

Peter O'Connor	Introduction to Journalism
Week 9	JOURNALISM IN WAR
<p>1. Like most of us, journalists belong to a national community. For the best of them, war or the prospect of war can be a professional dilemma. It's natural to support your country when it is under threat. Whatever their private feelings, journalists are as likely to go along with the sentiment, 'My country right or wrong', as most people. But journalists are also obliged to tell their readers what is going on.</p> <p>This is easy when the war is as clearly a case of goodies Vs baddies as it was in 1939-45, when the Nazis were piling up the bodies in Belsen and Auschwitz and Hitler had most of the rest of us designated as racial inferiors. But in most wars there are some very grey areas that force journalists to decide which way they're going to look. These include atrocities committed by people on your own side, 'fragging' (soldiers shooting their own officers or fellows, as happened in Vietnam), deaths due to 'friendly fire', and obvious discrepancies between the official version and what's really going on.</p> <p>In 2003, <i>New York Post</i> journalists knew where they stood even before the shooting had started <a href="http://www.musashino-u.ac.jp/gensha/oconnor/waseda/WJW/WasedaSILSJJournalismWeek11.pdf">http://www.musashino-u.ac.jp/gensha/oconnor/waseda/WJW/WasedaSILSJJournalismWeek11.pdf</a></p> <p>but for most self-respecting journalist there comes a point when they have to stop looking the other way when villages are being burned or enemy operatives are being thrown out of helicopters and start making a nuisance of themselves. The problem is, when journalists stop thinking their country holds 'the moral high ground' or refuse to sign on to shaky ideological catch-alls like 'God is on our side', i.e., when they start doing their job, that is also the very point when they may well find themselves out of a job.</p> <p>So what is the journalist to do in war? Cheer on the nation or tell it like it is? Any journalist who publishes stories which treat his own troops and the enemy by a common standard risks weakening public support for the war, sapping morale among the troops on the ground and, worst of all in the eyes of his colleagues and employer, bringing down sales or ratings.</p> <p>Soldiers are just people, scared something may go wrong and they may never see their family again. Even more than journalists, they need to feel that they have 'a job to do' and that theirs is the just cause. But balanced journalism undermines these certainties. A rounded article can help a soldier from one side realize that the person he's shooting at is more like him than he cares to admit: just another frightened human being. Soldiers who think the enemy is evil make better killers than soldiers who suspect that the enemy might be like them, no better, no worse.</p> <p>These opposing positions are nicely illustrated by two memorable war songs: Barry Sadler's <i>The Ballad of the Green Berets</i> <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LH4-tOqLH94">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LH4-tOqLH94</a> and Eric Bogle's <i>And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda</i>, sung here by Shane MacGowan and the Pogues, is narrated by a legless Australian veteran of the battle against the Turks at Anzac in WWI <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPFjToKuZQMsung">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPFjToKuZQMsung</a></p>	

## 2. World War One: The Christmas Armistice , December 1915

### **A British officer's letter: friend and foe of the dead**

**By a Subaltern at the Front**  
**Thursday December 30, 1915**  
*The Manchester Guardian*



A truce had been arranged for the few hours of daylight for the burial of the dead on both sides, who had been lying out in the open since the fierce night-fighting of a week earlier. When I got out I found a large crowd of officers and men, English and German, grouped around the bodies, which had already been gathered together and laid out in rows.

I went along those dreadful ranks and scanned the faces, fearing at every step to recognise one I knew. It was a ghastly sight. The bodies lay stiffly in contorted attitudes, dirty with frozen mud and powdered with rime. The digging parties were already busy on the two big, common graves, but the ground was hard and the work slow and laborious.

In the intervals of superintending this work we chatted with the Germans, most of whom were quite affable, if one could not exactly call them friendly, which, indeed, was neither to be expected nor desired. **We exchanged confidences about the weather and the diametrically opposite news from East Prussia. The way that they maintained the truth of their marvelous victories because they were official (with bated breath) was positively pathetic. They had no doubt of the issue in the east, and professed to regard the position in the west as a definite stalemate.**

It was most amusing to observe the bland innocence with which they put questions, a truthful answer to which might have had unexpected consequences in the future. One charming lieutenant of artillery was most anxious to know just where my dug-out, the Cormorants, was situated. No doubt he wanted to shoot his card, tied to a "Whistling Willie". I waved my hand airily over the next company's line, giving him the choice of various mangle-heaps in the rear.

