

CNN's Coverage of the War in Iraq: Introduction

Welcome

In 1991, CNN broke new ground with its coverage of the Persian Gulf War. Twelve years later, CNN was there to cover the second war in Iraq, only this time, improvements in technology and better access to the military provided CNN with even greater opportunities to provide its audiences with a front row seat to the theater of war.

CNN's Coverage of the War in Iraq: A Case Study presents a firsthand look at CNN's coverage of the war as told by the people who planned for, reported on and brought to air this important piece of history. The accompanying Teaching Activities and multimedia resources provide suggestions for integrating the in-depth Case Study into your curriculum.

For those teachers who are using this Case Study in conjunction with *Behind the Scenes at CNN*, you will find that the content of the Case Study dovetails with the original *Behind the Scenes* content. Look for links to the original *Behind the Scenes* content throughout the Case Study and accompanying Teaching Activities.

Subject Areas and Grade Levels

The content of the Case Study naturally lends itself to journalism and social studies curriculum, such as U.S. and World History, and Global Studies. However, individual chapters within the Case Study can be used across the curriculum in subject areas such as language arts, current events, media literacy and technology. The Case Study content and Teaching Activities are most appropriate for students in grades 9 through 12. However, materials can easily be adapted for middle school students.

A Description of the Materials

The Case Study: *CNN's Coverage of the War in Iraq: A Case Study* is comprised of interviews with various key CNN staff members who were instrumental in CNN's war coverage. The interviews are categorized and organized into four units:

- ❑ **Planning** – Examines the various ways that CNN prepared for its war coverage, from providing safety training to employees and getting its reporters in the right places, to conducting research, establishing a production format and reorganizing the newsroom floor.
- ❑ **Newsgathering and Reporting** – Provides in-depth insight on what it is like to report on a war from the perspective of the CNN journalists who either lived and worked in Iraq or who reported from the frontlines under the constant threat of attack.
- ❑ **Production** – Addresses the challenges faced by CNN executives as they produced war coverage 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, providing not only stunning live images of war, but also placing those images in a broader context for the viewer.
- ❑ **Looking Back, Looking Ahead** – CNN staff members, from executives to engineers, reflect on the role of the reporter in wartime, on the relationship between the media and the military in this conflict as compared to previous conflicts, on the role of journalism as capturing a first draft of history, and on the lessons learned in this conflict.

Each unit is made up of a series of chapters, each of which addresses a specific topic. For a chapter index, see [Chapter Index](#). The entire Case Study is available as a PDF file for printing ease. You may choose to print out one chapter at a time, or print out the entire Case Study at once.

The Teaching Activities: The Teaching Activities are organized by three main themes:

- **Newsgathering and Reporting** – Students will:
 - Examine journalism as a first draft of history
 - Apply the processes of gathering information and developing a story
 - Assess the coverage of the war across a variety of media
- **The Media and the Military** – Students will:
 - Examine the past, present and future relationship between the media and the military
 - Evaluate the embedding process with respect to the war in Iraq and future conflicts
- **Technology** – Students will:
 - Analyze the evolution of communications technology and its impact on the way the public learns about and experiences war
 - Examine the history of battlefield medicine

Multimedia Resources: As a supplement to the text interviews, the Case Study provides additional multimedia resources:

- **Video** – There are three video selections to help illustrate aspects of the Case Study. These videos, along with correlating discussion questions, can be accessed in the Video section of this Web site and are referenced throughout the Teaching Activities.
- **Web sites and Resources** - Web sites are organized by Case Study chapters. In addition, there are some sites that address the overall content of the Case Study and are therefore classified as “general.” Additional Resources include charts and artifacts from the war in Iraq.

How to Use the Case Study, the Teaching Activities and Multimedia Resources

The Case Study is intended to be used in its entirety. However, each chapter of the Case Study contains distinct content and discussion questions, and therefore can be used independently. The Teaching Activities draw upon and incorporate content from the Case Study. Also, online resources are included at the end of individual Teaching Activities and as a separate section of the *Behind the Scenes at CNN: War in Iraq* site.

CNN's Coverage of the War in Iraq: Education Standards

Education Standards

This program can be used to address the following educational standards:

A. National Council for Social Studies Standards

Culture: Learners can:

- ❑ Explain how people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference may interpret information and experiences.

Time, Continuity and Change: Learners can:

- ❑ Identify and use processes important to reconstructing and reinterpreting the past.

Power, Authority and Governance: Learners can:

- ❑ Describe and analyze the role of technology in communications, transportation, information processing, weapons development or other areas as it contributes to or helps resolve conflicts.

Science, Technology and Society: Learners can:

- ❑ Show through specific examples how science and technology have changed people's perceptions of the social and natural world.
- ❑ Describe examples in which values, beliefs, and attitudes have been influenced by new scientific and technological knowledge.

Global Connections: Learners can:

- ❑ Describe and analyze the effects of changing technologies on the global community.

B. NCTE/IRA Standards for the English Language Arts

3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.

7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

C. ISTE/NETS National Education Technology Standards Projects

Performance Indicators for Grades 9-12: Students will:

- ❑ Identify capabilities and limitations of contemporary and emerging technology resources and assess the potential of these systems and services to address personal, lifelong learning, and workplace needs.
- ❑ Analyze advantages and disadvantages of widespread use and reliance on technology in the workplace and in society as a whole.
- ❑ Routinely and efficiently use online information resources to meet needs for collaboration, research, publication, communication, and productivity.

CNN's Coverage of the War in Iraq: Teaching Activities

Newsgathering and Reporting

A First Draft of History

- ❑ Direct students to Jamie McIntyre's quotation referring to journalism as a first draft of history in [Chapter 10](#) of the Case Study. Then, discuss as a class the role of the journalists in providing a first rough draft of history. Ask: According to Senior Pentagon Correspondent Jamie McIntyre, what is the significance of the role of the reporter in wartime? What role do you think journalists play in recording history? How does the work of a journalist compare with the work of an historian?
- ❑ Organize students into small groups. Direct students to CNN's in-dept site on the [Special Report: War in Iraq](#). Assign each group one week of the war, from the week of March 17, the week combat began, to the week of April 27, the week the war was declared to be over. Have student groups read through information compiled for each day of their assigned week. Ask students to examine both the facts and figures as presented in the various categories, such as the Ground War, Casualties, POWs/MIAs, Humanitarian Relief and Strategy, and On the Scene reports provided by the correspondents in the field. As students read through the day-to-day coverage of the war, have them consider whether or not journalists have captured a historical record of what happened in the war in Iraq.

Explain to students that one of the roles of historians is to make choices about what information is most significant and meaningful. Challenge student groups to identify the most significant stories or events that occurred during their assigned week. Inform students that they should be prepared to provide the rationale for their choices. Have each group present its selection of stories and events to the class.

- ❑ Organize students into small groups and instruct group members to assume the role of historians. Based on the content from the [Case Study](#), as well as the CNN.com [Special Report: War in Iraq](#) site and other multimedia resources, have student groups create outlines for a War in Iraq section for a textbook that will be read by students five years from now. Instruct students to consider the following questions before they begin developing their outlines:
 1. How many pages should be dedicated to this section: a few pages, a chapter, or perhaps an entire book?
 2. How should the "rough draft of history" provided by the CNN journalists be interpreted?
 3. What information should be included in the outline? What information should be left out? What questions will need to be asked before making these decisions?
 4. How might time and perspective alter how events are recorded?

Encourage groups to share their outlines with the class and explain the methods they used to come to their conclusions and the challenges they faced in completing this task. Have students predict what their own children might someday learn about these events.

B. Stories Left to Tell

Refer students to [Chapter 6](#) of the Case Study to learn about CNN's Baghdad bureau and its role in covering the war in Iraq. Then, point out that there are still stories about Iraq that CNN journalists think need to be told.

Instruct students to comb online, print and television resources to identify the stories related to post-war Iraq and the wars that are being covered in the news. As students share their findings with the class, list their responses on the board. When the list is complete, have students identify common themes among the stories and discuss the following questions: To what audiences are the journalists' reports geared? Why do you think specific news organizations chose to cover

these stories? Do these stories provide balanced coverage? Following the discussion, have students draw upon their research to generate a list of stories related to the war and post-war Iraq that they think still need to be covered and write this list on the board.

Next, share the following quote made by CNN Baghdad Bureau Chief Jane Arraf during her interview for the Case Study:

When I first came in 1991 it was like I had started reading a novel, and I had to stick it out to see how it ended, and it hasn't ended yet. Now, Iraq isn't easy to cover because there is physical risk; there is danger here. There are immense logistical difficulties, a lack of communications, a lack of telephones, the curfews. But, it is a million times easier to cover (now)... . People will talk to you. The problem isn't that there is too little information; the problem is really that there is too much information.

Then, have students imagine that they are the CNN Baghdad bureau chief. Challenge them to prioritize the stories not yet told in terms of their importance. After students prioritize the stories, have them identify the different angles and perspectives that need to be addressed to provide balanced coverage of each story. Then, during the following months, have students monitor different media at least once a week to analyze and assess the coverage of these news stories.

C. A Multimedia War

Ask students to list the various sources of information on the war in Iraq such as cable television, network or local television, newspapers, news magazines, the Internet, or radio. Ask: Where did you prefer to get your information? Why?

Next, share the following quotes on the sources of information on the war with the students: Direct students to [Chapter 10](#), section D to access Rick Davis's quote on journalism as a first draft of history.

Next, hold a class discussion on the messages of the quote in the context of how students accessed their information about the war. Organize students into small groups and assign each group one of the major stories or events of the war. Then, have each group investigate the coverage of that event across a variety of media, including television, newspapers, news magazines, the Internet and radio. Using the Web sites below, as well as additional multimedia resources, have student groups list on a chart the strengths and weaknesses of each media for depicting the story or event. After groups present their charts to the class, challenge students to write a proposal for a course called Multimedia War 101, in which participants learn how to research information about a war. The proposal should include a justification for the inclusion of the various types of media in the course. It should also include recommendations for how to evaluate students' understanding at the end of the course.

LINKS:

<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2003/iraq/>

CNN.com: War in Iraq

<http://www.world-newspapers.com/iraq.html>

World Newspapers

<http://www.time.com/time/covers/1101030331/>

Time Magazine: Gulf War II

The Media and the Military

A. The Relationship—Then and Now

- Have students draw upon the information in the Case Study to discuss the concept of freedom of the press and identify whether restrictions have ever been placed upon the media in covering past conflicts. Ask students: Should there be any restrictions placed on the press in its coverage of war?
- Organize students into small groups and assign one of the following conflicts to each group: the American Revolution, Civil War, WWI, WWII, Korean War, Vietnam War, Persian Gulf War, Bosnia/Kosovo and Afghanistan. Direct students to the Web sites below to gain more information about the coverage and reporting of wars throughout U.S. history. Student groups should seek answers to the following questions:
 - What role did the media play in this conflict?
 - What restrictions, if any, were placed on the media during the conflict?
 - Did the coverage of the war affect the course or the outcome of the war?

After student groups present their information to the class, pose the following questions for a class discussion:

- Why do you think the U.S. government places restrictions on the media?
- Do you agree with government censorship of the media during wartime? Why or why not?
- Based on your research, what conclusions can you draw regarding the relationships among the media, the U.S. government and the military during previous U.S. conflicts?

Distribute copies of the Pentagon Guidelines for Embedded Journalists to student groups. The guidelines can be found at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Feb2003/d20030228pag.pdf>. Have students compare the guidelines for the media in the war in Iraq with those governing previous conflicts. Ask: What are the similarities and differences between government regulation of the media in the war in Iraq and in previous ones? Do you agree with the parameters placed upon the media during the war in Iraq? Why or why not?

- Refer students to the [Case Study](#) to gain insight into how CNN executives and correspondents reflected on the interaction with the military and the government in this conflict. Then have students comb the Web resources below to learn more about the relationship between the media and the military before and during the war in Iraq. In light of these various perspectives, have students discuss the coverage of the war in Iraq as compared with 20th century conflicts. Based on the readings, students should generate a list of possible reasons for the changes in those relationships over time and then assess the media's coverage of the war in Iraq from the perspective of both the media and the military.
- Pose the following wrap-up questions to the students: Should the U.S. government and the military continue the policy of embedding reporters with the troops? Why or why not? Should the news media participate in the embedding process if it is offered the opportunity in the next conflict? Why or why not? What are the risks and benefits for both the media and the military to have greater access in the form of embedding? What other ways, aside from embedding, could the military provide more access or more information to the media? What do you predict for the future relationship between the media and the military?

LINKS:

<http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/01/07/isaacson.jordan.letter/>

CNN executives: Let reporters cover the war

<http://www.newseum.org/warstories/index.htm>

Newseum: A comprehensive history of media wartime coverage.

http://www.usnewsclassroom.com/resources/activities/war_reporting/index.html
100 Years of Reporting from the Frontlines

<http://www.cjr.org/year/99/5/war.asp>
Columbia Journalism Review: This Warring Century
On wartime media coverage, from WWI through the conflict in Kosovo

<http://www.brook.edu/comm/events/20030617.htm>
Assessing Media Coverage of the War in Iraq

<http://www.globaled.org/curriculum/cm6.html>
International Conflict and the Media: The Press and the Military

<http://www.brook.edu/dybdocroot/comm/transcripts/20011031press.htm>
The Role of the Press: Lessons of Wars Past

<http://www.cjr.org/year/91/3/debriefing-thepool.asp>
First-hand account of Gulf War press pool reporting, in diary form

<http://www.tvweek.com/topstorys/021703greatermedia.html>
Electronic Media: Greater Access

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/media/jan-june03/embed_4-21.html
PBS.org: The Media's War

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/media/jan-june03/embeds_04-01.html
PBS.org: War Stories

http://www.americasvoices.org/archives2003/SchneiderG/SchneiderG_032803.htm
Embedded Bias and the War Casualty of Truth

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=A36362-2003Mar27¬Found=true>
Washington Post: Embedded in Controversy

<http://www.americanpressinstitute.org/content/971.cfm?id=971>
Coverage debates started before war wound down

B. Covering Future Conflicts

- ❑ Have small groups of students review the [Case Study](#). Then, have each group identify the main points made about providing live coverage of the war and embedding. After each group presents its findings, ask students: Why do you think the U.S. government chose to allow the reporters to be embedded with the troops in the war in Iraq? What are the benefits and drawbacks of embedding the reporters for the U.S. government, the military, the media and the viewers or readers?
- ❑ Point out to students that the U.S. military currently has a presence in the following "hot spots": Korea, Liberia, Afghanistan and the Philippines. Divide students into four groups. Instruct each group to conduct research to learn about the history and status of one of these four conflicts. Also, have each group note the U.S. government's position on the conflict, the role of the U.S. military in the region and the type of military action that might take place (e.g., urban combat, guerilla warfare, open desert, overt vs. covert military actions, etc.). Then, have groups draw upon their knowledge of CNN's coverage of the war in Iraq and its

experience with embedding to determine whether the U.S. military or the media should allow reporters to be embedded with U.S. troops to cover these conflicts. Ask groups to identify the logistical and political challenges that embedding might pose for the U.S. government, the media and the U.S. military. Have groups create 3 to 4 scenarios for how a conflict might play out in the region and how embedded reporters could fit into those scenarios. After each group delivers a formal presentation of its findings, including an explanation of the best and worst case scenarios of embedding related to the conflict, ask the class: Do you think the U.S. government should allow reporters to be embedded with the troops during this conflict? Why or why not?

Based on the groups' responses, have students create a list of criteria for both the U.S. military and the U.S. media that they think each might use to determine whether or not the military or the media would embrace the embedding process in future conflicts.

Technology

A. Technology of Covering War

- Explain to students that, throughout U.S. history, reporters have brought the news of war from the front lines to the American people. As a class, brainstorm a list of historical conflicts, including the American Revolution, War of 1812, Civil War, Spanish-American War, WW I, WW II, Korean War, Vietnam War, 1991 Gulf War, Bosnia/Kosovo, Afghanistan, and the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. Assign pairs or small groups of students one of these conflicts and have them research the technology that the reporters of the time had or have available to them (e.g., pony express, printing press, telegraph, photography, radio, video, satellite, Internet, etc.). Students should consider the strengths and limitations of each type of technology for reporting the news from the front lines of battle. Ask: How might the technology available at the time of the conflict have influenced the type of reporting available? How might the technology have affected the course of the conflict? How did the technology affect the information made available to the people? How informed was the American public at the time of the conflict? How informed do you think the public should be with regard to military operations? What information do you think the public should have about military operations? Explain.
- Refer students to the following quote by CNN President of Newsgathering Eason Jordan:

The technology changes every day. You know, there are dramatic improvements, and I think this war was better covered from a technology perspective than ever before. But if there was a war tomorrow, you would see leaps forward as far as the quality of the images...And it's important for us to continue being on the cutting edge of technology to ensure that we're not outsmarted in that regard...Because it's not just about technology. It's about reporting and what ends up being made available to the viewer at home.

Discuss with students the meaning of Jordan's quotation. In light of these comments and the improvements in the technology of war reporting from the 1991 Gulf War to the most recent war in Iraq, have students propose improvements to existing technologies, or even brainstorm potential inventions, that could assist future reporters in their jobs and improve the quality of and access to news and information.

- Challenge students to imagine they are correspondents covering a conflict ten years from now. Have each student write an [On the Scene](#) news report from the front lines of that conflict. In their reports, have students describe the technologies used to file their reports and how that technology might affect the reporting, as well as how the audience experiences and learns about the conflict. Ask: With the advent of these new technologies, how do you think television coverage of future wars will be impacted? What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of technology in war coverage by the news media?

