagues seemed to be mellowing, and younger reporters appeared to be leaning toward the middle of the road. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the trend has persisted. According to the Chief Spokesman for the National Security Council between 1996 and 1998 and the current Principal Spokesman for Lockheed-Martin in Washington, James Fetig, reporters from the Vietnam generation remain as distrustful of government as ever, pushing abrasively for answers long after their older and younger counterparts have given up.<sup>38</sup>

## **5. Conclusion:**

Do the Saigon correspondents and the rhythms that they and their employers adopted in covering the Vietnam War have anything to say to policy makers and news media managers of today, or are they mere historical curiosities? There are those who insist that there will never be another war like Vietnam. Where it ran for years, the conflicts of the future will be measured in weeks or months. When they occur, moreover, the governments involved will seal them off if they

arise in remote areas, keeping the press at bay. As for those that occur in more accessible regions, the opposite will occur. Reporters will be on the scene long before major forces are engaged. Cellular phones and portable satellite communications systems will allow them to transmit their stories directly from the field without official oversight, and the military will never catch up. The brief conflicts in the Falklands, Grenada, Panama, and the Persian Gulf, along with the interventions in Haiti, Somalia, and Bosnia, are examples of what will happen, not Vietnam.

None of these are bad points, but they assume no good will on the part of either the military or the news media for one another. If technology advances and the mechanisms of society tend to grow increasingly sophisticated over time, moreover, human nature remains the same. Whether the wars of the future are long or short, there will thus always be things to learn those of the past by studying the people who were involved, how they reacted to their environments, and how they were shaped by events.

In that sense, if the Vietnam database reveals anything, it shows how very ordinary the Saigon correspondents really were. For despite being somewhat younger by 1971 than reporters in the United States, they were not much different from their counterparts. The highest proportion of them reported for media outlets in the Northeastern United States, just as the majority of reporters did at home. And just like their fellows at home, they were mostly male, mostly white, and increasingly college educated. Although the data are incomplete, a similar profile emerged during the Gulf War. As in the United States, the broadcast media were on the rise, the Northeast remained preeminent, and women remained in the minority.

If the pattern holds, and there are no indications to suggest that it will not, the people who

cover the next war will be much the same, a cross section of American journalism. In the case of a war where controls are possible, the decision on how many reporters will accompany the troops will result from bargaining between the military and political sectors of the government. More will be authorized if officials need to sell the war to the American public and Congress, fewer if circumstances are otherwise. If the situation is more open, scores of reporters will undoubtedly flock to the scene as they did in Vietnam and the Persian Gulf, but the press will not run amok. As always, the American public will be focused on its own armed forces, and journalists will need access to the troops to fill the need. If they want it, they will have to follow rules. Many will be young, male, and middle class C for war remains a young man's game, at least for the moment, and the media retain their mainstream character. Senior journalists arriving to assess the situation will nonetheless drive up the average age.

In all of this, the reporters will reflect their times, and in the end, rather than age or journalistic experience, it will be the times that determine how they view the war, what they say about it, and how they observe the rules. When the American public began to question America's commitment to South Vietnam, for example, and protests began to rise, the young reporters who would shortly make their way to the war zone took it all in. When nothing they encountered in Vietnam relieved the misgivings they had formed and the situation instead went from bad to worse, a number turned sour. It would be unfair to say that, as a result, they all became discipline problems for MACV. The majority of them did not, just as the majority of young American soldiers, who had encountered many of the same influences while they were at home, never became drug addicts or malcontents after they arrived in Vietnam. Even so, as the war lengthened and malaise spread,

discipline declined among the Saigon correspondents just as it did among the troops.

In the end, experienced reporters were the ones who violated security. It may have been because they had been in Vietnam too long and had grown callous, but it is far more likely that they were as well aware as everyone else that the enemy knew everything and that they no longer held MACV's rules in much esteem. A third alternative is also possible, that the three reporters ran afoul of a U.S. command unfairly bent on enforcing its rules for the press far more stringently than in the past. The possibility, however, seems remote. Although officers in the field had sometimes conducted vendettas against reporters, the MACV Office of Information had never done so. During the very period when it discredited the three reporters, for example, the database indicates that it lifted the discreditation of a fourth because it had uncovered extenuating circumstances. In any case, what matters as far as military-media relations in future conflicts are concerned, is that only eight out of more than 5,000 reporters chose to break security over the entire length of the war. Even in the cases where infractions occurred, moreover, no one has ever been able to demonstrate that any damage resulted.