They spoke of a bottle of champagne. We raised our wistful eyes in hopeless longing. They expressed astonishment, and said how pleased they would have been, had they only known, to have sent to Lille for some. "A charming town Lille. Do you know it?" "Not yet," we assured them. Their laughter was quite frank that time. Meanwhile, time drew on, and it was obvious that the burying would not be half finished with the expiration of the armistice agreed upon, so we decided to renew it the following morning. They left us alone that night to enjoy a peaceful Christmas.

**I forgot to say that the previous night (Christmas Eve) their trenches were a blaze of Christmas trees, and our sentries were regaled for hours with the traditional Christmas songs of the Fatherland. Their officers even expressed annoyance the next day that some of these trees had been fired on, insisting they were part almost of a sacred rite.**

### 3. News is where the Newsmen are: Nanjing & the USS Panay

**ON DECEMBER 12TH 1937:** Japanese planes bombed the USS Panay, a US naval gunboat anchored in the Yangtze River during the Japanese siege of the Guomindang capital, Nanking (Nanjing). Japan and the United States were not then at war. Japanese representatives claimed not to have seen the US flags on the deck of the gunboat. Japan apologized and paid an indemnity to the US.

**UNIVERSAL NEWSREELS** December 1937: Norman Alley's footage and Graham McAnamee's narration of the Japanese attack on Nanjing segue into the bombing of the Panay by Japanese warplanes. The attack on Nanjing was thus presented as a prelude to the main event, the Panay Incident. As Graham McAnamee narrates it, Nanjing "paves the way for the tragedy of Panay".

As cameraman Norman Alley stays to film the Japanese attack, its victims, and the crowds of refugees fleeing to the city's Safety Zone, the USS gunship Panay waits offshore on the Yangtze, all hands standing by to rescue US citizens from the burning city. Nearby, other ships chartered by the major US company in China, Standard Oil, steadily fill up with Standard's Chinese employees.

The newsreel then shows newsreel staff and newspaper correspondents waiting until the last minute to be taken offshore. Because they are taken on board the Panay, we receive far more news of the Japanese attack on the USS Panay than we do on the subsequent occupation and 'massacre' in Nanjing. In retrospect, the occupation and Japanese control of Nanjing would become the far bigger story, especially on the 70th anniversary in December 2007~February 2008. However, in this newsreel the bombing of the Panay and the fate of US diplomats, naval personnel, refugees and journalists predominate, and the worst was yet to come in Nanjing. In this newsreel at least, we can say that news is clearly with the newsmen, and that its focus and dynamism is closely related to the nationality of the journalists and their publications.

**"A few hours after they arrive the ill-starred Panay is to steam up the river to a fatal rendezvous..."**

**"The newspapermen once more set foot on what to them is home territory..."**

**"Jim Marshall of *Collier's* magazine is here and Weldon James of the United Press. Two Italian newspapermen accompany the Americans."**

Next, US diplomats evacuate their embassy in Nanking "and head for the Panay in cars prominently marked with the American colors" including the "picturesque figure" of James Paxton Hall, Second Secretary of the deserted embassy. Thus, "besides her normal complement of 55 officers and men" the USS Panay carries American refugee US citizens, US naval forces, the press and the diplomatic corps and embassy staff: **"What a precious freight the Yankee patrol ship carries now."**

The attack caused US opinion to turn sharply against Japan, but it would take Pearl Harbor to turn the tide of public sentiment from isolationism to active intervention, otherwise known as war.

4. **LISTEN** <http://www.musashino-u.ac.jp/gensha/oconnor/waseda/Wmp/LordHawHawApril301945492.mp3>

**LORD HAW-HAW, WILLIAM JOYCE**, was a broadcaster and political theorist. Initially, Joyce joined the 'Black and Tans', the violent British semi-criminal military force sent to Ireland to put down the nationalist movement in the 1920s. He was strongly attracted by Fascism and anti-Semitism and joined Oswald Mosley's Fascist movement in Britain before going to Germany and becoming one of its best-known propaganda broadcasters to Britain, where he was nicknamed 'Lord Haw-Haw' because of his upper-class accent.