LINKS:

<http://www.newseum.org/warstories/index.htm>

Newseum: War Stories

http://www.usnewsclassroom.com/resources/activities/war_reporting/index.html

USNewsClassroom.com: Reporting from the Frontlines

<http://www.globaled.org/curriculum/cm0.html>

American Forum: International Conflict and the Media

<http://www.globaled.org/curriculum/cm5a.html>

American Forum: Freedom of the Press and National Security—The Early Years

<http://www.privateline.com/war/videophone.html>

Videotelephone Technology

<http://www.inmarsat.com>

Inmarsat

http://www.infoworld.com/article/03/05/30/22OPeditor_1.html?development

Technology at War

B. Battlefield Medicine

During the war in Iraq, U.S. Navy doctors stationed with the Marines staffed a mobile surgical unit situated close to the front lines of combat. This was the first time that surgical units have ever been this close to the front lines, allowing patients to get critical care more quickly, thereby increasing their chances of survival. CNN Medical Correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta was embedded, and was even occasionally pressed into service with the Devil Docs mobile surgical unit in Iraq.

Share with your students the following excerpt from an interview with Dr. Gupta, where he describes the genesis and operation of the Forward Resuscitative Surgical Systems, an innovative approach to battlefield medicine used by the Devil Docs:

Not since Vietnam have doctors, nurses and medical personnel in general been placed so close the front lines. If you actually looked [at] a global view of a Vietnam battlefield, it was a very compressed battlefield on the allied side. The distance from the front to the rear was not that far. If a helicopter had to transport somebody from the front to the rear, they could do it in a short amount of time. During the 1991 Gulf War, the battlefield had started to become very spread out, and very quickly moving. So, all of a sudden, it became very challenging to get the injured from the front lines back to the more definitive care in the rear of the battlefield. So, the simple, fairly brilliant, idea was, well, if you can't take them back, let's take some of the resources from the back, forward. And that was the genesis of Forward Resuscitative Surgical Systems (FRSS), which was staffed by Naval doctors and nurses, called the Devil Docs. They supported the Devil Dogs, which is the colloquial name for the Marines, moving these fully equipped operating rooms. Table, lights, anesthesia machine, surgeons, all the instruments, all the gear, all that sort of stuff can break down in less than an hour and set back up in less than an hour and not hinder the movement of the troops. This was really important, but it also meant that these doctors were possibly going to be fired upon while actually performing operations. I think that no other place on a battlefield do you see such a juxtaposition of people actually being fired upon while they are trying to save other people's lives. We saw that sort of stuff take place. That was the risk of an FRSS. I don't know what the numbers will show in terms of how effective it was, but from what I saw it seemed to be very effective. There were definitely people who would have died otherwise, if they hadn't had the FRSS.

Point out to students that, over the years, medical military personnel have sought many ways to reduce battlefield fatalities. Have students conduct research to learn about the evolution of military medicine during the last 150 years. Divide your class into six groups and assign each group one of the following conflicts: the Civil War, WWI, WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Pose the following questions to guide students' research:

1. What weapons were used during this war?
2. What types of injuries did doctors treat during this conflict?
3. What were the leading causes of death in this war?

4. What were the roles of doctors and other medical personnel during this war?
5. What medicines and medical technologies were available during this conflict?
6. How were patients evacuated?
7. What types of hospital facilities were available?
8. How did changes in warfare impact the evolution of military medicine?
9. What medical and technological innovations enhanced the delivery of medical care on the front lines?

After groups present their findings, have the class create a timeline that depicts the key events in the evolution of military medicine. Then, ask students: How do today's soldiers benefit from the advances in military medicine? How has the evolution of military medicine impacted the practice of civilian medicine? Discuss.

LINKS:

<http://www.cnn.com/CNN/Programs/presents/index.devil.docs.html>

CNN Presents: Devil Docs

<http://www.uihealthcare.com/depts/medmuseum/wallexhibits/ems/military.html>

Medical Museum: The Development of Emergency Medical Services

<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/awc-medi.htm#history>

Military Medical History

<http://www.armymedicine.army.mil/default2.htm>

Army Medical Department – AMEDD

<http://www.civilwarmed.org/>

National Museum of Civil War Medicine

<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/awc-medi.htm#history>

World War I

<http://home.att.net/~steinert/>

World War II: Combat Medic

CNN's Coverage of the War in Iraq: Video

VIDEO

The following CNN video clips have been cleared for your use in the classroom. They were chosen to illustrate aspects of the Case Study. You may use the clips as they relate to the individual chapters in the Case Study or as they relate to the Teaching Activities.

Note: Please keep in mind that some of these videos depict live coverage of war and may contain language and images that are not appropriate for all students. Please preview.

[Video Field Gear 101](#)

Summary: CNN's Renay San Miguel reports on the technology and equipment used in the field to broadcast a war.

Discussion Questions:

1. To what field gear equipment does the video refer?
2. Approximately how long does it take to set up the equipment?
3. How does the videophone work?
4. In what previous conflicts has the videophone technology been used?
5. What do you think are some potential benefits and drawbacks to using this technology?

Related Case Study Chapters:

[3](#), [4](#), [7](#)

Related Teaching Activities:

- [Newsgathering and Reporting: A Multimedia War](#)
- [Technology: The Technology of Covering War](#)

[Walt Rodgers: Retrospective](#)

Summary: This compilation of CNN embedded reporter Walt Rodgers illustrates the live frontline reporting that made journalistic history in this war in Iraq.

Discussion Questions:

1. As you watch the video, describe the images that you see. What is your reaction to those images?
2. How do you account for the varied degrees of quality of the images?
3. What types of technologies do you think were responsible for each of the images that you see in the video clip?
4. Based on this short video, what inferences can you make regarding the experiences of an embedded reporter in the war in Iraq?
5. Why does Walt Rodgers describe his live footage as historic television and journalism? What is the significance of the live reports from the frontline?
6. What do you think audiences learned from these live reports?
7. How does a retrospective compare with the live reports as they occurred in real time? How do time and perspective affect how the news media presents the events of war?
8. What do you think are some potential benefits and drawbacks of live reporting from the front lines for reporters, producers, the audience and the military?

Related Case Study Chapters:

[1](#), [2](#), [4](#), [7](#), [8](#), [10](#)

Related Teaching Activities:

- ❑ [Newsgathering and Reporting: A First Draft of History](#)
- ❑ [Newsgathering and Reporting: A Multimedia War](#)
- ❑ [Media and the Military: The Relationship – Then and Now](#)
- ❑ [Technology: The Technology of Covering War](#)

Road to Baghdad

Summary: CNN's Michael Schuller reports on some lessons learned on the road to Baghdad for the first week of April.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the stories that were included in this week-in-review video clip? What is your reaction to the topics and how they were depicted in pictures?
2. Why do you think that CNN writers and producers selected these stories for a week-in-review video? What stories from the first week in April were left out of this clip?
3. In what ways do the words and images you see in this video reflect the historic television journalism made in the war in Iraq?
4. What did you learn from this video? If you could make a week-in-review video for one of the weeks of the war in Iraq, what stories would you include? How would you relay those stories?
5. How do you think this report, compiled at the end of a week's events, compares with the events as they were reported live?
6. Using this video clip as an example, do you think journalism is a first rough draft of history? Why or why not?

Related Case Study Chapters:

[4](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#)

Related Teaching Activities:

- ❑ [Newsgathering and Reporting: A First Draft of History](#)
- ❑ [Newsgathering and Reporting: A Multimedia War](#)
- ❑ [Media and the Military: The Relationship – Then and Now](#)
- ❑ [Technology: The Technology of Covering War](#)

CNN's Coverage of the War in Iraq: Web Sites and Resources

Web Sites

General

- ❑ **CNN.com Special Report: War in Iraq**
<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2003/iraq/>
- ❑ **Time Magazine: Gulf War II**
<http://www.time.com/time/covers/1101030331/>
- ❑ **Iraq Newspapers and News Sites in English**
<http://www.world-newspapers.com/iraq.html>
- ❑ **A Brookings Iraq Series Briefing: Assessing Media Coverage of the War in Iraq: Press Reports, Pentagon Rules, and Lessons for the Future**
<http://www.brook.edu/comm/events/20030617.htm>
- ❑ **Newseum: A comprehensive history of media wartime coverage.**
<http://www.newseum.org/warstories/index.htm>
- ❑ **USNewsClassroom.com: Reporting from the Frontlines**
http://www.usnewsclassroom.com/resources/activities/war_reporting/index.html

Chapter 1: Keeping the Journalists Safe

- ❑ **AKE, Limited**
Andrew Kain Enterprises, Ltd. (AKE) provides consultation and training to companies operating in hostile regions. This Web site provides more information about the company's philosophy, products and courses.
<http://www.akegroup.com/new/>
- ❑ **Charter for the Safety of Journalists War Zones or Dangerous Areas**
This charter, written by Reporters without Borders, outlines the principles by which news media executives should approach their reporters working in dangerous locations.
<http://www.rsf.org/IMG/doc-1288.pdf>

Chapter 2: All the Right Places, All the Right People

- ❑ **CNN executives: Let reporters cover war**
In this letter written by CNN executives, former CNN President Walter Issacson and current President of Newsgathering Eason Jordan make a case for why embedding reporters with the military would be a good thing for the military, the press and the public.
<http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/01/07/isaacson.jordan.letter/index.html>
- ❑ **Iraq: Pentagon Starts Embedding Reporters With Troops In Effort To 'Tell Army Story'**
This Radio Free Europe report describes the embedding process.
<http://www.defense-aerospace.com/data/features/data/fe280/>
- ❑ **DOD Ground Rules for Embedded Reporters in Iraq**
A document from the Department of Defense Office of Public Affairs with outlines the policies and procedures for embedding reporters with the military.
<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Feb2003/d20030228pag.pdf>

❑ **Embedding Release for Iraq 2003**

The release that journalists wishing to embed must sign.

<http://www.journalism.org/resources/tools/ethics/wartime/embedding.asp?from=print>

❑ **Exclusive: U.S. Military Document Outlines War Coverage**

Editor and Publisher magazine provides commentary on the Department of Defense document that outlines the embedding process.

http://editorandpublisher.com/editorandpublisher/headlines/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1817934

❑ **CNN.com: On the Scene**

CNN.com's in-depth coverage of the war in Iraq featured this map of CNN journalists in the Gulf.

<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2003/iraq/otsc/index.html>

Chapter 4: Tools of the Trade

❑ **Video telephone Technology**

This article provides a description of videophone technology used since the conflict in Afghanistan in 2001.

<http://www.privateline.com/war/videophone.html>

❑ **Inmarsat**

This site describes the Inmarsat satellite technology.

<http://www.inmarsat.com>

Chapter 6: Live From Baghdad

❑ **Nic Robertson: 'We didn't want to push our luck'**

<http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/03/22/otsc.irq.robertson/index.html>

❑ **Behind the Scenes with Nic Robertson**

http://www.cnn.com/services/presents.iraq.opk/cnnopk_behindthescenes.html

Robertson shares his own thoughts of the exodus, leaving Iraq for neighboring Jordan.

❑ **CNN's bull's-eye view Sole U.S. staffer left in Baghdad (Robertson)**

<http://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/story/68550p-63796c.html>

❑ **Jane Arraf on life and work in Baghdad**

http://www.screenindia.com/fullstory.php?content_id=1686

❑ **Rym Brahimi: 'Strange peacefulness' in Baghdad**

<http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/03/20/otsc.irq.brahimi/index.html>

❑ **Complete On the Scene archive by reporter**

<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2003/iraq/otsc/archive.html>

Chapter 7: Reporting from the Front Lines

❑ **Behind the Scenes Archive**

<http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/btsc/archive/>

- ❑ **Fighting sandstorms and friendly fire**
<http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/03/25/btsc.irq.vinci/index.html>
- ❑ **Quick decisions on the battlefield**
<http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/03/25/btsc.irq.rodgers/index.html>
- ❑ **Sanjay Gupta: Docs grasp war through wounded**
<http://www.cnni.co.uk/2003/WORLD/meast/04/04/otsc.irq.gupta/>
- ❑ **CNN Presents: Devil Docs**
<http://www.cnn.com/CNN/Programs/presents/index.devil.docs.html>
- ❑ **Phillips: Operations aboard the USS Lincoln**
<http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/03/20/otsc.irq.phillips/index.html>
- ❑ **Christiane Amanpour on the role of the journalist**
<http://www.la.utexas.edu/chenry/usme/sp2001/roles/msg00067.html>
- ❑ **Walt Rodgers: Humbled by war reporting**
<http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/05/02/btsc.irq.rodgers/index.html>
- ❑ **CNN Presents: War Stories**
<http://www.cnn.com/CNN/Programs/presents/index.war.stories.html>
- ❑ **Martin Savidge: 'Packing for war'**
<http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/02/13/btsc.savidge.provisions/index.html>

Chapter 9 : Getting the Story Right

- ❑ **DOD Ground Rules for Embedded Reporters in Iraq**
<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Feb2003/d20030228pag.pdf>
- ❑ **Exclusive: U.S. Military Document Outlines War Coverage**
http://editorandpublisher.com/editorandpublisher/headlines/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1817934

Chapter 10: Looking Back, Looking Ahead

A. The Role of the Journalist in Wartime

- ❑ **Reporter's role in the war zone**
<http://jcomm.uoregon.edu/~jupshaw/crit/itagaki.html>
- ❑ **Caught in the crossfire: broadcasting in wartime**
<http://www.opendemocracy.net/debates/article-8-92-1312.jsp>
- ❑ **Existing Code of Ethics**
The Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, believes the duty of journalists is to serve the truth.
<http://www.bild.net/navigatUSA.htm>
- ❑ **The Journalist's Toolbox: Ethics**
<http://www.journaliststoolbox.com/newswriting/ethics.html>

- ❑ **Embedded Reporter's Role In Army Unit's Actions Questioned by Military**
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=A28385-2003Jun24¬Found=true>
- ❑ **Poynter Online: The Journalist/Physician: Can He Be Both?**
<http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=36&aid=28574>

C. Evaluating the Embedding Process

- ❑ **CNN.com: Wolf Blitzer Reports - Skepticism of embedding unfulfilled**
<http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/05/22/wbr.embedding/index.html>
- ❑ **Embeds and Unilaterals**
<http://slate.msn.com/id/2082412/>
- ❑ **Newseum: War Stories**
<http://www.newseum.org/warstories/index.htm>
- ❑ **War, Propaganda and the Media**
<http://www.globalissues.org/HumanRights/Media/Military.asp>
- ❑ **The Guardian: Military accused of mistreating reporters**
<http://media.guardian.co.uk/Print/0,3858,4638309,00.html>

D. On Journalism as a First Draft of History

- ❑ **WashingtonPost.com: A 'First Rough Draft'**
<http://www.udel.edu/global/agenda/2003/student/readings/terrorintelpress.html>
- ❑ **What is Journalism? Who is a journalist?**
<http://www.journalism.org/resources/education/forums/ccj/forum1/default.asp>

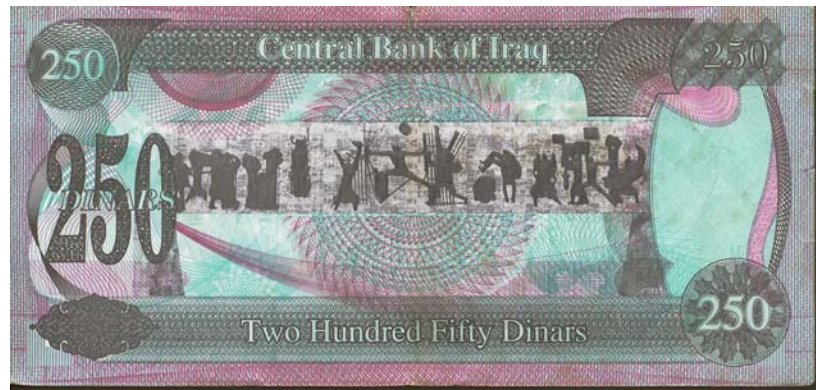
E. Final Thoughts

- ❑ **Covering News in Wartime**
Ideas and strategies for handling the special challenges wartime presents for journalists.
<http://www.journalism.org/resources/tools/ethics/wartime/print.asp>
- ❑ **THE REAL-TIME WAR -TV: A Missed Opportunity**
<http://www.cjr.org/year/03/3/friedman.asp>
- ❑ **THE REAL-TIME WAR -Defining News In The Middle East**
<http://www.cjr.org/year/03/3/smith.asp>
- ❑ **Assessing Media Coverage of the War in Iraq**
A Brookings Iraq Series Briefing
<http://www.brook.edu/comm/events/20030617.htm>
- ❑ **Dispatches From Media Boot Camp**
<http://slate.msn.com/id/2073993/entry/2074127/>
- ❑ **The Media's War**
PBS: Online News Hour interview with Eason Jordan regarding the news that CNN held stories to keep journalists there.
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/media/jan-june03/cnn_4-15.html

Resources

Iraqi Pre-War Currency:

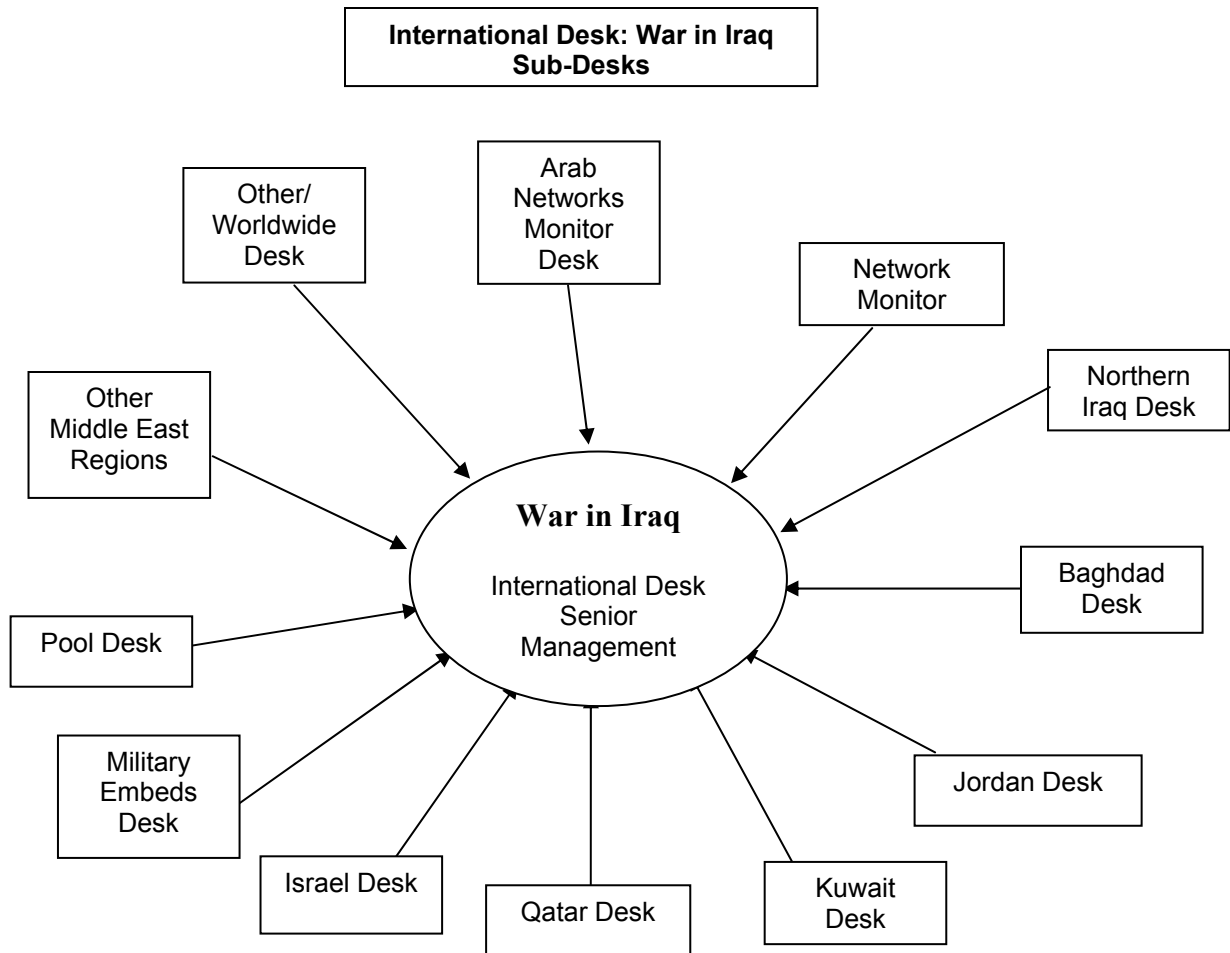
-A 250 Iraqi Dinar note.
This side depicts
Liberation Square (which
was know as Midan Tahrir,
before the U.S. went in to
Iraq). The bill was
designed by the famous
Iraqi artist Jawad Saleem.



On the other side is
Saddam Hussein's
face. According to
CNN's Rym Brahimi,
U.S. authorities in Iraq
had to reprint this note
because there is a
lack of currency.

We figured out that there needed to be overall management for the international desk...we identified areas that generally needed to be sub-desks for the people in the field.

Jane Maxwell – senior vice president, CNN Special Events



CNN's Coverage of the War in Iraq: Teaching Activities

Glossary

Beta Videotape

A videotape format widely used for television broadcast production.

Embed

Term used to describe reporters who were attached to a military unit during coverage of the war in Iraq.

Feed

To distribute video or audio from its source to a receiver. "Feed" is also commonly used to describe the video or audio itself.

IFB

The earpiece that anchors and reporters wear to hear instructions from directors or producers while on camera.

Monitor

A device that accepts video signals and displays them on a screen.

Package

A production term that refers to a completed television or video news segment.

Router

A hardware device that receives incoming data and allows a user to determine the route for that data to travel to its intended destination.

Satellite Phones

Phones that connect callers via satellite. Satellite phones give users a global alternative to sometimes-unreliable digital and analog connections.

Shock and awe

Part of the Pentagon's battle plan for Iraq, which was based on a concept developed at the National Defense University. "Shock and Awe" focuses on the psychological destruction of the enemy's will to fight rather than the physical destruction of his military forces.

Unilateral

An independent war correspondent, not officially sanctioned by the military.

Video Switcher

A device that takes in multiple video signals and combines them in different ways. It is used to cut or dissolve between cameras and other video inputs.

CNN's Coverage of the War in Iraq: A Case Study

Introduction

In the 1991 Persian Gulf War, CNN broke new ground in its extensive documentation of the first "real time" television war. The Pentagon presented the media with a unique opportunity in advance of the second conflict in the region: Journalists were invited to join the troops in a process called embedding. It was not a new concept, but the technology that allowed the embedded journalists, often called "embeds," to report live from the battlefield made for pioneering coverage.



For six months before the conflict began, CNN teams organized everything from equipment and safety training to getting all of the right people to the right places, both at CNN's Atlanta headquarters and on the scene in the Middle East. Writers and producers delved into research to pull together the information that would put military equipment, troop movements and background information into an easily presentable context.

On March 21, 2003, two days after the official declaration of war, CNN broke the story of the beginning of the U.S. "shock and awe" campaign. The months of planning rapidly shifted into newsgathering and production operations. As embedded reporters tracked the activities of the troops on the ground and sea, correspondents in CNN's domestic and international bureaus and producers in the CNN's Atlanta newsroom helped tie the individual accounts together and present audiences with up-to-the-minute war coverage 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

America's second war in the Persian Gulf was, for CNN, another opportunity for many firsts. Satellite technologies relayed live footage of an advance on the Iraqi capital. Videophones and night scope cameras captured images of bursting shells as coalition troops attacked and came under attack on live television.

The following case study tells the story of how CNN brought the war in Iraq to its global audience. It includes commentary from the executives who met with generals and heads of state to pave the way for CNN journalists. Engineers describe the key technologies CNN used to cover this war, and correspondents who had become artillery targets while reporting describe how they were able to tell the stories from the front lines. Through this account, the connection between the journalist and the battlefield comes to life, and the role of documenting a first draft of history is redefined.

Chapter 1: Keeping the Journalists Safe

War reporting is a dangerous job. You either want to be there or you don't. If you don't or are hesitating, don't go. But if you do find yourself in a war zone, there are many things you can learn before getting assigned. And it's not just how to dodge bullets. Self-survival in hostile environments spans a whole range of subjects from medical to outdoor survival.

Brent Sadler, CNN correspondent

A. Protecting CNN Journalists

Eason Jordan, chief news executive and newsgathering president for the CNN News Group, underscores that the top priority for CNN was to protect its people in the field:

JORDAN: We knew going into the war that it would be one of the most dangerous conflicts that we had ever covered, for a lot of reasons. Now more than ever, journalists are actually being targeted in conflict zones where it used to be that the danger was just being in the wrong place at the wrong time and being a sort of unintentional victim. Now, more and more, we're seeing journalists actually targeted and killed. So that was a big concern for us – especially given the profile that CNN has. And those fears turned out to be justified – because depending on how you count them, as many as 18 journalists got killed covering this war and that's about 1 in 70 who went to cover it [that] ended up getting killed. So those are awful odds. We at one time had over 200 people there and we didn't lose anybody, which to me was miraculous – but we had some very, very close calls. A couple of people who actually got shot, but not killed – and somebody who took a bullet in a flak jacket. We did a lot to try to heighten the odds of the survival of the people in the field. So the first and greatest concern we had going into the war was the concern and safety of our people.



Bullet-proof vests used by CNN journalists during the war.

B. AKE

AKE, Ltd. is a private security training firm in Great Britain. Started in 1991, AKE was the first company to provide war-training courses solely for the media. The company's instructors and operators have a British Special Forces background. AKE provides constant advice and risk assessment for all areas of CNN. In key hazardous areas, AKE provides security professionals to work directly with CNN's field teams. The relationship between AKE and CNN continues extensively to this date. Tim Crockett is AKE's on-staff representative at CNN. He worked alongside CNN correspondents in Afghanistan and became a full-time coordinator for all of the training of CNN staff for the conflict in Iraq. In this interview, Crockett provides insight into the role that AKE played in training CNN staff and in protecting CNN journalists in the field:

□ Training

CROCKETT: The training and the principles of the media and of Special Forces are planted on similarities between the two jobs. We are used to working in small teams, in dangerous environments, and our primary role within Special Forces was to report information, and that is exactly the same as a news team. So, we applied the same principles, but geared it towards newsgathering.

Fifty percent of the course is medical training and fifty percent is war zone training. The medical training is not just what you'd learn on a normal first aid course, because one of the facts about

working abroad is that you're not going to have an ambulance show up in ten minutes with definitive medical care being 20 minutes down the line. They are life-saving skills to help their colleagues should the worst-case scenario happen.

The other fifty percent of the course is situational stuff like bombs, reaction to fire, what to look for, sort of where to take cover if someone is firing at you, how to read a situation, how to deal with the cultural things so you don't get yourself into the problem in the first place, and the reaction of what to do at a check point, all the sort of preparations of how to stop yourself from getting into that situation.

From that we also teach them how to cover a riot or civil disturbance and how they can protect themselves if they get caught up in the crowd or how they can cover the stories, still get the pictures that they want, but without being in danger. If your crowd suddenly turns, and you are caught in the middle of it, there's a chance you could get injured. So, [we provide training in] how to prevent yourself from getting into that sort of incident.

Because chemical and biological weapons training is a very specialized subject, we actually are in association with another company called NewTek, whom we have brought on to do all the training for CNN. They run a 2-day chemical and biological weapon course about the suits and the masks. Again, everyone that went into the region during the war had to have this training. They had to have the suits, and we had a guy from [NewTek] in Kuwait to do the training and to monitor the whole situation. He had a software package, and I had the same back here, so that if a weapon had gone off, we could then predict the downwind hazard, sort out if it was a chemical or biological weapon that was being released.

□ **Protecting CNN staff in the field**

CROCKETT: Guys like myself and Special Forces had to be brought in to the company. We had two guys that were embedded. One was with Walt Rodgers, and one was with Martin Savidge. They acted as drivers and advisors. Moving fast across the desert, they had certain skills with desert driving and how to deal in that environment, which is a skill in itself, used time and time again while we were out there. But then, through the possibility of the vehicle breaking down and the military moving on and having to leave them, or getting to the point [of] writing stories and separating themselves, they would need that safety and support with them as well. So, they were drivers, cameramen, medical guys, all the way through...there were many halts through the whole from start to finish.

There were several incidents when we had to talk to one of our guys who was with Walt Rodgers. They were stopped on the side of the road while they were videotaping an Iraqi convoy being attacked by the U.S. And all of a sudden they found this Iraqi soldier beside the road that was still alive who needed medical care. So they started giving him medical attention and Walt Rodgers was filming and it was live on CNN.



Tim Crockett in a Chemsuit

There were several things that were put in place to help (staff in the field). We provided them with lightweight body armor and helmets for protection.... Lighter than most body armor because...it's made from Dyneema, which is a plastic, which gives you protection. And it's cut slightly different so it's easier for wearing in and out of vehicles. And as Brent Sadler's teammate Maria Fleet said, she got hit by a bullet fragment and she was wearing this at the time and it saved her, so she's more than happy that the system works.

□ **Monitoring CNN's staff in the field**

I was available 24-7 to cope with situations, to monitor things that weren't necessarily being monitored from a news aspect, but from a safety aspect, we have to keep an eye on them. And then I had to advise the people at the desk, the management team. We have to pull our guys out of here or we don't want anyone going there, just staying one step ahead of the game.

We've got our analysts pulling all the information from their sources. They were doing a lot of interviewing of Iraqis that were in exile, to get all the information beforehand. We have links with other industries, past relationships with the military, and we had a lot of people that were out there working with the military that were giving us information right before an incident or right after – so we were getting another angle. We were feeding that in when it wasn't sensitive to help with the newsgathering. And then again, it was just purely doing everything from a safety point of view.

Discussion Questions

1. What safety concerns do news executives like Eason Jordan have for their journalists who cover war?
2. What dangers do you think journalists face when covering stories in war zones? What knowledge or skills do you think journalists would need to work in dangerous areas?
3. What are some of the ways that CNN has tried to increase the odds of survival for its journalists?
4. If you were a journalist, would you ever consider covering a story from a hostile region? Why or why not?

Chapter 2: All the Right Places, All the Right People

We're in more places than anyone else on any given day. The same was true during the war; we were in more places than anyone else.

Matt Furman, senior vice president, public relations, CNN News Group

Knowing the importance of having CNN reporters in all the right places to cover the war in Iraq, CNN executives worked in advance of the conflict to establish trust and build relationships with both the U.S. military and with the leaders of countries in strategic locations throughout the Middle East.

A. The U.S. Military

❑ Working with the Pentagon

In a process called "embedding," reporters accredited by the U.S. Department of Defense were sent to live and work beside American soldiers in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Kathryn Kross, CNN's Washington D.C. bureau chief, served as the main point of contact between CNN and the Pentagon for the embed process.

As the point person for CNN, Kross interacted with the Pentagon's Office of Public Affairs, with Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs Victoria Clark and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Brian Whitman. Kross explains the interactions with the Pentagon that led up to the embedding of CNN reporters with the military:

KROSS: The Pentagon gets high marks for bringing the whole press corps along in this process; they held meetings to tell us what they were thinking, to hear some of our comments, to take some of our questions and to further develop their policy. Eventually, it came to a point when they said the networks would have embedded correspondents in air, sea and land. They said they will be equivalent, but not equal – that the individual organizations were not going to have the same assignments – and that there are any number of units and divisions that they could be assigned to... We were thinking that we would have two teams of reporters in each. And then, much to our delight, when it came down to the details, they told us that we would in fact have [many more than that]. They weren't just feeding the beast, they were gorging the beast, which was actually a very smart strategy for the Pentagon on several levels.

❑ Establishing trust between CNN and the military

When the war started, CNN had teams of journalists embedded with the military. But according to Chief News Executive and Newsgathering President for the CNN News Group Eason Jordan, probably a half to a third of those would not have happened had it not been for the efforts that CNN made on the ground to "sort of enterprise embed situations – rather than just rely on Washington to deliver us opportunities on a platter."

Jordan describes the process he went through to gain access for CNN's embeds:

JORDAN: A lot of work had to be done to make sure we had the access we wanted. For instance, we wanted to have a team basically embedded with the command group – [Lt. Gen. David McKiernan's] headquarters' group – with him personally for the duration of the war. It ended up working out that that happened, and we put a documentary on the air just in recent



Embedded reporter Walt Rodgers talks with soldiers of the 7th Cavalry.

weeks that was shot inside the headquarters for the entire war. We also talked about some of the units we wanted to be embedded with – we weren't just concerned about the ground war aspect, there was the air war; there's the Navy that we had to worry about. It's important to plant these seeds well in advance, to gain the trust of the players – the commanders in the region – and in the end we ended up having greater access with the U.S. forces than any other news organization in the world. I think it made an impact with the commanders that the leaders of CNN would go and actually personally work to open doors to make sure that access was given and to give personal assurances that they would be able to trust us – that we're not going to cross you; we're not going to do anything irresponsible...

... When it came to gaining the access we had with Gen. McKiernan's group at Camp Doha... and Gen. McKiernan is not a media friendly person under normal circumstances, but he had never had the head of a news organization come and make a pitch to him like this in the war zone. And we said, "Look this is history. You're going to be the first U.S. ground forces commander to march on and overtake an enemy capital since either WWII or the Korean War, depending on how you want to define it, and it's historic, and you [want] the story to be told if not immediately, at least for the sake of history." And he agreed to that.

It's important to understand that while the Pentagon is headquarters, the military commanders in the field had a lot of autonomy. They also don't always agree with the people at headquarters. Just like in any company. We thought it was at least as important, if not more important, to get to know and gain the trust of the commanders in the field who actually had a hand in executing the war, as it would be to go to headquarters and meet with bosses there. We think those efforts paid off.

B. The International Governments

JORDAN: Well we actually had a very hostile relationship with the Iraqi government, but it's like you're fighting with your brother or sister; you still have to find a way to live with each other even if you don't necessarily like one another. ... We fought hard for that access, even though we were thrown out again and again and again by the Iraqi government because we did reports the Iraqi government didn't like. We were also concerned; you want to have access in other places, which wasn't so difficult when you have access to the right people. So you go to Jordan and you meet with its leadership and you go to Syria and meet with President Assad who I've met twice... And I think they see it as a sign of seriousness and a sign of respect that you would make the effort to go engage them personally. It's not as if some news organization that's foreign to them, so to speak, is coming and asking for access. They know CNN. All the leaders of the world watch CNN and they attach importance to being able to engage leaders of the news organization directly, and there are payoffs there. We've had access to interviews in places like Syria or Jordan, Israel, the Palestinian areas, Kuwait, that we just wouldn't have had had those efforts not taken place.

Discussion Questions

1. What is embedding?
2. How did the process of embedding come about?
3. What were the parameters of embedding as outlined by the Pentagon?
4. How did CNN executives establish trust with the U.S. military? Why do you think earning this trust was seen as necessary?
5. In what ways do you think the embedding of the media with the military satisfied the goals of both the media and the military?

