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An Ethical History of Photography in Combat and of Combat Photography in the United States during World War II

Molly Shoener
Bucknell University

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by

Molly J. Shoener

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Approved by:

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Adviser: David W. Del Testa

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Department Chairperson: Ann Tlusty

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Abstract:

With the United States' entry into the Second World War, the word "censorship" was seen largely as antithetical to, rather than a necessary counterpart to, victory among Americans. People did not *want* to be censored in their writing, photographs or speech, but it proved to be necessary even before the war began, in order to protect government secrets and the people on the home-front from scenes that were too disturbing. Even before the war had officially begun, there were problems with censorship among journalists and newspapers. The initial response of outrage in reference to censorship in the United States was common among journalists, newspapers, magazines, and radio news; nevertheless, there was a necessity for censorship among Americans, on the home-front and the front lines, and it would be tolerated throughout the war to ensure that enemies of America did not gain access to information that would assist in a defeat of the United States in the Second World War.

The research I have conducted has dealt with the censorship of combat photography during World War II, in conjunction with the ethics that were in play at the time that affected the censors. Through exploring the work of three combat photographers — Tony Vaccaro, James R. Stephens and Charles E. Sumners — I was able to effectively construct an explanatory ethical history of these three men. Research on the censorship and effects it had on the United States brought me to three distinct areas of censorship and ethics that would be explored: (1) the restrictions and limitations enforced by the Office of Censorship, (2) a general overview of war and photography as it influenced the soldiers and their families on the home-front, (3) and the combat

photographers and personal and military censorship that influenced their work. Although their work was censored both by the military and the government, these men saw the war in a different light that remained with them long after the battles and war had ceased. Using the narratives of Tony Vaccaro, Charles E. Sumners and James R. Stephens as means for more in depth research, this thesis strives to create lenses through which to view the history and ethics of censorship that shaped combat photography during the Second World War and the images to which we refer as representative of that war today.

Introduction to Combat Photography, Censorship and Ethics:

With the United States' entry into the Second World War, Americans viewed censorship as antithetical to, rather than a necessary counterpart to promote victory among Americans. People did not *want* to be censored in their writing, photographs or speech, but President Franklin Roosevelt (1882 – 1945) enforced it on December 19, 1941 through Executive Order 8985,[1] establishing the Office of Censorship, whose impact will be further illustrated in discussion about Tony Vaccaro, to protect the United States from breeched confidentiality and to prevent the average person on the home-front from viewing potentially disturbing scenes of war. Executive Order 8985 created the Office of Censorship, and its Director of Censorship, Byron Price (1891-1981), safeguarded Americans against possible disloyalty, providing the office with the "power of mandatory censorship over all international communications not covered by military censorships and over domestic information originating from military installations and certain industrial facilities with military contracts."[2] At the time when the office was originated, the United States was not faring well in the war, with a large number of defeats and stalemates, and they were afraid that the "public might become demoralized or impatient for peace."[3] With the fear that war morale would immediately suffer, there was a desire by the government to censor unfavorable material.

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[1] James Woolley & Gerard Peters, The American Presidency Project: Franklin D. Roosevelt. Accessed on March 28, 2011. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=16068#axzz1JPhrN5VW.
[2] George H. Roeder Jr., *The Censored War*, Yale University Press, 1993, p.8.
[3] Ibid.

Working in conjunction with the Office of Censorship, the Army Signal Corps, whose impact will be further drawn upon in discussion about Charles E. Sumners, was created by Chief Signal Officer, Dr. Albert J. Myer, in 1860.[4] By the time of the Second World War, the Signal Corps grew from a communication network, to "producing training films for army and civilian personnel, and documenting combat missions."[5] Subsequently, the Signal Corps was responsible for documenting "every major military campaign in the ETO (European Theater of Operations) [as well as in the Pacific], producing millions of feet of combat film and hundreds of thousands of developed still images."[6] These are the sources from which the Office of Censorship drew its material, and for whom the combat photographer played a significant role.

The combat photographer, who will be further drawn upon in discussion about James R. Stephens, was responsible for ensuring that the photographs and films to be used in film and media were satisfactory by both the standards of the Army Signal Corps and the Office of Censorship. The images of the war that were captured were not only used in films and for media, but were also utilized for the interrogation and promotion of an understanding and belief in what had occurred in the Second World War. For instance, they were used "to confront German prisoners of war in the United States and the German population with the evidence of Nazi crimes."[7] The ultimate censorship that was implemented through the Office of Censorship assisted in the protection of secrecy of the Army Signal Corps and the combat photographers that worked under the censors.

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[4] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "The United States Army Signal Corps." *Holocaust Encyclopedia.* http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/?ModuleId=10005143. Accessed on March 3, 2011.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.