In preparing for future wars, policy makers and news media managers must keep these patterns in mind. For despite the profound distrust on both sides that resulted from the Vietnam War, neither of the two institutions bears the other any fundamental ill will. While anticipating the worst a few individuals can do, therefore, both must guard against so narrowing their points of view that they fail to respect one another's legitimate needs. The well being of the nation requires it. The United States of America would not exist without its military, but it could never have become what it is without its free press. As for the Saigon correspondents, as Zhu notes, they are still around and

still as abrasive as ever. For that reason, if for no other, Vietnam still matters.

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## Charts

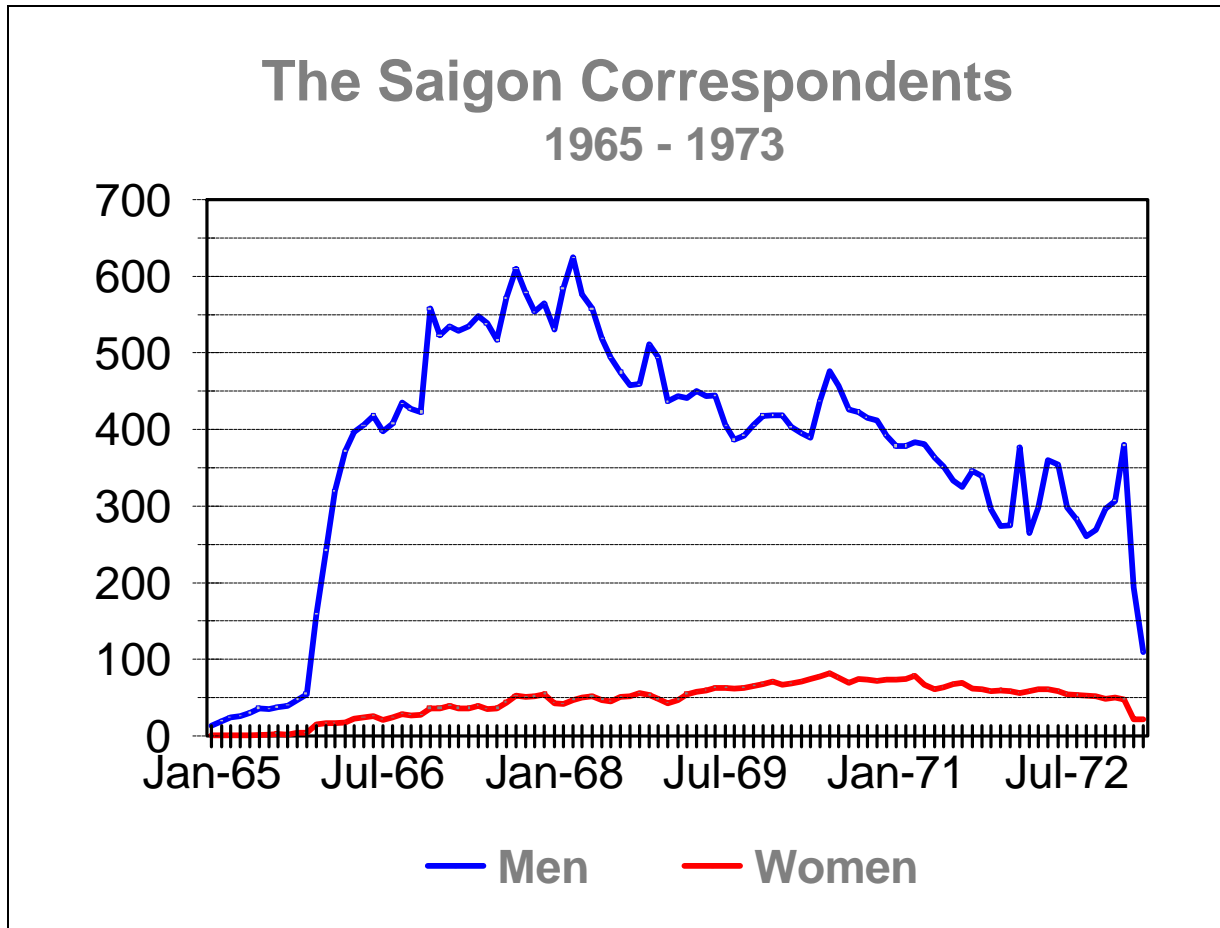


Figure 1



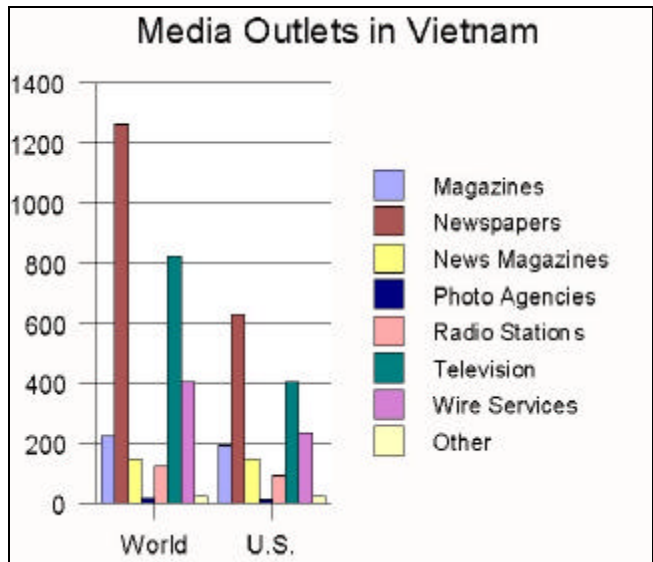


Figure 2

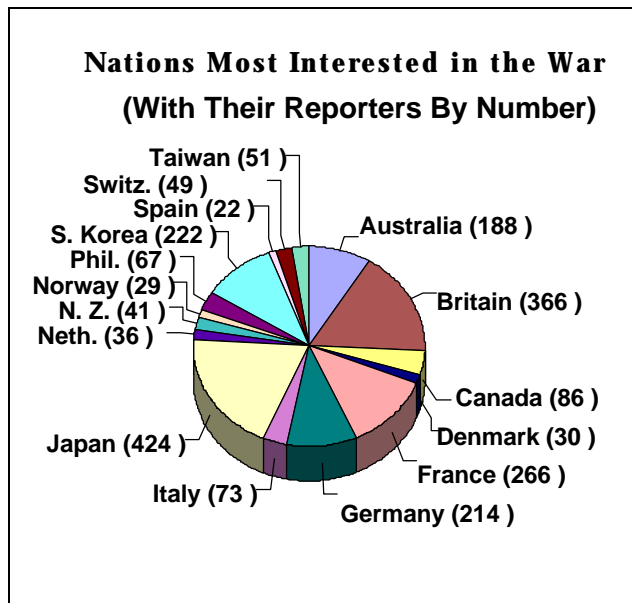


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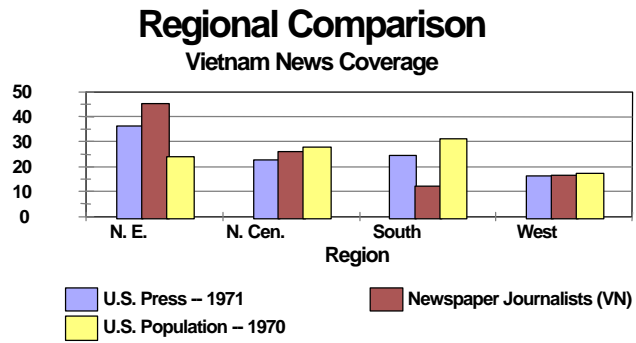