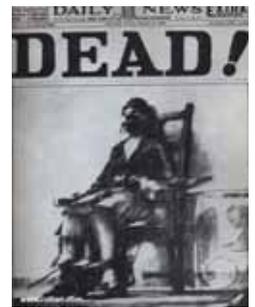
**IN GERMANY**, Adolf Hitler's propaganda minister Heinrich Goebbels began to build a ground-breaking propaganda machine in the early 1930s, initially from outside government, and after 1933, from within. Goebbels was extremely successful in promoting the Nazi Party and gaining mass support for the supremacy of Adolf Hitler, presenting his ideas and policies in terms that appealed to the German people and persuaded opinion leaders in other nations, that included not only Germany's Axis Allies, Italy and Japan, but also appealed to fascists in the US and Britain.

Born in Brooklyn, New York in 1906, Joyce moved with his English mother and Irish-American father to England in 1921. He joined the Nazi movement in England in the mid-'30s and fled to Germany just before war broke in 1939. He was soon taken on as a broadcaster for Joseph Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda. His weekly radio program was transmitted to Britain for about five-and-half years, 1939-1945.

Listen to this speech by Joyce, recorded live as the Allied armies advanced on Hitler's stronghold, on 30 April 1945. Joyce has clearly fortified himself with a stiff drink or two before making this broadcast, but he is still defiant, still convinced that the Nazi mission was the right one, that Hitler, whom he worshipped, was a visionary genius who led a 'just cause'. As a broadcaster, Joyce was the best and most effective propagandist: a convinced believer. He was far more than a mercenary or a hack, broadcasting to pay the rent. In 1945, the British government executed Joyce for treason, denying his claim to American citizenship as he had a British passport.



5. *The Iraq War gave us Abu Ghraib and the secretly filmed execution of Saddam Hussein. In August 2006, Guardian journalist James Harkin reported what he saw as a a disturbing new phenomenon, but a crafty journalist's trouser-leg camera photographed Ruth Snyder's 1927 electrocution in Sing-Sing, and this, alongside the public execution of Mussolini and his mistress Clara Petacci, in 1945, shows that there is nothing new in capitalizing on grisliness ~*



War porn The US army announced on Wednesday that it had arrested four Iraqis in connection with the abduction of the journalist Jill Carroll this year. Before she was released in March, Carroll had been filmed weeping and pleading for her life, in a series of straight-to-internet productions posted by her captors. A minor scandal broke when it emerged that GIs were sending pictures of dead Iraqis to a website with an obscene title [no longer accessible] in exchange for naked pictures of other people's girlfriends. Quietly, under the noses of the broadcast media, sites such as MySpace and YouTube are becoming the repository for gruesome images shot by American soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. Specialist sites such as Ogrish monitor jihadi websites to provide their customers with images of death and dismemberment. Most of us would rather not look, but on an average day, Ogrish receives between 125,000 and 200,000 unique hits on its website.

In 1995, the French social theorist Jean Baudrillard argued, tongue in cheek, that the first Gulf war was a mirage conjured up by the broadcast media. In his 2004 essay *War Porn*, Baudrillard drew attention to the way in which the explicit images of barbarity arriving from Iraq borrowed from the production values of modern porn. The posing of Iraqi inmates for the Abu Ghraib photos were a kind of niche pornography which constituted "the degradation, not only of the victims, but of the amateur scriptwriters of this parody of violence".



There was no longer any need to "embed" journalists in armies, declared Baudrillard, because the soldiers themselves have become immersed in the media war.

## 6. Stan Schnier: the view from New York city

Stan Schnier has been a photographer and a photojournalist in New York City for the last 25 years. He's going to talk us through some of the pictures he's been taking recently. What goes through his head when he's taking the sort of pictures that put the USA in a national or nationalist context? Pictures with overtones of patriotism and heroism or disillusionment and moral wreckage? Why does he shoot some subjects and leave others alone? What's his idea of a good picture or a good photo story? Stan was in New York City on September 11th 2001 but he's not going to talk about the remarkable pictures he took that day – you can see them at <http://stanschnier.com/>. Here's what Stan has to say about what he sees these days on the streets of New York ~

**POWERPOINT:**