However, even before the war had officially begun, there were problems with censorship among journalists and newspapers. On March 3, 1941, *Time* Magazine reported that secret information about the Pacific Fleet had leaked to the presses from Army General George Marshall (1880 – 1959), which sparked a White House press conference about ethics and censorship.[8] Although this information should not have been released by the General, President Franklin Roosevelt (1882 – 1945) questioned the ethics of the American people and the publishers "who printed such secret testimony."[9] A few felt that Roosevelt "impugned their professional integrity"[10] by asking that they think about the ramifications of publication of questionable material before retelling a potentially damaging story. Senator Burton K. Wheeler (1882 –1975), an isolationist at the time, had a similar response stating, "The President not only desires to muzzle Senators who oppose him but wants to muzzle the press and keep facts away from the people."[11] This initial response to censorship in the United States was common among journalists, newspapers, magazines, and radio news; nevertheless, there was a necessity for some degree of censorship among Americans, on the home-front and the front lines, to ensure ethical behavior remained intact among Americans; and the censorship, in some sense, would be upheld throughout the war. However, as the war continued, the censorship differed in order to remain consistent with the home-front morale and feeling of war at the time. For instance, at the near close of the war, much more gruesome photographs, such as dead soldiers, were shown to the public, while at the beginning of

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[8] "The Press: Ethics and Censorship," *Time Magazine*, March 1941.
  http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,851085,00.html.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

the US entry into the Second World War, a photograph like this would have been destroyed.

Background to Research:

      This honors thesis presents a thorough and explanatory ethical history of three combat photographers who lived through and photographed effectively the happenings of World War II. The research I have conducted throughout this past year has dealt with the censorship of combat photography, both by the government and the military, during World War II, in conjunction with the ethics that were in play at the time that affected the censors and photographers. In this thesis I will discuss the presence of military and governmental censorship during the Second World War. Because the military is inadvertently a branch of the government, it seems as though these two words should be capable of being used synonymously, but that is not the case. Military censorship was that which was enforced on the front lines by officers and the photographic lab that was present in the war. They were the first line of defense that the photograph had to pass through in order to be viewed by the public. The military censorship was often much more strict than the governmental censorship, especially as the war continued. The governmental censorship refers to the Office of Censorship that was put in place during the Second World War. This office was responsible for further censoring the photographs presented by the military, and also examining the captions that were provided with the photographs. This was the last censor that photographs had to pass through before being released to the public. The military and government censorship of the Second World War will be more thoroughly discussed in subsequent chapters. By

exploring the work of three combat photographers, Tony Vaccaro (1922 -), James R. Stephens (1921 -) and Charles E. Sumners (1923 –2004), I was able to gain a better, and more personal, understanding of the war as combat photographers viewed it through the viewfinder of their camera. Through the use of one-on-one interviews with Tony Vaccaro and James R. Stephens, which I completed during the 2010 – 2011 academic year, in correlation with the stories that Charles E. Sumners recorded in his memoirs *Darkness Visible*,[12] and the recollections that he told to his sister-in-law and editor, Ann Sumners, I have constructed an ethical biography on American combat photographers during the war and the censorship they experienced that was used to shape the feelings and morale Americans on the home-front. Related to images and their uses, the thesis will explore what Americans thought happened and what actually happened during the Second World War with the assistance of primary and secondary sources, but it will be carried by the interviews of three men in the middle of it all.

In researching this topic, I was able to explore the bravery, fear, steadfast nature, and stubborn attitudes that followed many of the combat photographers at this time in a way that would not otherwise be understood. Although their work was censored both by the military and the government, the experiences of the war affected these men in a different manner, which caused the intensity of war to remain with them long after the battles and war had ceased. The treachery of war had too great of an impact for many soldiers fighting to handle, but combat photographers, with their main duty being to capture all aspects of the war for the purposes of documentation, were forced not only to

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[12] Charles E. Sumners. *Darkness Visible: Memoir of a World War II Combat Photographer.* McFarland and Company Inc. (2002).

confront war's terror, but to photograph and thereby deeply remember, each horrific sight that occurred during the Second World War. Using the narratives of Tony Vaccaro, Charles E. Sumners and James R. Stephens as avenues to an analysis of the history and ethics of censorship that shaped combat photography, this thesis strives to create lenses through which to view the Second World War and the images to which we refer as representative of that war today.

Overview of Combat Photographers:

Combat photographers, such as the three men who I interviewed, were willing to use their cameras as a complement to regular weaponry, in order to illustrate the real terror of war and show the opponents' true colors in the face of war, and were seen as daredevils and willing to do whatever it took to get the shot.[13] These photographers wanted to make an impact on people on the home-front in order to help them further understand the reasons why it was important for them to assist the war efforts in any way possible and why they were sacrificing at home. They worked in conditions that would frighten many, but they were able to use their cameras to help the country fight the enemy through the power of a photograph. It is this interplay of military photographers producing images for both their fellow soldiers and the civilian world and the political and ethical tensions inherent in this that interest me.