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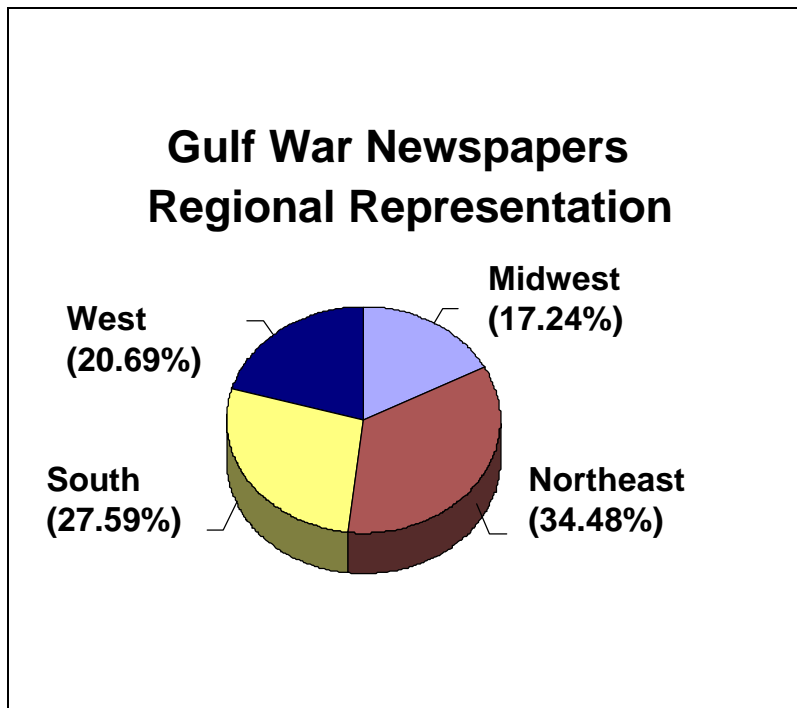


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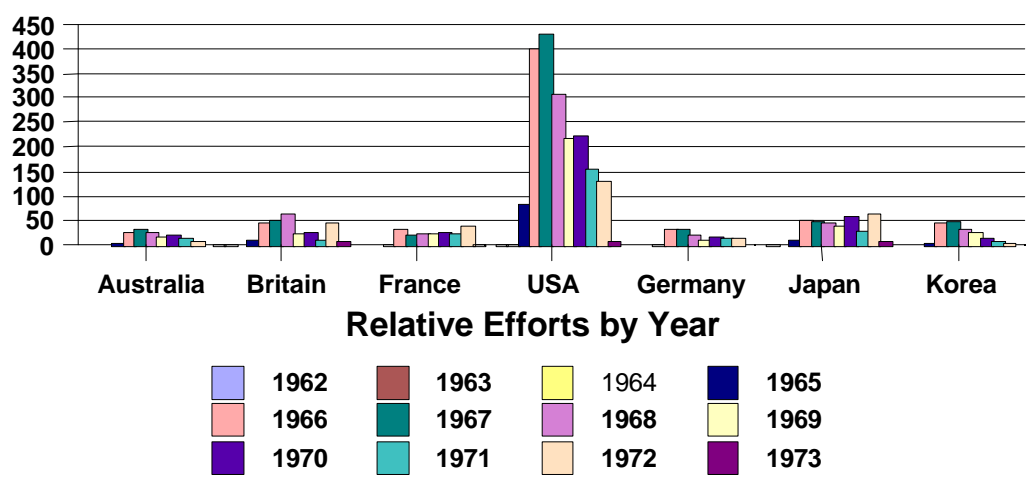
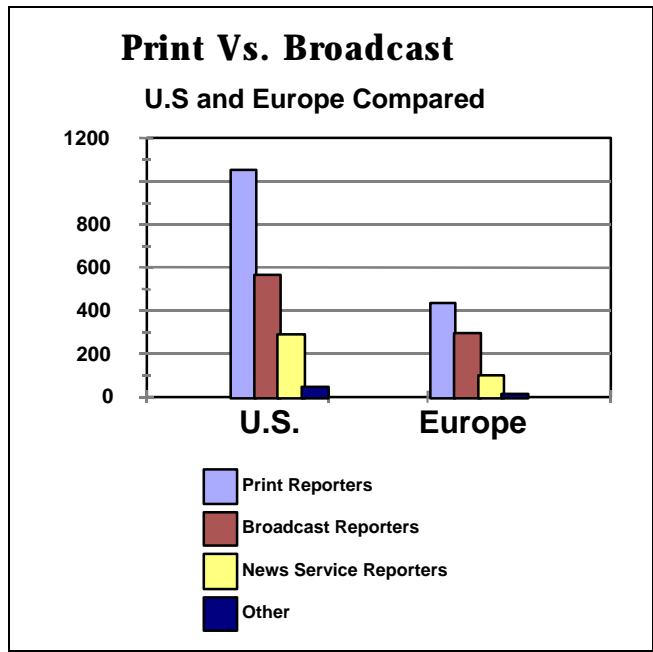