Chapter 3: CNN in Kuwait

We had talented engineers in Kuwait and we knew what we needed. You needed the camera, you needed some lights, you needed some microphones, and you needed some way to take the picture and the sound and send it back to Atlanta. That's a simple description of what we needed to do. Of course, once you got down to the details of it, it got pretty complicated.

Steve Cassidy, executive producer and head of the CNN workspace in Kuwait

Months before the first bombs fell in Iraq, CNN began setting up operations in neighboring Kuwait, where the U.S. military was launching its operations. Kuwait became the location from which CNN broadcast its daily international coverage of the conflict and dispatched its reporters into the field. Chief news executive and newsgathering president for the CNN News Group Eason Jordan tapped Steve Cassidy to set up the Kuwait facility. It opened in December, 2002.

Executive producer Steve Cassidy recalls the efforts required to establish the Kuwait workspace. The process focused on three goals: setting up studios for live coverage, training the embedded reporters on the equipment they would use and utilizing the office's anchors and day-trippers (reporters who were stationed in Kuwait but who went into Iraq to report for one or two days at a time) in covering the war.

Three Goals in Kuwait

CASSIDY: There were three assignments in Kuwait. The first assignment was that CNN was going to have Kuwait act as its forward anchor position. That meant that each of the CNN networks that planned on having anchor people out in the field [was] going to base them in Kuwait. So, CNN-U.S. planned on having 24-7 coverage from Kuwait with anchors in place there. CNN International intended the same thing. CNN Newsource intended to have the same presence for the affiliate services [CNN Newsource provides over 700 local television stations and cable news channels with access to the worldwide newsgathering resources of the CNN News Group], and CNN en Espanol intended to do the same thing as well. So, in Kuwait, what we needed to do

was build a television studio which would make it possible to do all of those networks all at the same time, and feed that stuff back to Atlanta to be part of the overall CNN coverage.

The second part of our job in Kuwait was [that] most of the embed teams that were going to be placed with the U.S. military originated with the military that was in Kuwait. The United States gathered together about 250,000 soldiers in Kuwait and that's where the invasion took place from. There were presences on ships in the north but the primary place for CNN's embed action was going to be from Kuwait. So, what we did was we set up what we called the "Embed University." We brought various members of the embed teams to Kuwait in advance of the war to train them on the new equipment that CNN intended to employ in the embed process. So, we brought people to Kuwait, and we brought in people who knew how to use the equipment and then we ran classrooms, and we ran field tests, and we ran field tests at night, and then we took the stuff out into the desert to see if it would work out there.



CNN wanted the background of the Kuwait office to say, "CNN is here." The Towers in Kuwait are the most recognizable symbol of Kuwait.

And then the third part of what we were responsible for was to cover the war once it started from the southern part of Iraq. So, in something that we call day-tripping, we sent reporters and photographers and producers from Kuwait out into Iraq once the war started to cover the southern part of Iraq. Then those people would return to Kuwait, rest up and then they would go back in. They would go out for a day or for two days, or go out for a week and then come back in...

... Once the war got started, our job changed a little bit because it also became the point from which we wanted to send CNN reporters into Baghdad. After the war had been underway for ten or twelve days, we arranged to send Christiane Amanpour, Nic Robertson, Jim Clancey, and Richard Blystone and a bunch of other people from Kuwait up to Baghdad, because that's where everybody needed to be once Baghdad fell. So



Working in the Kuwait office

those people left from Kuwait and moved to Baghdad. That's how the CNN Kuwait operation began to shrink down. Also, after they had successfully completed the war, the embed teams returned from Baghdad and other parts of Iraq through Kuwait where they were debriefed on their experiences by the CNN Presents team, and then they flew home from there.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think CNN chose Kuwait as its home base for coverage of this war?
2. What were the different functions of the Kuwait office?
3. CNN has offices and bureaus all over the world. What do you think are the functions of the bureaus? Considering the [current list of bureaus](#) and current world events, which bureaus do you think will be most strategic in newsgathering?

Chapter 4: Tools of the Trade

When the war [Persian Gulf War] started in 1991, even though we had the only team in Baghdad for a long period of time, we didn't have a night scope camera, which meant that anything we did at night, we couldn't see... Back then, as brilliant as we thought we had planned our coverage, we forgot – totally just forgot – one of the key pieces of equipment required to cover the war for 12 hours a day when there was no light outside... So this time around we focused a lot on technology and making sure that people had the tools they needed to get the job done.

Eason Jordan, chief news executive and newsgathering president for CNN

One distinguishing characteristic of the war in Iraq was the front-row seat that new technology provided to the theater of conflict. Live videophone reports highlighted technology's key role in leading stories, matching images of armored vehicles rolling across the desert to Walt Rodgers' description of a "giant wave of steel." The ability to broadcast live from the middle of a battle scene or to capture an historic moment in real time was made possible by the photographers and engineers who answered the question, "Here's what we need – could you make it work?"

A. Meet Some of the CNN Staff

I really need to emphasize the crucial role of engineers everywhere, because they get forgotten all the time. But, without them, you don't see air. It's as simple as that.

Rym Brahimi, CNN correspondent in Baghdad

- ❑ **Arnie Christianson** is operations manager in CNN's satellites and circuits department.
- ❑ **Greg Alvarez** is the senior manager for technical systems for CNN's satellite department. It was his responsibility to ensure that all stories got from the field back to Atlanta (or wherever they needed to go).
- ❑ **Darryl Trimm** is the CNN field engineer responsible for setting up the Kuwait workspace and eventually the Baghdad operations at the Palestine Hotel.
- ❑ **Jeff Barwise** is CNN's field engineer who was embedded alongside correspondent Walter Rodgers with the 7th Cavalry.
- ❑ **Darren Bull** is a photographer who works out of CNN's Baghdad bureau.
- ❑ **Earl Casey** is CNN's senior international editor who was responsible for overseeing the logistics of the personnel, training and equipment for international war coverage.
- ❑ **Steve Cassidy** is an executive producer and head of the Kuwait workspace.

B. The Tools of the Trade

We purchased over two dozen sets of the most portable advanced camera and communications gear possible, because we rightly anticipated having to hand carry most gear. This involved new technologies and systems which in themselves required training for our staff...and constant refinements to that technology, even during the war itself.

Then, we began to test these people in the field, their equipment and those systems...to "stress test" them, to determine weak points, and boil those weak points down.

Earl Casey, CNN senior international editor

❑ **The Satellite Setup**

With all of the newsgathering equipment in the field, CNN had to be sure to create reliable ways to send the stories out of Iraq and the surrounding areas back to newsrooms across the globe. For this purpose, the satellite department acquired access to multiple satellites during the coverage of the war in Iraq.

Technically speaking...

Greg Alvarez: All the satellites are sitting in a geo-stationary orbit, which means that they sit off of the equator going 22,800 miles per hour and then they orbit the Earth at that same speed that the Earth rotates. So they're at the same place in the sky.

Arnie Christianson: The major change in satellite technology since Gulf War 1 [Persian Gulf War] has been the advent of digital transmissions, which allow us to fit more transmissions in the same amount of bandwidth, and saves us a ton of money. In Gulf War 1 [Persian Gulf War], the bandwidth we used gave us a single video path out of Baghdad. In Gulf War 2 [recent war in Iraq], that same bandwidth was used to give us nine paths out of four different locations. In addition we also were able to transmit phone and data channels on that same bandwidth, freeing us from using sat phones and the local phone company.

❑ **Swe-Dish Satellite Antenna**

Reporters used this antenna when they were live on camera, speaking back and forth to anchors in various studios. The drawback was that it took 20 minutes to get it up and 10 minutes to get it down. So to use this system, reporters had to have at least an hour to an hour-and-a-half to make it worthwhile.



A Swe-dish antenna on top of a Humvee.

❑ **Vehicular Inmarsat Antenna**

This was a portable satellite antenna, measuring about two feet in diameter, which was mounted on the Humvees (see section C "Putting it all Together" on page 4 of this chapter). Once it locks onto the signal of an orbiting satellite, it can transmit video signals while the vehicle is in motion.



The dome cover of this vehicular Inmarsat antenna protects it from weather.

Technically speaking...

Jeff Barwise: The antenna – they call it a geosynchronous antenna – is one in which, once you find the satellite, you can drive around. I think it was for a day we were on air, driving through the desert with the 7th Cavalry, and that antenna allowed that to happen.

Arnie Christianson: I never expected the calls to stay connected for hours, even while bouncing over desert and rocks at 50kph while transmitting through sandstorms. A smooth highway is one thing, but rough terrain at speed is completely another.

❑ **Stationary Inmarsat Antenna – (M4)**

This portable satellite antenna does double-duty as a satellite telephone and a video/audio one-way transmitter. It can be folded up and carried by hand in a lap-top-sized case, but works only in a stationary position. Correspondents would often use two of these satellite antennas at once in order to double the quality of the transmission of live footage or packages.



Two stationary Inmarsat antennas.



Here, CNN cameraman Dave Rust is using a Sony Beta SX.

Sony DNWA9 (Beta SX)

This is the standard camera for CNN photographers. This is a larger shoulder-mounted camera that provides exceptional quality video footage. Many camera people preferred to carry this camera because they were more confident in the quality of the video it would produce. While it can survive harsh conditions if kept clean, many of these cameras were ruined in the sandstorms of the desert.



The PD-150 is much smaller and lighter than the Sony Beta SX camera.

□ Sony PD 150 Digital Video Camera

A small hand-held digital video camera. This camera is available at electronics stores for home use. Most people cannot tell the difference between the quality of the video of this camera versus larger beta tape cameras. This lightweight camera was much easier to carry around the desert, and fared much better in the hot, sandy conditions than the larger cameras.

□ Videophone (TH2)

By connecting this device to a camera and to a mobile or stationary satellite antenna, staff can relay live video. When used with the mobile antenna (vehicular Inmarsat) it can relay live footage while the camera and satellite are in motion. This is how Walt Rodgers and Jeff Barwise were able to show live footage of the 7th Cavalry moving through the desert.



The videophone and its accessories are stored and carried in a case about the size of a briefcase.



Courtesy CNN

□ Thuraya Satellite Phone

A satellite phone that works only in the Middle East and in Europe.

Technically speaking...

It's like a hand-held cell phone. And it's a good phone, but the problem is that the Iraqis - being as that they don't have (regular) cell phone usage there in Iraq - a lot of them use the Thurayas, in which case we were congesting the system and it wasn't as easy for the military to eavesdrop on Iraqis. They banned us from using the Thurayas because that's what the Iraqis were using.



Courtesy CNN

□ Iridium Satellite Phone

This is the same type of satellite phone that the military uses.

Technically speaking...

Jeff Barwise: The Iridiums are actually a phone based on a satellite system for use by the military. You can buy them, but for the most part it's a military phone of communication. It's a little bit bigger than a cell phone. It's more like a wireless home phone. And the military actually uses the Iridium, so we knew they would not ban us from using them. And that was more or less our backup when the Inmarsats were not working.

❑ **Regional Inmarsat BGAN**

This satellite modem allows for direct satellite Internet access in the field. It works in more than 99 countries and can manage many types of data, ranging from streamed video from the Web to instant messages from company servers. It weighs about 4 pounds and is smaller than most laptop computers.



A laptop (right) can connect to a BGAN satellite antenna (left) to send data.

❑ **Apple G4 Laptop Computer**

This was the field reporter's mobile editing bay/production studio. Video footage was uploaded into the computer, edited into news packages, and then sent to CNN from the laptop. Without this technology, reporters would not have been able to compile and edit footage, then send package reports back to Atlanta. The drawback was that a two-minute package could take as long as 90 minutes to send using a single M4 Inmarsat antenna. Even if two M4s were used simultaneously, the send time would only be reduced to 45 minutes.

Technically speaking...

Darryl Trimm: A CNN cameraman or editor can shoot video on his small digital video camera, transfer the video into a data file on his G4, edit the shots, compile a video package, then transfer the completed file via the G4 connection to a file server in the Atlanta newsroom. The data transfer is painfully slow through the BGAN /Inmarsat connection, but the results are extremely high quality video when played back at normal speed from the newsroom server.



"Embed University": CNN staff learn how to use the Apple G4 laptops with the stationary Inmarsat satellite antennas on top of the Hotel housing the Kuwait bureau.

C. Putting it All Together: Humvees as Mobile Production Studios

CASSIDY: We bought two [used] Humvees in Kuwait. Then we had to convert them for the specific needs that we had facing us. The vehicle that Martin Savidge had...we changed the configuration of it. It was shaped like a pickup truck when we bought it, and when we were done with it, it looked more like a station wagon. We had to chop off the back and add a roof and put roof racks on them. Then the engineers built inside of these things a rack full of equipment. We put (Swe-Dish) satellite dishes on the roofs of these things and also these (vehicular Inmarsat) geosynchronous satellite antennas. We had the ability to produce satellite telephone pictures.

In the case of the two Humvees, we had 2 four-person teams. We had an engineer who was responsible for all of the electronic equipment and making sure it worked. We had a reporter, and each vehicle was also manned by a camera guy. The fourth person in each team was a contractor from AKE, a company that provides security, assistance and hostile environment advice and training for CNN.



These Humvees, outfitted by the engineers, are almost ready to go to war. Courtesy: CNN

D. War Stories from the Front Lines: A Behind the Scenes Perspective

Some stories were driven in part by technology – just actually for the first time seeing the live coverage of an advance on an enemy capital. In a sense you can tie a correspondent to it; in another sense it's the technology that's the star. I mean Walt Rodgers provided some just incredible live reporting on the advance on Baghdad, and as great as he was, he couldn't have done it without the technology that was available to him.

Eason Jordan, chief news executive and newsgathering president for CNN

Often, behind the scenes of the riveting live reports from the battlefield, were the photographers and engineers who made sure that the equipment worked and the words and images got on air. Here are some of their stories.

□ On having a back up plan

BARWISE: We're talking full redundancy. When you're expected to go out with the military, the military doesn't care if a piece of your equipment happens to break, and you can't get another piece of equipment in as soon as where you're gonna be. [Inside the Humvee] I would say there were 12 pieces of equipment, and that's including two generators - two diesel generators. That was another thing to consider, that the military...everything the military has runs on JP8, which is a highly refined diesel fuel. It's actually a jet fuel. So we had to have diesel generators to run our equipment.



The production equipment in the Humvees (left) allowed reporters to send stories back from the field, but did not give them much room to sit or sleep. On the right, Martin Savidge sits in his Humvee. Courtesy CNN

TRIMM: We had backup generators because you cannot depend on the local power always being available. You have to have emergency power backups. We had to go out to shops in town [in Kuwait] and buy generators. Before we left there, we ended up with about 10 different generators we bought, some to back up the system in Kuwait and some to carry on the trucks out in the field to go with the military, including backups for them. Some of the smaller embed teams that didn't have a satellite dish with them had to have small generators to power their videophones.

BULL: We had information before the war that the U.S. was going to use a weapon that took out all of the electrical systems in Baghdad, that it could "fry" them. So, that would have destroyed our cameras and electrical equipment. To get around that, Nic Robertson and I came across the idea of using a really old film camera which is spring operated, and we actually bought one of those and a heap of film and managed to get that into Baghdad before the war in case that weapon was used. It was our backup plan to be able to get pictures out of there. Thankfully, it was never used and we never needed to use that camera. That was our contingency plan in case that did happen.

□ On meeting the challenges

Engineers fall into the category of landscaper, plumber, electrician, whatever you need.
Jeff Barwise, CNN field engineer

BARWISE: The only failure we had in the field, and that was only a 50% failure, was one of the generators. It just wore out. But we always had to consider the heat and the dust storms in keeping the Humvee running. My equipment, the satellite gear, and the Inmarsats, were not going to be hurt by the dirt at all. More the heat, and the rain. But the Humvee, every time we stopped, we and the military both had to clean our air filters, check the oil, try to keep the Humvee maintained so it would continue running.

TRIMM: Whenever it rained, the first thing that went were the telephones because it is a two-way path. The signal goes from Kuwait to Atlanta, and then back from Atlanta to Kuwait. So, you get double the atmospheric problems. If it's raining hard in Atlanta, the signal coming into and going out of Atlanta is attenuated [experiencing interference]. CNN had downlinks in other cities in the U.S. So, they'd take the signal [coming from the satellite over the Atlantic] and send it through an alternate route, either in Ohio or Virginia.

D. Evaluating the Technology

JORDAN: The technology changes every day. You know, there are dramatic improvements and I think this war was better covered from a technology perspective than ever before. But if there was a war tomorrow, you would see leaps forward as far as the quality of the images... And it's important for us to continue being on the cutting edge of technology to ensure that we're not outsmarted in that regard...

Discussion Questions

1. What role did technology play in CNN's coverage of this war? What were some of the technologies that CNN used to cover the war in Iraq? How were these technologies used? What was the significance of the vehicular Inmarsat satellite antennas and how were they used with the videophones in covering the war?
2. What is redundancy? What are some examples of redundancy that CNN employed for this conflict? Why was redundancy so important in covering the war?
3. What were the responsibilities of CNN's engineers during the war? Why is their role important to the process of newsgathering?

Chapter 5: Production Plans for War

We spent months before the war putting our graphics together... I was determined that we would be able to explain what was happening. You know, we saw a lot during the war, but there was a lot we didn't see. And so we had these extraordinary maps, animated maps, animations of the war effort that we used to explain things...

Teya Ryan, executive vice president and general manager, CNN/U.S.

A viewer who sees images of a battle but does not know where it is taking place may become as disoriented as a soldier without a compass. Likewise, a limited understanding of the weapons or transport vehicles used in a war may obscure one's comprehension of how potential targets are identified. CNN compiled a tremendous number of resources to put its coverage into a context that would make sense to someone who had never set foot in Iraq.