Combat photography is a practice of war that is extremely important to the betterment of military advantage, the safety of the government, and the citizens on the home-front. The military used photographs to understand and visualize enemy fighting,

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[13] Ray E. Boomhower, "One Shot": The World War II Photography of John A. Bushemi. Publisher: Indiana Historical Society (April 2004).

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equipment and formations. These photographs were also utilized by the government; after censoring the more graphic photographs, the Office of Censorship would distribute photographs to military and civilian news media so that they could be used toward the war efforts, to encourage people to support the war and reduce the consumption of materiel to help the soldiers abroad. On the home-front, people also used the photographs to feel connected to the war and to understand the war more fully. However, it is not just the camera that has to impress, but the men behind the camera.

Methodology:

Initially, I researched both primary and secondary sources on censorship during World War II and its effects on photography of both combat photographers, and photographers who, although not official combat photographers, found themselves in combat and documenting the war, at Bucknell University's Bertrand Library, from books in the university's collections and from the interlibrary loan. Through this effort, I also gained a better understanding of combat photography and the Second World War in a broad sense. After building a large base of general knowledge on World War II and combat photography and censorship during the war, I traveled to the United States Army Heritage and Education Center (USAHEC) in Carlisle, Pennsylvania and conducted more specific research on this topic. This is where I was introduced to the work of Tony Vaccaro, Charles Sumners, and James R. Stephens. Following an informative trip to the USAHEC, I traveled to New York City to the International Center of Photography. There I worked to uncover specific photographs that would epitomize the topic of my honors thesis. Subsequently, I conducted an in-depth interview with Mr. Vaccaro at the

USAHEC, with Mr. Stephens via email, and with the family of Mr. Sumners, which provided me with an abundance of information on each of their individual experiences with combat photography during and directly following the war.

As I gathered and analyzed multiple oral testimonies from each of the three combat photographers, a commonality began to arise in their tone toward censorship and even their undoubted belief in the importance of continued censorship throughout the war to uphold ethical beliefs concerning the Second World War and the work the soldiers abroad were conducting on the home-front. Contrary to what I expected to hear from these men, I learned that they understood and agreed with much of what was required of them because of the censorship. Continued research on the censorship and effects it had on the United States of the World War II era brought me to three distinct areas of censorship and ethics that would be explored: (1) the restrictions and limitations enforced by the Office of Censorship, (2) a general overview of war and photography as it influenced the soldiers and their families on the home-front, (3) and the combat photographers and personal and military censorship that influenced their work. By delving into these specific topics on censorship and ethics, I was successfully able to gain a more focused view of the way in which censorship was received through the soldiers and on the home-front, as well as how the different censors affected men; whether they were military censors or governmental.

Through the use of oral testimonies with multiple combat photographers, the effects of official and self-censorship on the outcome of their work became apparent. These men, with the guidance of censors, were forced to decide what was important to

photograph and what was better left ignored in their line of work. The interviews also explored the ways in which the photographers interpreted the scenes they encountered based on the censorship that they were forced to abide by and how their work changed as censorship and their outlook on the war was altered. Tony Vaccaro initially joined the war as an Army draftee and later earned the privilege to photograph for the military as a combat photographer, had different views of the censorship employed than did James R. Stephens and Charles E. Sumners. The two combat photographers, who were officially military soldiers for the entirety of the war, were much more accepting of the censors than Tony Vaccaro proved to be, in both his interview and his work.

Especially present in the recollections of the men who were official combat photographers for the entirety of their time in the military, the censors were seen as guides and protection for any possible mistakes the military and soldiers would make. For instance, Stephens recalled soldiers acting in ways that were not suitable for people on the home-front to see; men acting in ways that would disgrace the military on the home-front. Because of the censorship, other soldiers did not commonly carry cameras; therefore, solely official combat photographers and photojournalists photographed much of the war, protecting these soldiers from being revealed as slightly distasteful in their actions. Commonly, the only time soldiers would photograph during the war, included happy times. As soldier Donald Todd recalled, "On the front line there were times the sun came out and we weren't being shelled. At these times we threw balls, joked, acted up and enjoyed each other in spite of what we were going through and the buddies we had lost. You remember the good when you are under the pressure of combat and

endeavor to forget the bad."[14] Protection such as this is a luxury that is not present in the current military—with cameras on many devices, people can send photographs that the censors have never viewed, thus negating their presence and ability to protect the military soldiers from social disgrace.