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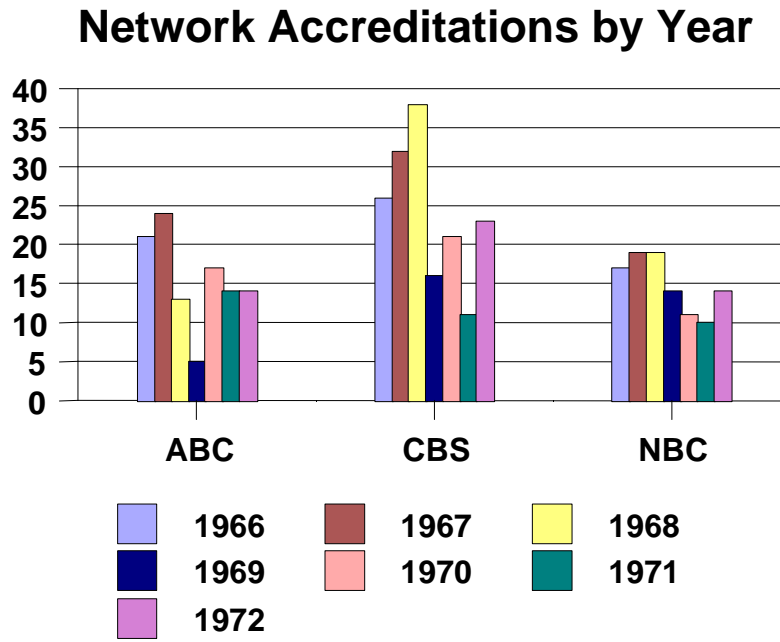