A. Answering the Key Questions

In the months leading up to the war in Iraq, researchers at CNN combed through volumes of resources to glean information about Iraqi and coalition weapons, mobility and manpower. Spearheading the efforts to collect the key information and make it available to air on television was CNN's Senior Executive Producer of Special Programs Jerry Krieg. Working with Executive Vice President and General Manager of CNN/US Teya Ryan and various other divisions within CNN, Krieg oversaw production plans for determining the best way to make the conflict understandable to a television audience.



A war-planning meeting at CNN.

What is the information, and is it correct?

KRIEG: One of the biggest tasks we had to do was search Iraq's present capability, what did they have available to them to fight back, and how much information, and it's not easy to find. It was very easy to know what we were going to use militarily, but then...after you do all this research, [you have to] translate it down to something that's easy to understand when you put it on the air. You constantly have to think, well, this person's looking at the TV, what kind of information can I put up there real fast to get them to know what's going on? Then you have to write and edit all that information.

How should CNN best use the information on television?

KRIEG: After all the information is [gathered], it all has to get produced. CNN was starting a brand new graphics system called "[VizRT](#)" (pronounced "viz r tee"). We had VizRT and [Keyhole](#) [images], and I had to work with the weather department that created some of the [3-D animations](#) ([Click on March 31 or April 1 Animation for an example](#)). Basically, we ended up with a whole plethora of information that we were going to put on the air.

We also produced some pieces that we call [101s](#). So we got ten to twelve 101's ready to go. Our goal was to think through the first 48 hours of the war. We thought the first 48 hours were going to be the most difficult for us because we thought the video was going to be poor, and we weren't sure when the embedded reporters and all that would emerge with their stories. So we knew we'd have the anchors in place and we kept thinking, what do we do, how do we explain the movement of troops and the success or lack of success of the war without all the pictures coming in? And besides that, how do we explain all this to people? How do we explain a certain time of movement, or a certain military plan, or a bit of Iraqi history, or who are the leaders of Iraq? So what we did was put together segments that were ready to go. We had the graphics ready to go, we had the video ready to go, we had the ideas ready to go.



This image was taken from an animation that was created by CNN Design using VizRT technology.

❑ **Will the look of the information keep the viewer's interest?**

KRIEG: Our two animation artists, John Cowan and Jon Kemp, were geniuses; we were constantly challenging them. We had to produce what the three generals wanted to talk about. It was a tremendous effort. The general would say, "Let's do an animation of what urban combat looks like." And they would give me this detailed thing of what urban combat would look like.

❑ **Selecting CNN's [military experts](#)**

KRIEG: The process [for selecting the Generals as CNN's experts] started long before [the war]. We would have them on as guests and try them out, and Clark [Retired U.S. Army Gen. Wesley Clark, at the time a CNN analyst and former NATO supreme allied commander] we had used before many times. We also had Grange [Retired U.S. Army Brig. Gen. David Grange], who knows ground warfare really well because he was Special Forces. Shepherd [Retired U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Don Shepherd] is the Air Force guy, so he knew the air war very well. Clark knew everything because he'd been so involved with the United Nations. So we had a tremendous balance, and that's what we do. I'd ask Shepherd a question and he'd go, "Grange can tell you that, Grange knows all about..." I go to Grange and Shepherd and they know what each other's expertise was, and Shepherd wants to be a producer, so when Shepherd gives you an idea, he would talk more about how to put it on TV at the same time, so he was fabulous. He was great to work with.

B. The Military Desk

When CNN covered the war in Afghanistan, a military desk or unit was created to conduct research and contribute information about the military for air. During CNN's coverage of the war in Iraq, the role of the military desk was to help viewers make sense of the military campaign. The desk consisted of approximately 25 producers who helped track the movement of troops, produce hourly updates that explained the tactics and equipment being used in different battles, set up live segments with military experts and provide producers in the control room with graphics, animations or maps to support programming. Peter Dykstra, executive producer of science and

technology, headed the military desk and was responsible for the coordination and development of that programming.

❑ **A steady stream of useful information**

DYKSTRA: One of the problems you get in being in the field, and even one of the things to be a little bit careful with, I suppose, with embedded reporters, is you’re in the middle of something that sort of lapses into military jargon, and you talk about things that are totally new and maybe a little bit intimidating for the average viewer. What’s the difference between an F-14 and an F-16? What’s the difference between a cruise missile and a rocket-propelled grenade? To military people that stuff is pretty simple. We need to interpret for show producers and anchors that have never been in this type of situation before what we’re seeing and what it is. What’s my military experience? I don’t have any either, but the fact is that I know how to ask the questions to get the answers needed.

❑ **Placing the military campaign in many contexts**

DYKSTRA: The goal of the military desk was to interpret, to help people figure out what was going on and to explain things in the context of history. In the context of technology, how do weapons work or how are they supposed to work? Why did they fail or why did they perform well? Why were they working and why were they not? And as with just about any story, in the context of politics, is there an anti-war movement? What are they saying? What are the war supporters saying? What are the families of the troops saying? What are the troops saying? What are the Iraqis saying? What’s the rest of the Middle East saying?

❑ **Communicating military information to the viewer**

DYKSTRA: [One thing we did was] produce live shots—about one an hour... A live shot would involve our experts, often the generals who were retained by CNN as experts... We would bring them on as guests and interview them with [CNN anchors] Renay San Miguel in the morning and Miles O’Brien in the afternoon and evening. We’d conduct interviews, perhaps in front of a big map that was built for us, using other video that had been gathered throughout the battle, whatever happened that day.

We also provided updates that were called “war recaps.” These were generally done [several] times a day. And they were real quick summaries; they were like quick newscasts, like a minute’s worth of everything that had happened in the war that day. You know, “at 12:04 pm (it was Eastern time; we’d use our time), U.S. troops took over Baghdad airport,” or something like that.

❑ **Getting the information to the control room**

DYKSTRA: [We stored the information in] a file which is the central, the bulletin board, if you will, for the newsroom computer: every kind of potential weapon of mass destruction that might have been discovered in Iraq; Iraqi palaces, the complete list of Saddam’s palaces; known past sites where weapons of mass destruction were manufactured or deployed or stored. There are 100s of these. I know it’s over 1000. All of these are listed, and they can be looked up by any show producer. This is such a huge list. That’s why a guest mentions something totally out of the blue; he’s talking about military strategy, and totally out of the blue he mentions the bunker-buster bomb. You’re watching TV at home, and you see a picture of it five seconds later.

Discussion Questions

1. What challenges might a news organization like CNN face when planning to cover a war on television? What were the primary concerns of CNN’s production staff in the months leading up to the conflict in Iraq?

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2. What information do you think that the audience watching CNN's war coverage would most likely need to have explained? Based on the interviews with Jerry Krieg and Peter Dykstra, how did CNN producers address those needs? Explain.
3. Why did the production staff at CNN conduct intensive research prior to the conflict in Iraq? What types of information did the staff collect? What are some of the challenges of conducting such an aggressive collection of data? How did the producers make this information available to CNN's audience?
4. What tools were created for the producers to help CNN's audience make better sense of the military campaign? What other functions did these tools serve?
5. What types of elements do you think contribute to the look of the programs? Do you think that the look or the presentation of the content is important to the viewer? Why or why not?
6. What do you think are some potential benefits and drawbacks of having time to prepare before the production of war coverage? How might the production of war coverage have been different if the conflict occurred with little or no advance preparation? Explain.

Chapter 6: Live From Baghdad

Over the years, the Iraqi government invited several news organizations to base international correspondents there. CNN was the only one to take them up on it.

Jane Arraf, CNN's Baghdad bureau chief and correspondent, from the "IPI Global Journalist Online" magazine

A. Meet the Staff at CNN's Baghdad Bureau

Jane Arraf

Jane Arraf is CNN's Baghdad bureau chief and correspondent. Named to the position in September 2002, this is her second assignment to the Baghdad bureau; she worked there when she joined CNN in 1998. Between assignments in Baghdad, Arraf moved to Istanbul in January 2001 to serve as the network's bureau chief there.

Arraf has covered Baghdad through crisis, war and U.N. sanctions and is often the only Western journalist reporting from Iraq. In 2003, she covered the war in Iraq for the network, reporting from Turkey and then inside Iraq, filing multiple reports on the latest news as well as human-interest packages.

Nic Robertson

Nic Robertson is a senior international correspondent based at CNN's London bureau. His first role on joining the network in January 1990 was as an engineer, and during the 1991 Gulf War, he was the only CNN engineer in Baghdad.

On September 11, 2001, as the terror attacks unfolded in the U.S., Robertson was the only western television journalist in Afghanistan. Later that day, he reported live via videophone that the Northern Alliance had attacked the city of Kabul. In August 2002, CNN aired a series of packages taken from videotapes Robertson uncovered in Afghanistan. The exclusive Terror on Tape series was the culmination of weeks of work, relying on resources Robertson had cultivated during his years of reporting from Afghanistan.



CNN's Ingrid Formanek, Nic Robertson and Rym Brahimi answer questions after arriving in Jordan from Baghdad.

In 2003, Robertson reported live from Baghdad until officials expelled the CNN group just as the U.S.-led coalition bombed the city. Robertson taped the bombings as his crew was leaving, and the footage later aired exclusively on CNN. After leaving Baghdad, Robertson reported from neighboring Jordan, offering insight into the latest reports coming from Iraq. He later returned to Baghdad to cover the latter stages of coalition movement into the city.

Rym Brahimi

Rym Brahimi is a field producer and correspondent for CNN and is based at the network's European headquarters in London and at its bureau in Baghdad. In 2002, Brahimi spent time in Iraq reporting on the buildup of tension between Saddam Hussein's government and the West. She covered the Iraqi reaction to U.S. President George W. Bush's "Axis of Evil" speech and

reported on the "Day of Days" celebrations that marked the anniversary of the end of the Iran-Iraq War.

In 2003, Brahimi reported live from Baghdad until officials expelled the CNN group just hours before the U.S.-led coalition bombed the city. After leaving the Iraqi capital, Brahimi reported from Jordan before returning to Baghdad after coalition forces had secured the city.

Darren Bull: Darren Bull is a cameraman and editor with CNN. He worked with Rym Brahimi in Baghdad for about four months before the war and then covered areas in southern Iraq when the war began. After the fall of Baghdad, Bull returned to the city to cover the latter stages of coalition movement into Baghdad.

B. History of CNN's Iraq Bureau

I first started covering Iraq in 1991 as a print reporter for Reuters News Agency, and it really was the most difficult place I had ever been in. It was like a movie; it was like being in the dark almost all the time and trying to fight your way to some sort of light. The payoff was, when you actually did a story that you knew to be true and actually said something about this place, that there was such an immense feeling of satisfaction.

Jane Arraf, CNN's Baghdad bureau chief and correspondent

ARRAF: We had had a presence [in Iraq] for many years, but not a bureau. Eason Jordan essentially decided to open up a formal bureau, so I moved here in late 1997 to set up the bureau. I stayed for about three and a half years and relocated myself to Turkey and opened up a small bureau in Turkey for CNN. Then I was asked to move back as Bureau Chief again to Baghdad as things were heating up before the war...

Before the war, Iraq was a "black hole" for journalists because it was so isolated. Physically, it was hard to get here, difficult to get visas. Once you were here, the control was such that it was very, very difficult to get accurate information, to have people talk to you honestly. Every time you were able to confirm a fact, however small, it was a huge victory. Every step of the way required countless ethical, professional, moral decisions that were immensely difficult...

For a long time, I was the only correspondent based in Iraq. Things were up and down with the Iraqi government and they steadily declined up to the time I was expelled by the Iraqi government in November 2002.

□ Jane Arraf gets [expelled from Iraq](#)

ARRAF: It was just two days after Saddam Hussein had announced that all of the prisons were going to be opened and all prisoners would be freed. It was an amnesty of all the prisoners. We're still seeing the effects of that. But, the extraordinary thing was that some relatives of people who had disappeared in 1991 had gone to the prisons and said, okay, "Where are our sons, where are our husbands, where are our loved ones." They were told to look and there was no one there. So, they went to various government offices and spent two days in the street, and finally showed up at the Information Ministry where we were forced to operate, as were all foreign news agencies. They demonstrated because they were demanding to know what had happened to their relatives. Saddam had said the prisoners were all free, and they came to the Information Ministry where the [former] Information Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf had announced that Saddam had ordered prisoners freed, and they said, "The president gave this order, we want to know where our relatives are." It was the first spontaneous, unauthorized demonstration [that] any of the Iraqis I worked with had ever seen. It was absolutely extraordinary, the bravery of these people. So, of course, we covered it. I did live reports on it. It was news staring us in the face. You just couldn't ignore it, although a lot of people did. The Iraqi government was extremely upset

about that because it indicated some loss of control, evidenced by the fact that people were demonstrating without being authorized, and by the fact that they couldn't control us. A few days later, I was asked to leave. I was told I had to leave for 72 hours and then I could come back again. Indeed, they did let me back in, but a few days later they told me I had to leave again for another 72 hours and come back again. But, they never let me back in after that... After it was determined that I really was not coming back, I went to Turkey... I remained bureau chief in exile. [As the war entered its final phase], I went to northern Iraq and Kurdistan and reported from there following the front line as Baghdad fell. When the war was over I came back to Baghdad.

C. The Challenges of Reporting from Baghdad

□ Getting the right staff

ARRAF: After the 1991 Gulf War, CNN was treated well. But, foreigners in general, and Americans in particular, were thought to be the enemy. You had to be quite courageous and daring to be able to work in that kind of environment, to show up and work for CNN. Understandably, in a system like that, there is a certain level of cooperation that had to go on between the local staff and the Iraqi government that is all known and [understood]. The way I ended up hiring people was either they had been with us for quite a long time and proved that they were loyal and talented.

□ Working conditions after the fall of Baghdad

BULL: We had a lot of camping equipment because the conditions when we got into Baghdad were really basic. The hotel was really a shell of a building; there was not electricity or running water for the first few days. It was really quite filthy and there was still a lot of fighting in the streets outside. So, the conditions were fairly difficult.

I think [we] were just probably running on adrenaline to some degree because we'd go out and work very hard during the day, then come back and do live shots at nighttime. In my case, I was packed into a small dirty room with a couple of other cameramen and all their kits, and as I said, no electricity or running water. It was also difficult to find food in the first few days because society had pretty much broken down in Baghdad. So, we were living off canned food until things started to get back on their feet again.

□ Reporting a story

BRAHIMI: When you wanted to do a story, you always had to get permission from the Iraqi Information Ministry, and they would help you find people to interview, because you didn't do anything without people from the Information Ministry...

The Iraqis saw CNN as an American network and, unfortunately, very much as part of the U.S.

administration. We all went to great pains to explain that was not the case. It was a very, very difficult balancing act all the time. You had to have an understanding of what the political situation was, what you could get away with, what you could say in order to satisfy your ethical rules, or your journalistic standards, while



Rym Brahimi's press pass from the Iraqi Information Ministry.

at the same time not putting anyone in danger with their lives. It was quite a tricky balancing act. On the whole, you sort of learn and walk that tightrope, and hope you do a good and fair job.

□ **Iraqi minders**

ROBERTSON: Everywhere you would go out you always had a government minder. When you went to an interview, they would be standing right by you. We faced a tough time before the war...in terms of "Iraqi minders," the government minders. Just before the war we had a second minder who was posted to us. They, the Iraqi government, really started clamping down on how much we could go out and report. It was very restricted. But in the run up to the war, a couple of weeks before the war, they really started to limit the amount of places we could go to and who we could talk to and the amount of time we could spend out filming and things like that. They made it much harder. And also, the Iraqi government put a lot more pressure on us this time than before the last war [in 1991]. I think they recognized that this is all about the end of Saddam Hussein's regime, and there was a lot more pressure on us than there was during the last war.

□ **The impact of Iraqi minders on CNN's coverage**

ROBERTSON: We tried to get additional translators to work with us before the war to go out in the field and translate for us, and the Ministry of Information prevented us from doing that. So, there were times when it got close to the war when our minders were the translators as well. I found occasions where ...the minders were deliberately asking different questions and they were deliberately not fully translating answers. [Also] the minders made it much more difficult because [local Iraqis] were intimidated by them. So, at times the minders had quite a significant impact [on our coverage].

D. Nic Robertson on [Fleeing Iraq](#)

(On March 21, 2003, Iraqi officials told CNN correspondent Nic Robertson and his crew that they must immediately leave the then-Saddam Hussein-controlled Iraq, because the government was unhappy with CNN's reporting. In the following CNN article, Robertson shares his own thoughts of the exodus, leaving Iraq for neighboring Jordan.)

First we had to drive through Baghdad to this parking lot on the edge of the city to change from Iraqi to Jordanian vehicles. There were small trenches around the compound – some manned by young boys who looked no older than 16 or 17 – very young. Some, on the other hand, were much older. Perhaps in their 40s, 50s or 60s. Some of them didn't look as if they were fighting fit, but these were representative of the Ba'ath Party, performing civil defense duties around the streets of Baghdad. We saw a lot of them around.

It was a very strange feeling to drive through the city. The streets were deserted. It was after the first night of shock and awe. The bombing had been heavy. There was still smoke in the air and, on some roads, we were driving over broken glass from buildings that had been blown up. You could see the destruction all around. Then, you'd look and see these tiny groups of defense fighters, standing on the street corners. Not a strong army but just a sort of a "dad's army." That was strange.

It was the checkpoint that really struck me when we left the city. There was one soldier on duty, just sort of waving people through, as if it was any other day. You could see some defensive positions when we hit the highway out of Baghdad, traveling west toward Jordan, but not many. There were no huge troop concentrations. There were neither a lot of tanks nor artillery. You did not get the feeling that the city was well defended. That really surprised me.