Although the official combat photographers agreed with much of what the censorship restricted, Tony Vaccaro, who was originally hired as a photojournalist, and later as a combat photographer felt very strongly against the censors. Vaccaro felt the hammer of the Office of Censorship when he shipped all of his photographs from the landing at Normandy back to his family and found out that they never arrived. All of the photographs he took up until that point were censored and destroyed, never to be seen again. After this occurrence, he did not mail, or allow out of his sight, any of his photographs again. He felt as though the censors infringed on his creativity and freedom to photograph, because of his prior experience, and thereby did not appreciate the protection the censorship provided for the ethics of both soldiers and the military in general. It was not ethical, censors believed, to send photographs of dead Americans home to people awaiting the return of their soldiers, in the chance that the dead American was recognized and discovered dead through carelessness of the government and media. This was a concern in subsequent wars as well. For example, a photograph taken by *Detroit Free Press* photographer, David Turnley, during the Gulf War illustrated the reaction of a man after learning that his friend had been killed by a horrendous blast.[15] Upon receiving permission to print from the men in the photograph, Turnley submitted

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[14] Donald Todd Interview. January 23, 2011. Conducted via email by Molly Shoener.
[15] *Triumph in the Desert,* Ray Cave and Pat Ryan, editors. New York: Random House, 1991.

the photographs for publication, but found that after some time his editors had not yet received the photograph. The military officials informed Turnley that "they were holding on to the film because the images were of a sensitive nature. They also said that they were concerned about whether the dead soldier's family had been informed of his death."[16] Although eventually published, it was this type of ethical nature that persisted as the war continued, and as wars in general continued. Throughout history, there have been numerous instances where photographs such as this were censored to provide higher war morale and continued support of the war. Vaccaro did not understand the extremity of this importance, and instead stated strongly, "I didn't give a damn…I was going to take my picture."[17] Although some men felt as Vaccaro did, the majority of combat photographers understood the importance for ethicality and censorship during the Second World War.

With all three of the photographers I contacted, I used oral testimonies as the main source of information. This allowed for me to gain a clear perspective of what they thought about photographing the war and how it affected them. I also focused on specific aspects of the war with each of the three photographers. However, while oral testimonies are superior to secondary sources for perspectives, there are problems with memories that I am asking these men to recall. They are simply memories, which have been influenced and altered because of movies, television, and the retelling of the stories. Sometimes the stories could be exaggerated or altered without the teller even realizing he was doing

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[16] Paul Martin Lester, "Military Censorship of Photographs," *Media Ethics Issues and Cases*. WCB Brown & Benchmark, 1994, p. 214.
[17] Tony Vaccaro Interview. August 30, 2010. Conducted at the USAHEC by Molly Shoener.

such. Because of that, I could not rely solely on oral testimonies. I used multiple primary and secondary sources to back the information received through the oral testimonies of the experiences of the three photographers. Because I did not have the option to choose photographers only from a specific unit or year, I actually have three very different photographers that were interviewed. Tony Vaccaro joined the war late and photographed after the war, Charles E. Sumners was stationed in Europe, while Stephens was stationed in the Pacific Theater. Because of this, these three men had different experiences with the war, and there was a chance of very different perspectives of the war and their jobs as photographers of the war. However, they had surprisingly similar stories; all of these men had commonalities in terms of the institutions to which they reported. Each man photographed under the guidelines presented by the Office of Censorship and were provided with the same photographic procedures, restrictions and censors, which made combining them into one fluid piece much more efficient.

Question of Ethics during World War II:

In 1929 the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) created a voluntary Code of Ethics, which was abided to by many regardless of their voluntary nature. This code established that journalists should provide a true and honest story, free of associations that may compromise credibility and resist the pressure to influence news coverage, which is incredibly similar to the National Press Photographer Association's

code.[18] With the establishment of the Office of Censorship during World War II, it was asked of these broadcasters to "provide news, information—and propaganda—to help the war effort."[19] This was meant to protect the ethical responsibility of journalists and Americans alike, but counter-intuitively goes against the NAB code, making it seemingly unethical.   While there is evidence to procure an argument that censorship, and the censorship employed during the Second World War, is unethical, there is a deeper understanding of the importance, toward an overall ethical responsibility, of censorship of the press and military at this time.