Figure 8

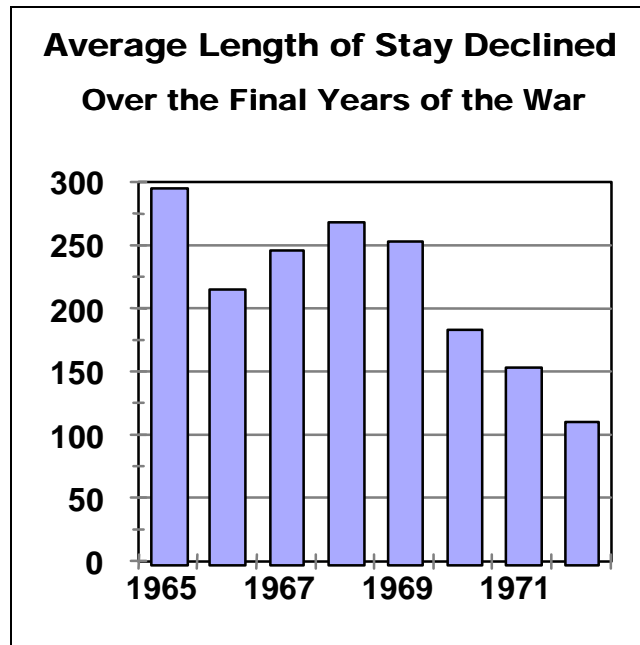
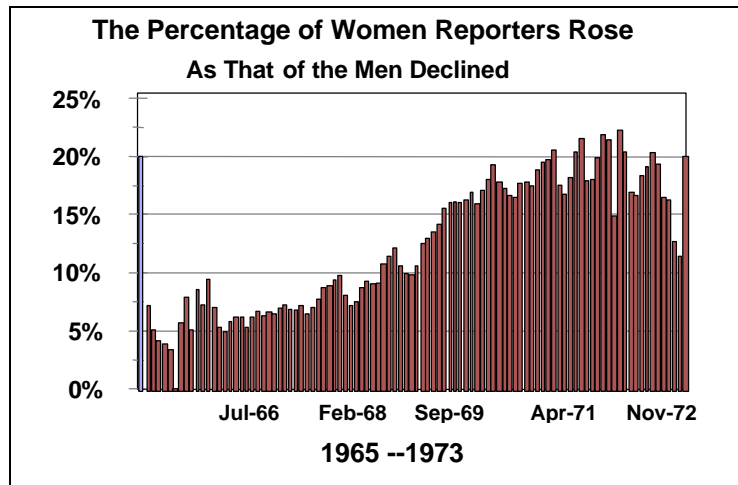
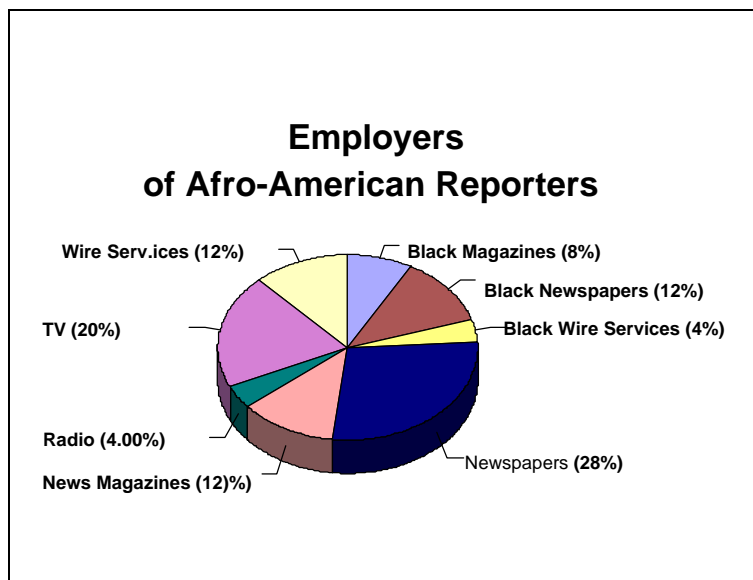