We stopped to refuel about 100 miles outside Baghdad. Parked next to what looked like a military compound was a big trailer, maybe a fuel truck, which had clearly been targeted. I don't know if it was by a missile or by a bomb but it was completely destroyed.

We saw more signs of destruction as we got closer to the Jordanian and Syrian border. We knew that U.S. Special Forces were operating in the desert and had taken over the airstrips, and we could see possible clues that they'd been working on the ground. There were shot-up Iraqi military vehicles: buses, trucks, trailers. There was even a huge crater with rubble all over the road that looked like it had been targeted [by] a missile or bomb - though we could no longer tell what would have been there.

It was not until the Iraqi border that the searches began. There were more people on duty than normal, and they seemed much more serious. There was even what appeared to be a contingent of Iraqi intelligence personnel. They were not involved in any searches but stood and watched really carefully. We had to unload everything as the Iraqi customs people went through all our bags. The whole process took about four or five hours. Then we were able to drive out and drive into Jordan.

ROBERTSON: Rym Brahimi, Brian Puchaty, our cameraman, Ingrid Formanek, our very respected producer, and I went to Jordan... One of the difficult things was that the Iraqi Ministry of Information had insisted that when we drove to the border we had to take one of their officials, in fact our normal minder... When we were forced out this time, we actually had to send a car. We were waiting for two hours to leave, and we actually had to send a car to the minder's house to pick up the minder and bring him to the hotel so that he could escort us out of the country. He didn't want to drive to the border because it was too dangerous.

□ Possible Consequences

ROBERTSON: Would I have put my whole team in jeopardy or just me? That's the big question. The teams that had gone out before had been really thoroughly searched, and if they had anything that they shouldn't have on, one team was made to go back to Baghdad. And there was [always] the potential that they would try and do that. However, we were now leaving with the war actually in progress, and I didn't think that they would do that sort of thing if they caught us. And I thought also that if they did anything they could pick up me and let the others go. I calculated that it could be done, that the stuff could be hidden. I'd done it before. If something went wrong on the road, if we were targeted for some reason or involved in a shootout on the road, even just a few miles from the border, all of these things were going to be absolutely essential to our survival. If you are lying in a ditch in the middle of the night, how are you going to get yourself out? So, it seemed to me to be a pretty important risk to be taken. The consequences could have been quite severe.

E. Returning to Baghdad under U.S. control

ARRAF: It was extraordinary when I first came back, absolutely amazing, like being released from jail, like being able to breathe again. I don't want to be melodramatic, because there were so many horrible things that happened to Iraqis, they actually were in jail, so I shouldn't use that metaphor. But, I am trying to get across what a dramatic difference it was to be able to walk down the street without being followed, to be able to have conversations with people. That's really the main thing. All these people who I've known for years and known that they couldn't tell me their real stories, to be able to talk to them was such a blessing. All of a sudden, everyone had a million stories and everyone wanted to talk. Someone said to me that every Iraqi could write a book about his life under Saddam Hussein. It's absolutely true. They just have amazing stories, almost every single person there.

ROBERTSON: Well, for me, that was the hardest moment, going back in and seeing the journalists who had been allowed to stay and cover it. I hadn't been too bothered leaving. But

going back in and seeing those guys who had stayed, that was a tough moment for me. But this was everything I had wanted it to be. It was great to get back in, great to get to report the story without being constrained by Iraqi minders, great to try and go out and find people you had talked to before and find out what they were really thinking because they had never been able to say, to find out about all of Saddam's secrets.

BRAHIMI: It was really interesting because, under the previous regime, when we went out into the streets to interview people accompanied by minders, people would be afraid, they wouldn't necessarily speak their minds. You'd have to really convince people to talk to you on camera. And if they did, they would just sort of come up and most of the times toe the government line. If not, they would try to talk, and you'd have to read between the lines. Most of the time it was very hard getting information. You'd get interesting sound bites here and there, but it was a lot of hard work.

When we returned, all of a sudden we're in [a] country where there was total anarchy. It was total chaos when we first arrived. You're going from one extreme to another. You are going from a very extreme, very authoritarian type of rule to nothing, a total void, because the Americans themselves were grappling with how to bring things together. So, you're in this total chaotic state where people are still looting. We'd go and talk to people as they were looting, and they would talk to you as they were moving a chair here or a desk. It was crazy.

But, what was amazing was the fact that, when you went out with a camera, all of a sudden we were surrounded by hundreds of people, a lot of them in passionate or angry ways [trying] to express their concerns. Whereas before people would look from afar or run away, or just wanted to be in front of the camera and have their pictures shown but never talked. [Now] they would all come up to us and say, "You're the press. You're the media. You have to say what's going on here. You have to tell the rest of the world. Look at this, we have no this, we have no that. I can't feed my children." Everybody would come and pile their grief on us. In a sense, it was a totally, radically opposite situation from the one we had experienced there before.

Discussion Questions

1. Why does Arraf refer to pre-war Iraq as "a 'black hole' for journalists"? How did "control" impact the flow of information there? What do you think Arraf means when she says, "Every step of the way required countless ethical, professional, moral decisions that were immensely difficult"? What circumstances might have forced the journalists to make these decisions?
2. Who is Nic Robertson? What was his role in reporting the war in Iraq? Explain the challenges that he and his colleagues, Jane Arraf, Rym Brahimi and Darren Bull faced as they reported what was happening in Iraq. Who were the "minders"? Why were the journalists assigned minders? What problems arose when the minders doubled as translators?
3. Why were Robertson and the other CNN crew members expelled from Iraq in March 2003? Describe some of the sights and sounds Robertson noted as they fled to Jordan.
4. What observations do Arraf, Brahimi and Robertson each offer about their return to Baghdad under U.S. control? What is anarchy? Why was Iraq in a state of anarchy immediately following the war?

Chapter 7: Reporting from the Front Lines

It wasn't that the role I did as a journalist was anything unique from what I've done in the past. It was the fact that it was live – the fact that the viewer saw and wondered, just as I did, how the heck is this thing going to end? How is it going to turn out? And it was sort of a very candid look, not just at the Marines, but at the journalists in this case, the CNN team caught up with the Marines, and you really have two groups of people struggling to survive. And I think that's what made it very compelling. If you want to call it, it was the ultimate reality television.

Martin Savidge, CNN news anchor and national correspondent, embedded with the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines

A. Meet some of CNN's Frontline Correspondents and Staff

Walt Rodgers

Walter Rodgers is a senior international correspondent for CNN based in London. Rodgers was embedded with the 3rd Squadron of the 7th U.S. Cavalry. He covered news from the Cavalry as it rolled toward Baghdad. Rodgers used a telephone and a videophone to provide the latest reports, many during the cavalry's movement and some during intense fire.

Christiane Amanpour

Christiane Amanpour is CNN's chief international correspondent, and she is based in London. During the war in Iraq, Amanpour anchored CNN's coverage in the first 24-36 hours of the conflict. Amanpour then went into the field and reported from southern Iraq, where she covered the movements of British troops. In April, she moved to the Baghdad area and was in the Iraqi capital just after the city fell. Amanpour stayed in Baghdad for two weeks to cover immediate post-war stories.

Brent Sadler

Brent Sadler is CNN's Beirut bureau chief. In 2003, Sadler traveled to Iraq to report for the network during the war in Iraq, where he provided several reports, including a package about U.S. paratroopers securing a northern Iraqi airfield in the early stages of the conflict.

Sanjay Gupta

Dr. Sanjay Gupta is CNN's medical correspondent and a practicing neurosurgeon. During the war in Iraq, Gupta reported as a guest of the U.S. Navy's medical unit, the "[Devil Docs](#)." He provided viewers with exclusive reports from points along the unit's travel to the outskirts of Baghdad, where his group delivered emergency medical care near the front lines from a mobile field hospital known as a Forward Resuscitating Surgical System (FRSS).

Martin Savidge

Martin Savidge is a news anchor and a national correspondent for CNN. In 2003, Savidge delivered on-the-ground coverage of the crisis in Iraq and related military buildup in Kuwait. Afterward, he worked from the front lines as one of CNN's embedded journalists. Savidge reported from his position with the 1st Battalion of the 7th Marines, often during battle and regularly with exclusive footage.

B. In their words...

In what became journalistic history, CNN correspondents were at the forefront of the U.S.-led war against the regime of Iraq's Saddam Hussein. Whether they were embedded with the U.S. military, stationed at regional bureaus or involved as unilaterals (correspondents who were not assigned as embedded reporters) or day-trippers into Iraq, CNN journalists canvassed the region, reporting on military maneuvers, political affairs and personal struggles. What follows are some of their stories.

□ Impressions of the troops

RODGERS: They treated us warily at first, as they rightfully should have. We had the privilege of living beside them in a camp in Kuwait for about a week first. We did a story or two out of there. We "chatted them up." And we let them use our satellite phones to call their wives and their mothers in Puerto Rico or wherever. Then, they said, "Hey, those reporters, they're not such bad people after all." Then, they'd open up. By the end of the trip, every darn soldier was working like a reporter for you. They were all cub reporters. They'd say, "Hey did you see that? You'd better report that." They'd help you out. The relationship built constantly as we went along, particularly when we were under fire for about 14 days. Then those guys would go out of their way, even while they were fighting, to make sure we were sheltered and protected. If we were taking fire from the right side of the road, they would pull their tank up beside us to shield us from it.

□ Personal and physical challenges

AMANPOUR: In terms of the personal challenges, well I think those were enormous because it was extremely fraught with incredible danger and incredible hardship. Being in the desert, just the basic personal challenges of no hygiene, basic to poor food supplies, very little sleep, having to service the network almost 24 hours a day over and over and over. Those challenges were difficult. Getting sand into all the equipment, which causes breakdowns and havoc, the heat, the inability to get to some of the stories, those were all personal challenges. And then of course, the constant fear of the Iraqis potentially using weapons of mass destruction, for instance gas, chemical weapons, biological weapons. We went through a lot of missile alerts where people yelled, "Gas! Gas! SCUD! SCUD!" and everybody had to put on their masks and jump into trenches. And there were no SCUDs, and there was no weapon of mass destruction launched, thank goodness. But all of that, you know, makes for a good bit of tension...

GUPTA: From a physical standpoint, it was 120° out there; there were sandstorms. The first time I went out, I didn't have adequate eye protection. The sand just gets everywhere, and your eyes are the most vulnerable. Even with the basic goggles I did bring my eyes were completely filled with sand and [I] could barely open them in the mornings. It was obviously very difficult to do your job with that sort of thing. And, you know, I probably would have brought more baby wipes and more stuff like that, just for hygiene purposes. There were no showers; there was no running water; there was no cold water; there was no hot water. You just had to put yourself in that situation and figure out everything that you needed. It was 120° during the day and sometimes 40° at night, so you need to have proper clothing and all that stuff.



CNN's people and equipment had to withstand the harsh conditions of the desert. Here, a satellite stays in place during a sandstorm.

The convoy in front of us got ambushed and we thought we were going to get ambushed next when a couple of Cobra helicopters came in and cleared the area, or "made it hot." That's a terrible sight to see. When you make an area hot, you basically kill everything in sight. I never felt directly threatened. I never felt like I was about to die. But there was always a sense of danger, and you slept at night and you were afraid that you would wake up and find Iraqis around your camp. It was sort of a general sense of panic, I guess, throughout.

RODGERS: [Out in the desert] it was dirty. You stink; you sweat. You can live with that. The worst smell is rotting dead human flesh. That's so strong at night that if the wind changes and blows it in your nose it will wake you up. That's how putrid it is. The worst thing to look at? I learned a trick years ago in places like Sarajevo where I'd see 60 or 70 people dead. I never let my eyes focus on any dead person's face or any dead person, per se. I'd just keep swinging my eyes without ever locking on anything. When you lock on anything, it's riveted in memory. I did not want any gory pictures riveted in memory... The guns are loud, but you expect that... For the tactile sense, the worst thing of all is the dirt and the grit. In a sandstorm it's really awful, awful, awful. It gets in everything. It took me four days of showers back in Kuwait to stop digging dirt out of my ears. You forget the bad stuff and remember the good stuff, the camaraderie, the laughs, and there were [precious moments](#) which were absolutely lovely, which I will cherish the rest of my life.

SAVIDGE: If someone says, "Well, what's the difference between covering a war and being an embedded journalist?" the striking difference, I suppose, is that for however long you are embedded, you are constantly exposed to the dangers and the environment, especially the stress environment, of being with the soldiers. When you are covering the war, a lot of times you'll go to the front maybe for a day or two and come back; you're off for a few days, and then go back in again. There's not this long-term exposure that you have when you're embedded with military forces. Plus, you don't have the access, meaning you aren't right up front at the tip of the spear. That's a good thing and a bad thing. The good thing is you get great pictures and certainly good stories; the bad thing, of course, is the fact that you are right up front and can suffer the same fate of the combatants, even though you're not a combatant...

□ Political challenges

AMANPOUR: I think the obvious political challenge is that, unfortunately, the times we live in right now in the post-September 11 world, the U.S. media has little space for differing opinions. As you know, there is a vast, sort of conservative, juggernaut, which tends to basically criticize opinions that differ with the Administration. People who raise questions and try to tell the whole story are accused of being unpatriotic. As reporters, particularly at CNN, we have an international audience as well as a U.S. audience. We're obliged at CNN to give the whole story from all sides, regardless of the political bias or the national preference. So that was a bit of a challenge.

□ War stories

RODGERS: One of the interesting stories, this is really funny, is we were rolling through the desert, north towards Baghdad, and we were getting within 60-80 miles of the place, and I was reporting this as best I could without giving away our exact position. I was reporting this and there was the Iraqi Information Minister saying we were still in Kuwait, and that I was making all this stuff up. Somebody asked me in a live shot, "Well, this guy says that you guys are lying and you are making all this stuff up."

I just looked in the camera and said, "I'll stake my credibility against his any day of the week." And the funny part about [it] was, of course that made it back to Baghdad and



Embedded with the 7th Cavalry, Walter Rodgers provided live reports from the battlefield in Iraq.

that Iraqi Information Minister, the one they called "Comical Ali," he got furious. He was very mad at CNN, but of course, we just kept coming north, then he disappeared.

GUPTA: I have a set of skills that are a little bit unique in that I do neurosurgery, and they did not have any neurosurgeons out with these Forward Resuscitative teams. Neurosurgeons are in the far rear; they are on the ships in Kuwait city and in Germany. What happens is that sometimes injuries occur, and if this person cannot be resuscitated, operated on, or treated within a certain amount of time, they statistically become much more likely to die. And that was sort of the impetus. The first person that came in was a child who had been shot in the head. The doctors who I had been with a couple of weeks at this point, they knew my background and asked me if I would evaluate the child. Together we realized that the child had minutes to live with this amount of blood and metal in his brain. So, I took the child to the operating room and did the operation, and did not think twice about it. I thought that it was the right thing to do. It sort of struck me as a little bit odd afterwards when people were questioning whether or not I had crossed the line. I thought crossing the line would be not doing the operation, holding up my press pass and saying "Sorry, can't help I'm a journalist."

SAVIDGE: On [April 9] our vehicle broke down. We had constant mechanical problems, and just as we were about to make what we thought was a triumphant entry into Baghdad, the fuel pump on the vehicle, which had been giving us fits, decided to quit. And it quit just at the moment that the column was forming up, and this caused a bit of a logistics problem. Initially, if the vehicle isn't working, you're forced in the back, which is considered safer, because if your vehicle is being towed, you're a much bigger target than if you had your own means of movement. But other troops, advanced troops, from our Marine column had gotten into the city and done a quick look around. They said it was quiet; lots of people on the street; don't see any of the bad guys. A decision was made between us and the commander. I said, "Look, we really want to be up front; this looks like it's going to be the last hurrah." And he agreed, he said, "Well, you know, it doesn't appear that there is going to be too much in the way of opposition." So we took a relatively, probably unwise, decision and felt that circumstances warranted it would be okay. And that meant towing our vehicle behind another Humvee at the very front of the column, but about five vehicles back in the column.



CNN correspondent Martin Savidge takes a break from the heat.

Scotty [Martin's cameraman] was at the very front. We were being [driven] through the streets, and of course, at the same time, CNN is simulcasting and showing the statue coming down in jubilation and celebration. And we saw the same thing as we entered from the southeast portion of the city: people on the street, people waving. And it was really nice to see the looks on the faces of these young Marines who had fought to get to where they are, and to be welcomed, as perhaps no other military in modern times had been welcomed since the end of World War II. So we're enjoying that, savoring that moment... And suddenly, we come around the corner to a street that led to Baghdad University. I didn't know the University was there, but there was a wide-open campus, a lot of buildings. And we should've known, should've been tipped off, that the streets were empty. That should've been an indicator, because I've often found, in other situations, the public is pretty smart. They know, those that live there, they know who the good guys and the bad guys are; they know where it's safe; they know where it's not. And the fact that there was nobody celebrating on that street should have been a clear indicator. But we were still advancing; we didn't really give it much thought. Then suddenly, at the front of the column, as they started to cross the bridge of the Tigris, a lot of gunfire, a lot of heavy automatic weapons fire. And that was a tip off; something was wrong. And I began communicating to Atlanta, "We

hear a lot of gunfire up front; there's something happening at the front of the column." And I could barely get that out when there were explosions to the sides, and these were RPGs which were being fired from the inside of the campus of Baghdad University.