World War II held for Americans the responsibility to conquer evil with what was right. Americans felt that World War II was fought "for a moral cause."[20] The American soldier worked to uphold this responsibility, and the protection of the United States, and this protection came with a price—censorship. Though the journalists at the time upheld a voluntary Code of Ethics, to display the truth of a situation, this code had to be compromised for the protection of the country during wartimes through censorship. The censorship employed by the Office of Censorship was present in the press, news, and other sources of media, creating the problem of ensuring that wartime secrecy was upheld, yet perpetuating the citizens' right to know the happenings of the war.[21]   A continued discussion of ethical behavior throughout the course of the war will be

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[18] National Press Photographers Association, 2011, Accessed March 23, 2011.
http://nppa.org/professional_development/business_practices/ethics.html
[19] Stephen L. Vaughn, *Encyclopedia of American journalism*, Routledge Publishing, 2007, p. 159.
[20] Susan D. Moeller, *Shooting War: Photography and the American Experience of Combat*, Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, NY, 1989, p. 157.
[21] Michael S. Sweeney. *Secrets of Victory*. University of North Carolina Press. (2001).

presented more in depth in subsequent chapters, relating the ethicality of the censorship to the role of the combat photographer, the Signal Corps, and the Office of Censorship.

In the case of this thesis, I define ethics as the study of moral values and proper conduct in the context of war. In further understanding of my definition of ethics, as it relates to this thesis, it is important to recognize that there is a necessity for conformity, especially in the case of censorship during wartime, to the principles of societal and professional behavior. By this I mean to expand upon the difference of *good* and *right* in terms of the Second World War and the Americans receiving the war on the home-front. Instead of discussing the consequences of the behavior, good or bad, looking at war in terms of right and wrong allows the war to be considered in terms of actions employed. Although soldiers during the Second World War were forced to act in a manner that may not seem ethical, based on *good* behavior, it was the *right* behavior for the situation. In order to defeat a greater evil, certain war tactics had to be utilized. War is about victory and procuring for the nation what is "right," regardless if obtaining that victorious end ultimately occurs in a good or seemingly moral manner. In the situation of combat photography and censorship, it was necessary for the material to be censored, to ensure that Americans did not resent the terror of the war that we were enveloped in, and although it may not have been *good* for the Americans to be misled in terms of the amount of bloodshed and horror that the war produced for soldiers, it was *right* for them at that time, not to be too enthralled by the war initially. As the war continued, it was also *right* for the Americans to be exposed to more horrific images, in order to prepare them to receive soldiers who were not as happy and safe as previous photographs had

perceived. The aspect of ethical warfare that will be understood more fully through this thesis is that of the ethics of censorship in respects to war. Information, press, letters and photographs were censored to protect the wellbeing of the country and of its citizens. War and ethics may seem antithetical, but the idea of ethical warfare has received considerable attention over time, and will be discussed in reference to censorship of photographs in the following thesis.

Only a few historians have considered ethics and war photography directly, and the scholarly consideration of the ethics of image taking had not received that much attention. For war photography, Jorge Lewinski wrote, "Never before had so many photographers been engaged as at that time—their single mammoth task to record the scale, variety and multiplicity of war activities crowded into the five years between September 1939 and September 1945."[22] The magnitude to which photography had been important during the Second World War was illustrated by the number of photographs taken and the number of photographs on record. Although many photographs captured by combat photographers were censored during the war, they were necessary to illustrate the history what occurred following the close of the war. Lewinski also noted that, "Every image, every frame they shot was scrutinized by military experts to assess its usefulness, its suitability in the overall purpose of winning the war…Rarely did a picture slip through which the military had not approved."[23] This exemplifies the strict manner that the Signal Corps represented in relationship to censorship. Photographs were not

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[22] Jorge Lewinski, *The Camera at War: A history of war photography from 1848 to the present day*. Simon and Schuster Publishing, NY. (1978).
[23] Jorge Lewinski, *The Camera at War: A history of war photography from 1848 to the present day*. Simon and Schuster Publishing, NY. (1978). p. 95.

only censored, but scrutinized by military personnel, so that improper or useless photographs would not be captured by photographers continuously. For image taking and ethics, Susan Moeller's text *Shooting War* has importance because of the illustration of the reality of war and photography. She states, "Even photographs of destruction to things [that were] American were looked at as askance and released with caution. It was a year after Pearl Harbor until the United States had been shown some pictures of the calamity—pictures of roiling smoke, belching fire, and twisted ships. But the navy never (to this day) showed the most terrifying pictures—of the burned and contorted human wreckage."[24] This take on combat photography and ethics influenced me in how I considered the actions of Sumners, Vaccaro, and Stephens in the Second World War on the battlefield with a camera in hand.