Figure 9



**Figure 10**



**Figure 11**

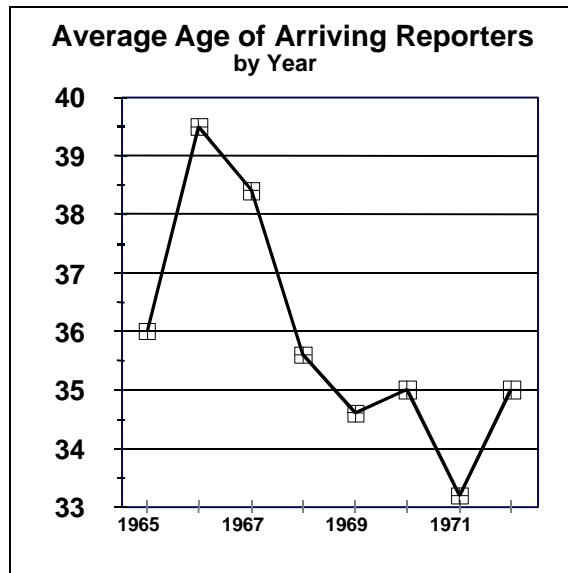


Figure 12

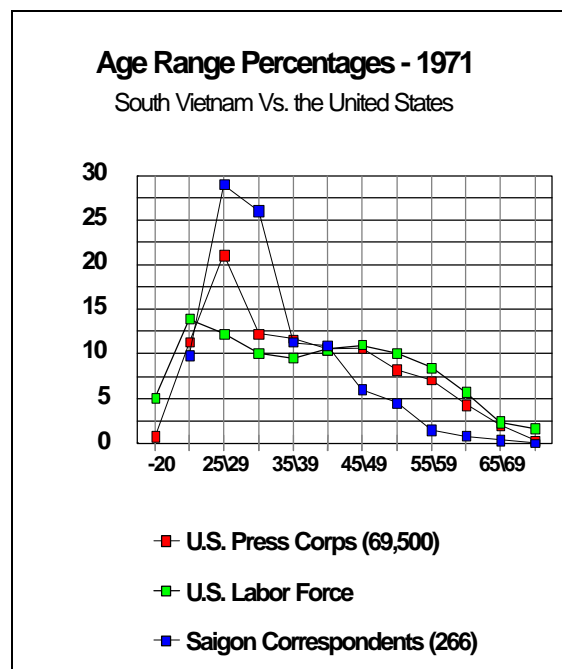
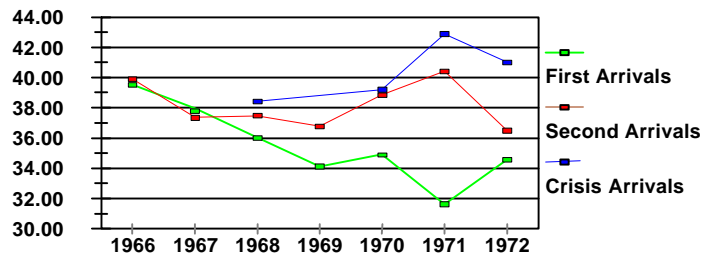


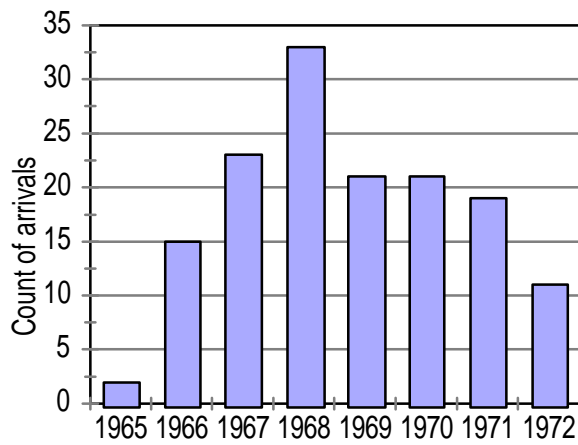
Figure 13

**U.S. Average Age by Type of Arrival**  
 First, Second, and Crisis Arrivals



**Figure 14**

**U.S. Freelancers**  
 Arrivals by Year



**Figure 15**

## Endnotes

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1. Gen. William C. Westmoreland, "The Press in Vietnam," an unpublished lecture delivered at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, Canada, 8 December 1972, copy in U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH) files.
  2. Braestrup made this point in many conversations with the author.
  3. See William M. Hammond, *Reporting Vietnam: Media and Military at War* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1998), pp. 222-223.
  4. Unless otherwise specified, all the figures in this study are drawn from the correspondents database.
  5. See: John W. C. Johnstone and Edward J. Slawski, *The News People: A Sociological Portrait of American Journalists and Their Work* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), p. 15.
  6. David Weaver, and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, *The American Journalist, A Portrait of U.S. News People and Their Work* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 15; Hammond, *Reporting Vietnam*, pp. 220-25, 228-29.
  7. Hammond, *Reporting Vietnam*, pp.41-44.
  8. Memo, Col. Rodger Bankson, Chief, MACV Information, to In-Country News Representatives, Sub: MACV Accreditation Criteria, 28 Feb 67, Acc. No. 73A3413, Box 8, Hector Villanueva file.
  9. Memo for Correspondents, Sub: Rules Governing Public Release of Military Information in Vietnam, 31 Oct 66, Copy in CMH files.
  10. The sexes of 26 reporters in the Gulf could not be determined from the information in military files. A ratio of about 10-to-one, however, seems well established by the information that is available.
  11. Johnstone and Slawski, *The News People*, p. 195.
  12. U.S. Congress, House, "Address to the Midwest Regional Republican Committee Meeting," *Congressional Record*, Vol. 115, pp. 34043-049.
  13. Johnstone, *The News People*, pp. 20-21.
  14. See: William Hammond, *Public Affairs: The Military and the Media* (Washington, D.C.: U.S.



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Army Center of Military History, 1996), Vol. 2, pp. 104-106, 326-27, 596.