Well then the column breaks apart, not in a chaotic way, but, that is, you don't [sit] there in a straight line to be attacked. You break off, and some troops dismount and take up defensive positions behind walls, behind buildings, and begin trying to move in on where they perceived the fire was coming from. Other vehicles take on an attack role themselves; they have to start flanking; they have to start moving. The key here is everybody starts moving in a hurry. And the thing is, we're attached to a Hummer that is now in attack mode, doing very aggressive, diversionary tactics, and we're still stuck to the back of him with a tow bar being dragged along in all of this. And it was never intended to go this way. We're now being dragged over a boulevard that had a grassy-treed divider; we're being dragged over that; we're being thrown over curbs; we're doing almost 90 degree turns, and getting thrown everywhere inside this vehicle, like a tennis shoe in a washing machine. And we were still on the air. I don't know how the connection maintained itself, but it did. And you're trying to describe what's going on, and at the same time, you're trying to hang on, and you're also trying to figure out what is really happening.

There were a couple of times we would stop, and we thought, Okay, get out. And I'd get out, and the cameraman, well the engineer who's being the cameraman, would get out, and we'd try to get a better view. Well then the Hummer in front of us takes off again without warning, and the next thing you know, we're water skiing down the street being dragged by the cables that are attaching us to the vehicle. So we claw our way to get back inside, and manage to do that. And this is when I



CNN cameraman Scott McWhinnie with U.S. troops in Iraq

see an armored personnel carrier, what they call an Amtrak – the Marines have – with my photographer, Scott McWhinnie in the turret, in the commander's position. And I see it just in time to see the vehicle ramming the wall of Baghdad University as they try to punch a way to get in, because they're getting all this intensive fire coming at them, and they realized they've got to get in to the University if they're going to stop it. And so the wall comes down, and the next thing I understand is that we are going to be dragged through the same wall that the armored personnel carrier has just gone through. The wall is down, but there's a huge pile of bricks. And we get dragged, literally kicking and screaming, into the heart of the battlefield. And then instantly, because it was a field, like a farmers' field, became bogged down; the front wheel got blown out, the back wheels are now all up to the axles in mud, and our tow vehicle is no longer able to pull us at all, and is frantically trying, literally, to tear free from us. We're screaming to disconnect the tow bar, and they jumped out and did that and rode off. So now we're stuck in the middle of the battlefield and more rockets are coming at us and a tremendous firefight has broken out. The only thing between us and the university was a thin line of Marines that you see on the videotape. They were in a trench where Scotty is, filming, immediately behind them.

Now we've got two problems: we're still live on the air, but we realize we're now abandoned, not because the Marines were scared; they had to go fight the fight, and we couldn't. And we realized that if we were to get out of this situation, we would have to do it ourselves. That meant, one, changing a flat tire that is buried so you had to dig it up, and two, fixing an engine that was broken, and three, figuring out to how get ourselves reversed out of the circumstance. So the

engineer, immediately he jumps out with the bullets flying, lifts up the hood, and just goes to work on the engine. And our security consultant, he jumps out and starts working on fixing the flat tire. And I'm running around like an idiot going, "Can I help? Can I help?" you know, like a little kid jumping from one to the other. And they're like, "No, no, you can't help me. Go see if you can help him." And I go over there, "No, no, there's nothing you can do." And I got so frustrated so I said, "Okay, you know what? I'm making coffee." And I just dug out this little kerosene stove, put it behind the vehicle and I had a cover. And I just sat there like a father waiting for his baby to be born because they're always told to boil water, and that's what I was doing, boiling water. And I made coffee and brought them coffee. As if they really needed it. Its got to be almost 100 degrees, and I don't think anyone at that point was feeling that they were a little tired or fatigued, like they need an adrenaline boost. But I needed to do something. I needed to take my mind off the situation we were in, and so, yeah, that was my big role in the battle of Baghdad – making coffee.

❑ **What they saw vs. what we saw**

RODGERS: All television is fragmentary. The angle on the camera lens is probably 45 degrees from what it's pointing at. You can do the arithmetic, 360 degrees in a circle, less 45 degrees. The vast majority of what's going on around you, you don't see or the camera doesn't see. So, we were in firefights that were much more ferocious and loud and severe and dangerous than just the 45 degrees coming out of the camera lens could pick up. We had bombs falling behind us, to the left of us, and to the right of us, and the camera wouldn't see that. This is true of all video pictures.

AMANPOUR: I think the most obvious difference [between the Persian Gulf War and the recent war in Iraq] was that there was a lot more access for reporters, especially those following U.S. forces. The embedded system was new, and it did give reporters an enormous amount of access. However, I feel that a lot of the advances were mostly technological advances. In other words, reporters had access; they were able to use all sorts of new technology, far more advanced than back in 1991. And to an extent, historic journalistic perspective suffered, because each embedded reporter was only able to see through a tiny keyhole of what was going on, unable to see the big picture. And there was virtually no coverage by the western media of any real combat. I mean, you saw heavy artillery, you saw long distance exchanges, but there was no up close combat coverage and very little casualty coverage, which, you know, can present a slightly distorted view of reality...

GUPTA: What you see out there is just so much more real. I mean everything, the smell to the actual reality of it, is profound when you are in the middle of it. And I think working with the medical unit, all the just terrible things that happened to people, real people like you and me, on a battlefield, all those things get funneled to the medical unit... The types of weapons that are used in a war are different from the types of weapons that are used in an urban city in the United States. These are large caliber weapons. They do terrible things to the body, both adults' bodies and children's bodies. I think, having been through it, in some ways I've steeled myself to ever see anything like that again... The first time I saw some stuff, I was really shocked by it.

SAVIDGE: Did you see as much as I wanted you to see? No, probably not. And what I would say about this is I think we did a little bit of self-censorship; I know we did self-censorship on the part of the network. I didn't do it in the field, but I know on the network level that war is horrific. From what happens to the human form when a person is shot or blown-up, to the tragedy of those who are survivors, to the wounded, to the combatants on both sides, war is just horrible, it always has been. I've never seen a war I liked. And, unfortunately, I think in the modern age, at least with the American audience, a lot of the war is seen through the nose camera of a bomb that is about to hit, or through the nose camera of a predator, an unmanned aircraft, or from an F-16, and it tends to quit at the moment when war is most violent. In other words, the visual goes to hash when the bomb explodes, and that is when war is at its absolute worst.

Did you see enough of it? Well, you certainly saw a lot more of it in this war than we have in any other. And quite frankly, if you saw that 45 minutes, you know, where we were outside of the F-1, if you saw the time we were at Baghdad University, you saw a lot. You know, because for the first time you saw an uncut, unedited live... you saw, even if words weren't spoken, the imagery, the sound. You could almost smell what was going on because it was just so intense. Even coming over the relative, problematic satellite-tracking problem, you got that visceral sense of combat, which I think is quite telling to a vast majority of an audience that's never even served in the military.

Discussion Questions

1. What were Walt Rodgers' impressions of the troops? Why do you think that the troops, in the words of Walt Rodgers, "treated us warily at first"? How did Rodgers win their trust?
2. What personal and physical challenges did the embedded correspondents face? What was the "constant fear" to which Christiane Amanpour refers? Did this threat ever become a reality?
3. According to Martin Savidge, what is the difference between covering a war and being an embedded journalist?
4. How did each of the war stories presented offer a different perspective on the war in Iraq? Do you think these different perspectives are valuable to the public? Why or why not? How did the experiences of the correspondents differ from what you saw on television? What does Walt Rodgers mean when he says, "All television is fragmentary"?
5. Of the war stories you read in this resource, which made the greatest impression(s) on you? Why?

Chapter 8: Producing the Story 24/7

From a production standpoint, it becomes less about war and more about a major news story, and it's about having the resources in the control room to be able to produce the best TV in that live storytelling fashion. And that we had.

Sue Bunda, senior vice president of CNN/U.S.

Learning how to produce a war live became the focus of CNN's journalists – from executives to producers and from editors and animators to anchors. Following are the reflections of journalists who made history.

A. Producing the Ultimate Live TV Experience

So it was really two important things: one was to capture the action and get it on immediately, and the second thing was explain to our audience that which they could not see, and that we did graphically.

Teya Ryan, executive vice president and general manager of CNN/U.S.



CNN's control room during the war in Iraq.

While the newsgathering division of CNN reported the stories from the frontlines and surrounding regions, CNN's journalists responded to the challenge of how to produce a war that was happening in real time. Teya Ryan, executive vice president and general manager of CNN/U.S., oversaw on-air production for CNN/U.S.'s war coverage. Here she reflects on the dynamic nature of covering war live 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

□ Changing on a dime

RYAN: Certainly, the extraordinary, almost life-changing situation, if you will, for journalism was this war, in terms of how we cover it. Being live in the middle of a war zone clearly has never been done before; it was a first... You begin to learn over the course of the days of covering this because it was an entirely unique experience. You fly by the seat of your pants. You know, Walt

Rodgers called in, and he's on convoy into Baghdad, and you stay with it as long as you can. What you have to do in situations like this, in many ways, is just put your best people in the control room who are able to change on a dime, roll with the punches; it was the ultimate live television experience. That's what CNN does best. [Another goal was to] get the journalism right, which is what we did. We spent hours making sure that we were right about the information. We didn't want to be wrong once, and I think that CNN consistently got it right. We reported correct information. In many ways, [you] just learn how you do a war coming at you live.

□ Making programming decisions

RYAN: You know, in many ways, the decisions we made during the war are very different decisions than you make during regular programming, because the decisions you make in such a live news event are reactive. You have a sea of information that comes into you. You can't do a lot of newsgathering because it's an event that's happening in front of you. You're not controlling the event; you're only riding the tiger. So, in many ways, the information, while vast, is narrow. So, in a way, the programming choices are very simple. What's coming into the building that you feel is the most relevant journalistically, most immediate and happening now? And you make your choices based on the menu that's coming in. We certainly emphasized our embed reporters and took them whenever they came up live. I would say that the editorial choices were based entirely on what was the action at that moment. But the other choices that were made that were significant were to make sure that our audience had perspective on what was happening... So it was really two important things: one was to capture the action and get it on immediately, and the second thing was to explain to our audience that which they could not see, and that we did graphically.

B. Providing the Big Picture

People were saying, "I've never seen the big picture. I see one unit here." You get the complaint? I had it from CNN. I had it from viewers. "You never saw the big picture. I'd look at one reporter, and it looked like he was in the middle of the end of the world. I'd look at another guy, and they're just driving along as if no one's in the country to stop them. And it was confusing. I couldn't figure out which way the war was going." And my response to that was, "Well, hello, and welcome to the general's world because this is the stinking problem."

Martin Savidge, CNN news anchor and national correspondent, embedded with the 1st Battalion, 7th Marine unit

One aspect of embedded reporting during this conflict was the feeling by some that it was like, in the words of Martin Savidge, "looking through the binoculars backwards." Rick Davis, executive vice president, CNN Standards and Practices, addresses the challenge of being able to provide the television audience with the big picture of the war:

DAVIS: I would say it's pretty hard when you're doing real time reporting to make sure that you properly put things in perspective. In other words, how do you get the big picture for the viewer on television when he or she can't, as with a newspaper, turn the page and go on to another story? Because we turn the page for the viewers; we move on to the next story when we choose to... We do a timeline of the day, but if you miss those, and you just came in and you just watched for 45 minutes and all you saw was a firefight from one location, then you had to go to work or do what you had to do, that draft of history for that day wasn't complete for you. So there were daily wrap-ups on our network and others where you kind of got the big picture. But we wouldn't want to get away from this really... these embeds and these other things, where you've got the ability to take people live to the battle zone. People hadn't had an opportunity to do that in previous conflicts. So that was amazing and compelling and terrifying and scary in some cases. But it gave you a better perspective of what soldiers go through, but at the same time it may have meant that you weren't getting the big picture that day.

❑ The Map Table

KRIEG: The map table was...something we had to do every day. The generals would say to me, "I need some more aircraft carriers." It's not like they did it overnight. It took time to get them. They thought we just cut them out of cardboard or something.

We had to stay ahead. We'd say, "You know, general, we have the next 48 hours. But it takes two or three days to make these animations."... What you don't want to have happen is that you put these big things up and the Pentagon calls up and says, "You guys look like idiots. You just used this tank. We would never use that tank."



Miles O'Brien and Ret. Maj. Gen. Don Shepherd discuss the war in Iraq using the map table.

Jamie McIntyre is CNN's senior Pentagon correspondent. He offers this perspective:

MCINTYRE: What we tried to do is look at what was being reported from all of our embeds. We just tried to watch CNN, and then tried to figure out what we could add. What would be value added to that? What are they not seeing? What are they not able to see from where they are? And often we would learn a lot from the day reporters. That would give us questions we could ask at the Pentagon... It was a very difficult thing just to get a big picture... But, what we were trying to do was fill in some of the gaps with our sources at the Pentagon. It was a little different from the way things usually [happen], because normally when something happens, the reporters at the Pentagon are the primary source of information. When something with the troops has happened, we're getting the reports back at the Pentagon, we're piecing it together and we're telling the primary story. In this case, we weren't the primary source of information. We were sort of the secondary source. We took a little bit of a back seat to the embedded reporters, but that was a good place to be.

D. Putting the Story on Air

The very first day when the war started, I was handling Walt Rodgers and he was the news of the day, so for 12 hours I was on the phone basically 11 hours and 30 minutes, transferring him from control room to control room. He really was a trooper too. He was on air for 10 hours straight, non-stop. He can talk up a storm...

Eileen Hsieh, assignment editor for CNN embedded reporter Walt Rodgers

In a news organization, the control room is where the assembled stories and reports are actually put on air. A producer is there to decide what information is worth airing and what is not, and a technical director uses a video switcher to call up images of anchors, reporters, live shots and taped video. Eileen Hsieh is an assignment editor with CNN's international desk in Atlanta. During the war, she was one of the editors for Walt Rodgers, as well as several other CNN embedded reporters. Here Hsieh recalls the process for taking a story from Rodgers and making it available for air.

HSIEH: Let's say an American soldier dies in Baghdad as the 7th Cavalry was entering the Baghdad International Airport. If we had that news, Walter would call us. He would call me directly, because I'm his editor. And each reporter has an assigned editor each day, and sometimes that fluctuates, it can change from day to day. It depends on how heavy the news is in

a certain region, or a certain division of military. So, assuming that at the International Airport, where Walt Rodgers was, he calls me and says, "Eileen, we've got this news that an American soldier is dead, and he's the first casualty of this operation." He would give me a call and set up a videophone, which is a little device that he can send images pretty quickly through. We have dedicated receivers for it. So, I give him a number to call in and he would call in and the audio and video would show up on a certain receiver that he's assigned to. And once we get him, we call the control room, tell them that this is happening, and we will want them to take Walt to air as soon as possible because he's got breaking news.

Discussion Questions

1. How did CNN news executives plan for the war coverage?
2. What were the goals of CNN's producers going into the conflict?
3. What were some of the challenges producers faced while covering the war in Iraq? How did CNN address those challenges?
4. What is meant by the "big picture"? What challenges did producers face in providing the big picture? In what ways did CNN approach the public's desire to see the big picture?
5. What role did graphics and animations play in the overall presentation of the war coverage?
6. What role did the military experts play in covering the war?
7. What criteria do you think should be used to evaluate the television news media's coverage of the war in Iraq? Explain. How would you evaluate the television news media's coverage of this conflict?

Chapter 9: Getting the Story Right

There are balance issues on showing casualties... A lot of people said, "Don't show any of that." Some people wanted to see it... so those were tough calls we had to make.

Rick Davis, executive vice president, CNN Standards and Practices

CNN Standards and Practices was created to establish guidelines for reporting, to communicate those guidelines to all of CNN's networks and Web sites and to help ensure that those guidelines are followed. During the war in Iraq, Standards and Practices faced the challenge of establishing and communicating the guidelines for both embedded reporting and CNN standards for reporting on the events of the war. The group also monitored on-air coverage of the various CNN networks, conducted daily reviews of the coverage and established procedures for making the tough calls about what was appropriate for broadcast. In addition, Standards and Practices served as a conduit for network employees' questions. Rick Davis is the executive vice president of CNN Standards and Practices. In this interview, Rick talks about some of the tough choices faced by CNN newsgatherers and producers over the course of the war and the thought processes that led to CNN's on-air results.



CNN editors on the international desk during the war.

A. Setting the Standards

DAVIS: My role began before the war in Iraq got started, because it was important that everybody [from anchors to producers to writers] understood what our guidelines were in terms of reporting... It was important to make sure that, particularly on issues of the highest sensitivity... like operational security and the safety of the troops and our own people, that everyone knew our rules regarding reporting, so that we could be aggressive...but not violate any guidelines... So we put out a list of guidelines to the staff on how we were going to deal with our reporting by our embed reporters. We were very public about this. We reached an agreement with the military regarding how we were going to use our reporters that were traveling with the troops. So we had to agree to certain [restrictions on our reporting and rules](#). We signed on to those. We signed on to them knowing that in previous conflicts we didn't have access to the battleground like we wanted to. And this was going to be a compromise for the military and it was going to be a compromise for the news organizations. It was also a compromise for the military because they were going to have us around. We might have been in the way, and we were going to report on them. But there were certain rules to protect the safety of the troops... Those rules went on for pages and pages, and we signed on to that. Now we signed on to it as a news organization, but if everybody throughout this big 3800-person news organization didn't know what the rules were, somebody here could violate those rules and put in jeopardy our relationship on that particular reporting unit and get our person thrown out. Then we would have been at a competitive disadvantage, and we didn't want that to happen. I'm proud to say that it didn't happen, but I'm also proud to say that we didn't pull punches.