In the case of Vaccaro, we explore the Office of Censorship and the way it impacted not only combat photographers, but amateur photographers as well. To ensure that secrecy of the military and of the soldiers' whereabouts, many photographs and letters were highly censored by the Office of Censorship. As will be addressed, Vaccaro had numerous photographs censored and never returned when working as a GI in the Army. In the case of Sumners, we explore the Office of Censorship and its relationship to the Signal Corps' military censorship that faced soldiers on a daily basis. The Signal Corps had a much stricter sense of censorship to ensure that ethical behavior of the military was properly portrayed. Instead of the insistence to keep people from viewing the terrors of war simply to increase war morale, the Signal Corps did so to illustrate the

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[24] Susan D. Moeller, *Shooting War: Photography and the American Experience of Combat*, Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, NY, 1989, p. 204-5.

ethicality of their soldiers. In the case of Stephens, we gain an understanding of the Office of Censorship and the Signal Corps in relation to the role of the Combat Photographer. As a soldier with two hierarchies of censorship above him, Stephens could essentially be careless in the ethicality of photographs he produced, but because of his personal beliefs, he became even more censored than the Office of Censorship and the Signal Corps up until the end of the war—not photographing any dead soldiers in uniform, whether they were American or enemy forces. Of course, a broad range of other memoirs and supporting secondary material supports understanding of the relations of ethics and combat photography, but the words of these three men carry this thesis, emphasizing the importance of the personal factors that influenced the ethics and combat photography produced during and representative of the Second World War.

Importance of the Study of Combat Photography, Censorship and Ethics:

Combat photography and the ethicality of censorship during World War II is a topic that is not widely researched in the manner that I have illustrated.[25] Although there is an abundance of information on World War II, the understandings of the way in which combat photographers felt capturing some of the most disturbing and horrific photographs of all time and the way in which the photographs were censored, both on the frontlines and the home-front have not been uncovered as meticulously and in such a personal manner. A connection to censorship through this topic allows the historian to better understand the difference between what the actual photographer witnessed and

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[25] Core sources on the topic of combat photography during World War II as well as ethics and photography include *Armed with Cameras*, *The Censored War*, *Entering Germany*, *Darkness Visible*, *Military Censorship: A Guide to Sensible Censoring*, *Shooting Under Fire*, *Shooting War: Photography and the American Experience of Combat*, *Censorship and Images of Modern War*, *Privacy, Photographs and the Press*, *Icon of the real war: A Harvest of Death and American War Photography*.

what the recipient of the photographs on the home-front saw. The intense amount of censorship, especially at the start of the United States' entry into the Second World War, kept the American people in the dark about much of what was happening in both Europe and the Pacific. This thesis presents the idea that the censors not only withheld the true dangers of the war, but allowed the people on the home-front to be consumed by the wartime mindset of relying on the media for information about the soldiers abroad. This was illustrated through the censorship of the media, by the Office of Censorship, simply presenting more gruesome photographs when the war efforts lagged and people became complacent; thus dispelling the idea that the photographs taken by the military during the Second World War were all presented to the public. Although these soldiers may have taken photographs of the dead Americans, these photographs were not initially viewed by the Americans on the home-front in order to increase home-front morale and continue the rise of war support.[26] This thesis explains why the censors were present and how they were received by the Americans through examining the Office of Censorship, the military and self-censoring of soldiers and the view of war by soldiers and on the home-front through the use of oral testimonies and additional World War II memoirs.

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[26] As the war continued, more graphic photographs were released to the Americans, in an effort to express the need for continued war support. When Americans became complacent in their war efforts, the Office of Censorship (established in 1941) expunged photographs from the Chamber of Horrors—a secret file of censored combat photography from World War II that was deemed too graphic for the Americans.

Chapter One
Case Study One: James R. Stephens
War and Photography: From the Front Lines to the Home-Front

Background:

December 7, 1941 marked a drastic turning point in the lives of the American people with the attack on Pearl Harbor. Young men like Jim Stephens were faced with the realization that their lives would soon change, as the United States entered the Second World War. Although only one-third of the American men aged 17-35 enlisted in the war, the prestige that was held by the American soldier preceded the men.[1] People on the home-front, through programs such as, the United Service Organization,[2] and from such forces as the Salvation Army and the YMCA,[3] would strongly support their soldiers overseas, and many assisted in any way they could. Through photographs ingrained in the minds of the public, such as the photograph of soldiers raising the United States flag at Iwo Jima on February 23, 1945, newspapers, magazines and other media were able to reach people on the home-front to continue the support of the soldiers fighting the war for the United States. In order to understand the effect war had through photography on both the people abroad and the people at home, this chapter will focus on the view of the war from two perspectives—that of the combat photographer on the front lines and the family on the home-front. It will thoroughly examine the wartime experience of James R. Stephens as he fought half a world away from his country and family, in the Pacific;

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[1] Allan Winkler. *Home Front USA: America during World War II*. Wheeling, IL. Harlan Davidson. 2000. p. 31.
[2] A program established shortly after the US entry into the Second World War, in order to procure morale among military personnel
[3] A program in conjunction with the USO, in which civilian agencies joined forces to later become the United Service Organizations for National Defense (USOND).

exploring the multitude of his and other combat photographers' photographic decisions that shaped the ways in which families on the home-front understood and remembered the war as well as considering the relationship of the combat photographer to the Signal Corps, in order to further consider the ethics involved in documenting a photograph suitable for the American people.