15. David Weaver, and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, "Journalists in the United States," in *The Global Journalist, News People Around the World*, ed. David H. Weaver (New Jersey: Hampton Press, Inc., 1998), p. 409

16. Lawrence Lichty, "Video Versus Print," *Wilson Quarterly* VI, no. 5 (1982): pp. 48-57. The author addressed this question in William Hammond, "The Press in Vietnam as Agent of Defeat: A Critical Examination," *Reviews in American History*, June 1989, pp. 314-15. For an even more extended treatment of the subject see, Daniel C. Hallin, *The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

17. Weaver, *The American Journalist*, pp. 13-15.

18. Interview, author with Barry Zorthian, 16 Jan 99.

19. Kalb made his comment to the author during a meeting at the Joan Shorenstein Center for the Press and Public Policy on 19 April 1999. Sidle's remark comes from: Interview, author with Maj. Gen. Winant Sidle, 22 April 1999.

20. Interview, author with Barry Zorthian, 5 Dec 1998.

21. Galloway is quoted by Baroody, *Media Access and the Military*, p. 58.

22. The point was made by Fred W. Friendly in "TV at the Turning Point," *Columbia Journalism Review* IX, no. 4 (Winter (1970-71)): p. 19. The numbers cited are not absolute, but they do show relative efforts. Of all the journals, the *New Yorker* produced some of the finest commentaries on the war in the work of Robert Shaplen, its resident Asian expert.

23. Robert J. Donovan and Ray Scherer, *Unsilent Revolution: Television News and American Public Life* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 90.

24. Interview, author with Maj. Gen. Winant Sidle, 22 April 1999. Although again the numbers are not absolute, Figure 8 shows clearly that the networks paid less attention to the fighting following the start of negotiations. See, Hammond, *The Military and the Media*, Vol. 2, pp. 102-03.

25. Jack Raymond, "It's a Dirty War for Correspondents, Too," *New York Times Magazine*, no. 23 February (1966): p. 92.

26. That information is provided by Johnstone and Slawski in *The News People: A Sociological Portrait of American Journalists and Their Work*.

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27. Johnstone, *The News People*, pp. 22-25.
28. Weaver and Wilhoit, "Journalists in the United States," pp. 398-400.
29. Johnstone, *The News People*, pp. 26, 91.
30. The Military Assistance Command's accreditation forms did not register race. The Blacks were identified through the pictures that MACV required each reporter to submit, the Hispanics by their names. The approach is hardly foolproof, but it does at least allow the composition of a tentative profile. No comparable information on Blacks exists for the Gulf War because pictures were not required.
31. Weaver, "Journalists in the United States," pp. 400-01.
32. Interview, Author with Barry Zorthian, Minister-Counselor for Public Affairs, U.S. Mission, Saigon, 1964 - 1968, May 9, 1999. Figure 7 measures arrivals. Once in Vietnam, the new reporters were mixed in with their seniors and the average rose. Over time, however, even that figure fell as more and more young people arrived.
33. Johnstone, *The News People*, Tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.5, pp. 200, 202. Interview, Author with Barry Zorthian, May 9, 1999.
34. This is Johnstone's conclusion. See: Johnstone, *The News People*, p.186.
35. Barry Sherman, "The Peabody Collection: Vietnam on Television, Television on Vietnam, 1962-1975," in *1987 American Film Institute Video Festival* (Los Angeles: American Film Institute, 1987), pp. 28-32; Sidney Schanberg, "The Saigon Follies: or Trying to Head them Off at Credibility Gap," *New York Times Magazine*, 12 Nov 72, p. 38
36. See Hammond, *The Military and the Media*, 2:359-67, 380-81.
37. Ltr, Richard Pyle to the Author, 15 March 2000.
38. Jian-Hua Zhu, "Recent Trends in Adversarial Attitudes Among American Newspaper Journalists: A Cohort Analysis," *Journalism Quarterly* 67, no. No. 3 (1990): p. 998; Interview, author with James Fetig, Spokesman for the National Security Council, 1996-1998, Principal Spokesman for Lockheed-Martin, March 24, 1999.