B. Making the Tough Decisions

□ How much to use...and what to use

DAVIS: The toughest decision was what to do with material we got regarding the prisoners of war and the video of casualties – how much to use and what to use. The best thing to do in that regard is bring people together and collectively use the decision-making of other experienced journalists and make a call as to when and how to report and whether to show video we got in. We didn't always use everything that we got in. Some of it was too graphic. Some people say, "Show it all. People should have the right to see what you get to see in your newsroom. What do you mean it's too graphic? War is hell, shouldn't I get to see what it looks like when someone's killed? Who are you to decide?" So you have to make that call. Some people would just get outraged if you showed too much. People would get outraged if you didn't show enough. People would get outraged if you showed way too much of the protests of the war. Other people would be upset because you didn't show enough protest of the war. So we'd huddle up and evaluate our coverage about whether we had the proper balance of everything from protests to graphic war footage, and the proper mix of international newsgathering, to domestic coverage of government leaders and military leaders versus what people are saying around the world about this war...

... We struggled for hours as to how much of the prisoner of war video to show and when to start showing it. The Pentagon asked that we not show it until they had time to call the families and tell them that their sons and daughters had been taken prisoners. Yet we had the video of these people. We could have put it on the air and they would have recognized them and they would have gotten word from television rather than from the Pentagon. We don't think that that is kow-towing to the Pentagon; we just think that that's the right thing to do. But the Arab-language satellite networks didn't do that. The material was provided to them by the Iraqis, and they just put it out, and then it got onto other international networks. And some of the family members, through satellite TV, got them off of other channels. So the families started confirming to journalists that it was their son or daughter that they had seen. So then we had to figure out...well, the Pentagon hasn't informed them yet, but they're now saying that they saw it. There were six of them and until we knew each family knew, we'd say six were taken and here are two of their names, here are three of their names, and we had to keep updating the copy as we found out certain families found out. And we wanted to make sure that all the networks and Web sites were going with the same language. So we had to keep updating that copy hour by hour on that Sunday. And then we had to decide how much of that video to use, because we didn't want to see them really being taken advantage of by having the video used in an inappropriate way. So we selectively decided to use about 10 or 12 seconds from each POW, but not so much that they were humiliated.

□ The delay

DAVIS: We realized early on that if we were taping these combats in real time that we are going to have the potential to have a brutal firefight live on television. That would mean one of two things. You'd see a lot of killing on both sides, unedited. How much did you want to show and have it be out of our control? And so what we decided was we would institute a five-second delay, so that if we were in the coverage of live combat, in the control room we could switch over to a delayed feed.

C. Striking a Balance in Coverage

DAVIS: Here's what the difficulty is: for people who watch CNN for long periods of time, they say each hour we do this over and over again...maybe 20 percent of our viewers, were watching around the clock. But most of our viewers don't watch that way. So if we think this is an important

enough story at 4 o'clock, isn't it important at 5, 6, 7, 8...for people who happen to tune in from 5 to 6, or 6 to 7, or 7 to 8? So this is the kind of balance that you have to go through in terms of how much of this are you reporting. Are you overdoing the story? Are you hyping it? And we go through this all the time with other stories around here. Most people don't sit in front of the TV all day, particularly on one network when they have 75 or 100 channels or more. So we try to think we're going to program an hour or whatever it might be for the people who are tuning in to find out what happened today. And so those stories are tough from a standards standpoint because it's more than just an editorial call. It becomes, “What are you really saying about the story?” Of course, there are balance issues regarding showing casualties on a standpoint of the U.S. military versus maybe tens or hundreds of civilian casualties, and how much to show of the war protests, and whether that's a news story or not. A lot of people said, “Don't show any of that.” Well, of course we're going to show that. That's part of what people are doing. People are marching in tens of thousands or more – certainly in this country and around the world – and we had every right to show it. And some people didn't want to see it. Some people didn't want to see the casualties. Some people, that's all they wanted to see. It depends on your perspective. So those were tough calls that we had to make.

D. Copy Editing for Historical Accuracy

DAVIS: Everything that is scripted gets copy edited. Copy editors have a very tough job; they have to make sure everything's right and they have to make sure we tell an interesting story and it includes certain things and doesn't include others. So I just want to say how important it is from a standards standpoint that you have copy editors who understand their role. It's equally important reporters understand that copy editors are necessary and should challenge them and be skeptical in some ways, and make their stories fair and accurate and balanced...so that the viewer gets the whole picture, but most importantly gets an accurate picture.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the function of CNN Standards and Practices? What challenges were presented to Standards and Practices during the war in Iraq? Why do you think this division monitored and reviewed the networks' daily on-air coverage of the war?
2. Who is the head of the CNN Standards and Practices? Why was Rick Davis involved in the pre-war planning? Why did CNN sign on to restrictions on reporting? Why was it important that everyone on staff understand these rules? In Davis' view, in what way was this war a “compromise” for both the media and the military?
3. What were some of the tough decisions Davis and his team had to make in covering the war? How did these decisions have far-reaching implications?
4. What was the toughest decision Davis faced during the war? What factors did his group consider when the prisoner of war video came in to the network? What did the Arab-language networks do when they received this video? Why do you think CNN was so selective in its choice of images from this video?
5. In news production terms, what is a “delay”? Why did the network institute a five-second delay in its war coverage? Do you think this was a good idea? Why or why not?
6. What is the role of the copy editor? Why is it especially important from a Standards and Practices perspective to have “copy editors who understand their role” and “reporters who understand that copy editors are necessary”?

Chapter 10: Looking Back, Looking Ahead

After the statues of Saddam Hussein fell and the U.S. declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, CNN's staff reflected on the journalistic victories and casualties of the war. What follows are some of their answers to concerns about how well the embed process worked and how successful they were in telling the story of the conflict.

A. The Role of the Journalist in Wartime

RODGERS: Everything I filed there, I filed off the top of my head. I didn't write down; I just narrated what I saw. That's what I do and that's what I'm paid to do. I get paid to talk and to tell a story. A good journalist is a good storyteller, and I was telling you the story of what was happening... You know that what you are doing is exciting and interesting and you try to convey that without hyping it. Often we were in situations, which were far more dangerous than I allowed myself to tell, because I didn't want to appear dishonest or exaggerate.

ROBERTSON: I think our job is to give a fair and balanced and accurate report of what's happening on the ground. I think that the language one chooses to do that should be insightful to people, to give them an insight into what's happening and to allow them to almost see it through your own eyes. But you must be absolutely balanced. I think that the need in situations like this to filter out, if you will, some of the language that gets injected into a war situation, words like "the enemy," for example, would be inappropriate reporting for an international news audience. There were two sides, the coalition and there were Iraqis. I think that perhaps, using a word like "the enemy" would be inappropriate from independent journalists, because that is not our job to go in there and take sides. During war, language that is used by officials on both sides can often be quite extreme. That's the nature of wars.

AMANPOUR: I think it's our role to be the eyes and ears of those who can't be there. And if we are going to do that, we have to give as broad and as unbiased and as unpartisan a picture as we possibly can. And I think, to an extent, rather too many people fell into the jingoism of war coverage, and I don't think that serves much purpose... I grew up in the CNN tradition, and most people who've been at CNN as long as I've been at CNN also grew up with that tradition. You know, we were the original unbiased network, if you remember. And particularly, I have grown up in the international culture of CNN. I've always been keenly aware that CNN does not just broadcast to an American audience, but also to a global audience. Our strength is that we are trusted around the world. And in order to maintain that trust, one has to really keep your wits about you, even in the most difficult times, and there's nothing more difficult than covering war... I think that the risk these days for TV journalism, is the more "whiz-bang" the technology, the more Hollywood the storyline becomes, and the more real journalism suffers.

B. Expecting the Unexpected

JORDAN: You can train your people and put them in week-long training courses, and you can provide them with security experts in the field. Some of them are even armed, and you can give them flak jackets and helmets and armored cars, but in the end you just can't guarantee anything. So that was by far the greatest worry and challenge that we had. You want to make sure you don't drop any balls logistically as far as deploying people in places and making sure you have all the visas you need. And money is an issue. It's very expensive to cover a war, and sometimes things you don't really plan on ended up coming out of the blue... For instance, the biggest expense for the war I would have not guessed until we got well into it... was insurance for our people on the ground. And we had days to where just our insurance costs, for one day, [were] over \$100,000... And we had military veterans, retired military people, who were actually riding in that service, and those people cost a lot of money, \$1,500 a day. Well, when you have a lot of them deployed... So, just the insurance and the security experts that we retained on some days just cost us over \$150,000. That's before you pay any staff, locals that help support you.

C. Evaluating the Embedding Process

JORDAN: There are great things about the embed situation from a reporting perspective, and then there are bad things. One thing is that you're basically locked into a unit, to a team, and the team might see a lot of action and it might see nothing. It's a very narrow perspective. It's not a view from a thousand meters; it's a view from ground level. You're not flying in a plane getting the big picture; you're getting an up close and personal view of the war. It's just a narrow view of the conflict, and you can get great stories that way, but it's just a small part of the story. The unilateral correspondents...had some freedom of movement. They could tell different types of stories, but there were downsides to that as well. They did not have [the] access to the U.S. military they wanted because the military was really restricting things to the embedded correspondents. But also it's important to tell the stories of the civilians. You're not embedding with the civilians in population, and you need to be able to tell all sides of the story. And that means telling the stories of average Iraqis who aren't necessarily big fans of Saddam Hussein, but they're human stories that need to be told on all sides of the conflict. And then you had other people on the perimeter of the conflict, like in Israel, in Jordan where there are refugee issues and fears of SCUD missiles and things like that, and they had an important role to play in the story as well. In the end, the embeds couldn't do it all; the unilateral correspondents couldn't do it all; the war-based correspondents couldn't do it all. By the time you put it all together, you get as close as you can reasonably expect to get to a full picture, supplemented greatly by correspondents in Washington, at the Pentagon, the White House, and elsewhere, [who] brought another dimension to the story as well.

MCINTYRE: Having reporters with the troops is something that the news media has been asking for, demanding for quite some time, and it didn't really happen in the first Gulf War. We were limited by the fact that most of the coverage was through tightly controlled pools. So, I think embedding went a long way to help the relationship. And I think it sort of set the standard for how wars will be covered in the future, because people will now expect that, if there is a war, there's no reason that reporters shouldn't be there to cover it... I think one of the lessons for the Pentagon is that, if you are going to embed reporters with your forces, you better win the war, you better have a successful war plan. Because, one of the reasons that the embedding was successful was that the war was a success from a military point of view. There was a point going into the war, about a week in, when things weren't looking so good. The U.S. had suffered a lot of casualties; they hit the sand storms; a helicopter attack had been repelled by the Iraqis; and supply lines were kind of stretched; and some of the arm chair generals who were commenting on the war were starting to complain that there weren't enough forces in there... Now, had that trend continued for days or weeks, and all the reporters were there to report it, the Pentagon would have had a real problems on its hands. So, if you want reporters to report a positive story, then you'd better be doing a good job.

AMANPOUR: The last war the U.S. military fought before the Gulf War was Vietnam, which was a disaster for media-military relations. Basically the media was blamed – wrongly – for losing that war, and the military brought a lot of that baggage with it to the Gulf War. So we were heavily restricted once the war got underway with only very limited access. I think that's changed to an extent, because in the post-Gulf War period, there were a lot of wars that I covered which did not involve Americans going to war. There were a lot of civil wars; there was Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and other such things. And reporters got used to having a lot more access... When people ask me about my concerns about the embedding process, my response is that's it's a fantastic advance from having no access during the first Gulf War, but we have to be careful that we don't substitute technology and carefully organized access for real journalism. We don't want to go too far down the path when the best technicians and logisticians are confused with being the best journalists.

SAVIDGE: It's easy to be highly impressed with military forces. They're tough; they're heavily armed; they have a lot of neat gizmos and gadgets. So you come away with good feelings... And that is the greatest challenge I had as a journalist out there, because you are facing the same

threat. These are people that you get to know. There are friendships that develop, and they are looking out for you, and in some respects, you are concerned about their welfare as well, as human beings. And yet, as a journalist, you somehow have to try to, not physically, but mentally isolate yourself from them when it comes to reporting, trying to maintain that objectivity. And that's incredibly hard to do... Overall, I think that we did a very good job. It certainly wasn't for a lack of trying. Are there lessons to be learned? Certainly. Should we go blindly forward into the embed process again as we did this time? I'm not so certain. I agree embeds are valuable; we should use them again if offered, but we need to look back on the embed experience and not just say, "Hey, we got some great pictures." What are we really saying journalistically? Are we being used by the military? Are we being prevented, as journalists, from telling the whole story?

D. On Journalism as a First Draft of History

MCINTYRE: We are writing, as someone said, the first rough draft of history. There's a whole series of things that occurred in the 1991 Gulf War that were never documented, never told, not really recorded for history anywhere because there were no reporters there to cover it. There were official unit histories and stuff, but a lot of stories went untold. And we did a much better job by allowing a lot more access. For reporters, it's all about access and being able to give first-hand accounts of what's going on, because we are making the historical record of what happened. I think it's very important.

SAVIDGE: I think we have done a fairly good job of representing the events that we knew of when they were happening, at the time they were happening. Once a conflict comes to an end, there's, of course, a lot more information that can be released as a result of the fact of national security issues being in the way; what was key, secret information then isn't so much now. These either can fill out journalists' reports or in some cases, point them out to be totally inaccurate. But we are the first official rough draft, as long as you keep in mind that most rough drafts don't necessarily look anything like the finished product when it's all said and done. My rough drafts are constantly crossed out and scratched out, starting all over again. But they are, at least, the initial taste; they are the initial view that we have; and it is up to journalists who will come after, those that investigate, those that don't worry so much about covering the moment, to hopefully flush out and either affirm or debunk some of the material.

RYAN: I think journalism is, indeed, the first pass at history, but I don't know that journalism offers the historical perspective, and certainly, I don't think we did it while it was happening. I think what we did was, again, to the best of the physical ability, take our audience to the battlefield, take our audience to the moment of the action, take our audience to the place where all of this was happening, and hopefully they got a sense of what was going on. We didn't cover everything; we weren't there at every moment. We didn't see everything, but we did more than has ever been done in a war that fast. In many ways, we probably changed the history itself by covering a war live: that's history making in and of itself. In a way, we made history as well as documented history. But do I think we gave the full perspective on the event? No, that's going to come with time.

DAVIS: The combination of newspaper and television, and then at the end of the week maybe news magazines, and now we're going to start seeing the books that are being written by the correspondents who were on the scene... That's the best way to get history. History should be a combination of all those things...and of course the Internet...this was really the first war covered by the Web in a way that people could really stay on top of things...But better than newspaper and television news, Web sites can go in-depth so that you can get maps and you can get charts and you can get explainers, and it was really whatever the viewer wanted. We could only do so much of that on television, but we'd send you to our Web site that was incredibly in-depth... So people really had, for the first time in a major worldwide conflict, probably more information than ever before.

ARRAF: One of the key stories that would have to go down in history was that amazing Parliament vote in Turkey, when, absolutely confounding all American expectations, the Turkish Parliament voted to reject allowing American troops in who were already on their way, off the shores of Turkey, waiting to land so they could sweep into northern Iraq. Turkey is a NATO ally and a great friend of the U.S., but because of the anti-war sentiment in Turkey, Parliament rejected the U.S. use of their military bases. It changed the whole course of the war, and it changed the region in a sense.

CASEY: The story in the history books will be the post-war story. The war itself was non-exceptional, frankly. Probably the best war story is the professionalism and pride of the military itself, how the individual soldiers acquitted themselves in extended conflict with many months away from family and comforts of any sort. To date, the American soldier comes across as merciful, caring for the Iraqis, and free of scandal or general brutality. The individual American – at war in a strange land with extremely mixed rationales...fighting for a homeland still smarting from the attacks of September 11th, determined not to permit that type of warfare against the homeland [to] recur.

E. Final Thoughts

JORDAN: I think the news media on the whole did a very good job covering the war, because it had better access than it's had to any war in a long, long time. Having said that, no one news organization can provide the complete picture. And as great as TV is, for example, I think that anybody who relied exclusively on television for war coverage was shortchanged, because TV could, and did, do things that provided reporting that you couldn't get in newspapers, for example, and vice versa. And there were great stories that were in great newspapers that you would never see on TV. They weren't necessarily TV stories. There weren't necessarily cameras around in some cases. But there were so many journalists that covered the war, it would be a mistake for anybody to rely on one news organization or one type of media-newspaper or the Web or TV or radio, and say, "All I need are the radio reports," or, "All I need are the TV reports." It's really necessary for people who want to be well informed with the well-rounded picture to rely on a combination of types of media, and a combination of news organizations to get a well-rounded understanding of a story as big as this one.

AMANPOUR: [Regarding the performance of the media in the war in Iraq] it's very difficult to make a sweeping statement. If you're talking about pictures and real time coverage, well, it was phenomenal; nothing had been seen like it before. Now, what does one do with those pictures? That's how I evaluate. What do you do with the access? What do you do with your reporting? How does the network, as a whole, compliment your reporting, providing additional perspective? I think that's how to evaluate it, and, in the end, you know, the evaluation should be, did the reporting prepare the public for the reality we see right now?

DYKSTRA: In the first Gulf War there were reports that the Patriot missiles were widely successful in shooting down Iraqi missiles; that all turned out not to be true. In about two years, all the reports said that the Patriot missiles rarely worked well; the Iraqi missiles didn't hit their targets; the Iraqis missiles were just awful pieces of equipment; a lot of them blew up in the air, never made their targets. So you need to measure what both sides are saying and be appropriately skeptical of both... We learned a big lesson there. We learned it in 1993. So whatever lessons we're going to learn about the implications of coverage, we'll probably learn a year from now. We did a lot of things to be proud of, and we probably did a few things that turned out to be wrong, but just like '91, we'll see.