Though the crisis of the attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 and Adolf Hitler's declaration of war against the United States on 11 December 1941 surely terrified Americans throughout the country, it brought a sense of unity to country divided over the issue of war and reengaged a strong sense of nationalism across the borders. All but the most devoted isolationists now had a concrete reason for why the United States should join in the war, and all Americans gained an understanding that war was necessary to protect their homeland. Many older people today still recall what they were doing when the United States was bombed, and even more so their thoughts about war after the assault. People across the nation felt a series of feelings after this attack: "First it was indignation, then it turned to anger, and by the time one went to work the following morning it was determination: 'They can't do that to us.'"[4] This one incident was all it took for the American people to jump into action and ready themselves to fight in the Second World War.

The American people understood almost immediately that the attack on Pearl Harbor marked a new chapter in the lives of the United States and all of its citizens. They recognized that, "[w]ar meant adjustments to new patterns and disruptions to be

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[4] Allan Winkler. *Home Front USA: America during World War II*. Wheeling, IL. Harlan Davidson. 2000. p. 29.

overcome, and forced a rapid growing up."[5] Young men had to join in the war efforts abroad, fighting for their nation, and women had to assist these efforts on the home-front, taking on jobs and working to maintain stability among the family. Not only did the American people feel necessity in entering the war, the government could now breathe a sigh of relief. The crisis marked a turning point in which the United States government and civilians recognized that they were required to respond to this assault in some way, with the most obvious option being to enter into the war. The indecision and lack of consent was over, due to the crisis of the attack on Pearl Harbor, and the United States could enter the war without much, if any, confutation.

One of the soldiers entering into the Second World War voluntarily was James R. Stephens. After working as a news photographer for the *Los Angeles Times*, he knew that his abilities would be well utilized to support the military's photographic needs. After training at Camp Crowder, Missouri in 1942, Stephens became a part of the Photo Assignment Unit 8 (PAU-8) in 1942, which was stationed during World War II in Hawaii.[6] Stephens was stationed in the Pacific for much of the war, where he was half a world away from his family, and kept in contact through media that was present. He recalls being issued 4x5 Speed Graphic cameras when shipping off to Leyte Island in 1944. Stephens recalled that, because of the extremely tropical weather, "[by] the conclusion of combat operations on Leyte Island in the Philippines in January, 1945, the cameras were worthless."[7] The tropical weather, with an annual rainfall of approximately

[5] Allan Winkler. *Home Front USA: America during World War II*. Wheeling, IL. Harlan Davidson. 2000. p. 31.
[6] Email Correspondence Interview with James R. Stephens. 24 February 2011.
[7] Email Correspondence Interview with James R. Stephens. 24 February 2011.

120 inches, was detrimental to the life of his camera, but luckily only needed to work for a few months that he was stationed in that area. As he explained, "There were two main reasons for photographing the war: preserving images for history and for use by major commanders in areas far removed from the action…During World War II there were no satellites, digital cameras, or television. Film had to be gotten from the cameraman and somehow to a photo lab, processed and then placed in a user's hands."[8] Ideally, instant access to photographs and news would be had by people on the home-front, but because Stephens was stationed so far from the country, it was often difficult for others to transport photographs and news back to the United States or even the European Theater in a timely manner. Although this was not his job as a combat photographer, it was the common way to stay in contact with the Army, especially when in the Pacific, and the lag in their ability to transport the photographs caused problems with accurately understanding what was occurring. He created his photographs for the public, and understood and abided by the censors, in order to perform his duty to the utmost of his ability. In order to verify his personal censorship, a Bureau of Public Relations Officer, most commonly an intelligence officer that was responsible for releasing the photographs to the press, would "screen out any pictures that could conceivably giver 'aid and comfort' to the enemy or damage home-front morale. In dealing with photographing for the Army, as well as hoping to impact viewers on the home-front, Stephens learned quickly, a photograph is worth a million words, but only if it has the ability to reach someone's eye. Many photographs went unseen throughout the entirety of the war,

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[8] Ibid.

giving people on the home-front false hope for the men that would return to the United States.

Start of the Mobilization:

A "stringer" news photographer for the *Los Angeles Times* and a photography student at the Art Center School in Los Angeles in 1941, James R. Stephens recalls that he was only twenty years old at the time of the bombing at Pearl Harbor. With this attack and the subsequent declaration of war, Stephens knew that he would be a part of the glory, destruction and efforts of the war as a combat photographer. As he recalled, "From the sixth grade on I was aware that war and the military life would be in my future. With my deep interest in photography and the way it impacted peoples' lives, I wanted to get into the war and be a part of the effort to record it for history in what turn[ed] out to be the false hope that my efforts would somehow prevent it from happening again. An idle dream."[9] Similar to other combat photographers of his time, Stephens' primary objective was to illustrate for the American people the treachery of war, and create a long-lasting impact on future generations, in the hope that this type of brutality would not occur again. He knew that this meant joining in the war efforts.

With the threat of the pending war, men such as Stephens were faced with the first peacetime draft to procure young men for the military in 1940.[10] After the attack on Pearl Harbor and subsequent entrance of the United States into war, all men, ages

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[9] Email Correspondence Interview with James R. Stephens. 24 February 2011.
[10] George Q. Flynn, *Lewis B. Hershey, Mr. Selective Service.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. (1985).

eighteen to sixty-four, faced with the draft were required to serve for the duration of the war, rather than the previous requirement of a one year service.[11]   The quickly approaching war, forced the military to mobilize at a rapid pace, requiring more men to participate than in previous wars.   An advantage for use in procuring Army photographers for the Signal Corps, Stephens was already a professional photographer in his civilian life. As an *L.A. Times* photographer, he recalled, "I saw a lot of tragic and bloody events which prepared me well for what I was to witness during the war as a still photographer. Consequently, I was better prepared for the carnage and bloodshed of the Pacific War than my team mates."[12]   Many men, even the combat cameramen who were photographers in their civilian lives, were not prepared for the brutality and ferocity of the war in which they were participating.

Prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, choosing only practiced photographers like Mr. Stephens was an adequate system for the military.[13]   This practice allowed for the military to ensure that they were receiving the most competent and professional members for their photographic forces.   These men understood how to navigate around the complexities of the camera, as well as how to photograph in a way that would not violate the censors for which they worked, thus ensuring the most precise and effective photograph was created.   However, by 1942, this practice of Selective Service finding enough skilled photographers was not sufficient, and in order to recruit enough photographers to cover the war, the Signal Corps was forced to begin training unskilled

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[11] George Q. Flynn, *The Draft, 1940-1973.* (1993).
[12] Ibid.
[13] George Raynor Thompson. *The Signal Corps: The Test*. Center of Military History: United States Army. Washington, D.C. (2003).

men [and women?].[14]   Because of the immediate necessity abroad, those men who had "little enough skill with a camera at a field parade were hurried overseas to attempt combat photography."[15] They were required to understand the camera from the inside out, the importance of recording the war for future generations, and the ways in which their photographs would be censored, as to not create unusable photographs. Therefore, as the call for combat cameramen increased in correlation to the mobilized units, with an increase from a "staff of 27,000 persons, it expanded to over 350,000 men and women by 1945,"[16] the Signal Corps had to increase the size and scope of its facilities, to better equip the new combat photographers.[17]

Although the increase in the size of the facility allowed more photographers to be trained, the call for combat cameramen continued to grow ever quickly. This called for the men to receive rapid, yet extensive, training and move on to the war abroad. Typically, in three short weeks, the men would learn everything they needed to know about combat photography and being in the war:

> They built hasty fortifications after long marches over difficult terrain, made overnight bivouacs, learned how to use and to protect their equipment under extremes of weather and temperature, and practiced shooting pictures from moving vehicles. They learned the techniques of setting up and using field processing laboratories. They spent a great deal of time mastering map reading, for combat photographers were usually strictly on their own at the front. Since combat photographers would carry weapons at all times, the men learned practical ways to accommodate

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[14] George Raynor Thompson. *The Signal Corps: The Test*. Center of Military History: United States Army. Washington, D.C. (2003).
[15] Ibid. p. 394.
[16] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "The United States Army Signal Corps." *Holocaust Encyclopedia*. http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/?ModuleId=10005143. Accessed on March 3, 2011.
[17] Ibid.

themselves to the carbine, the 45-caliber automatic, and the Thompson submachine gun while packing and using their camera equipment.[18]

These young men were expected to learn everything that was representative of soldiers, as well as learn how to operate a camera, protect their equipment and get the shot without getting shot. They were thought of as the most intense, sometimes even crazy, soldiers on the front. They had to be almost fearless when they were behind their camera, or the shot would be lost because of a shaky hand or a terrified pause. These soldiers had to watch everything happen, similar to other soldiers, but more importantly, they were required to document the treachery and savagery of war, to forever ingrain it in the minds of people on the home-front.

Prospects of War as Regarded on the Home-Front:

The United States has consistently revered soldiers as national heroes, and though these men were young and facing an imposing enemy, they did so in a manner that continued their title. The families these soldiers left behind in the United States, families like Stephens', were constantly overcome by fear for their soldier, but also extreme pride. As Winkler emphasized, "Soldiers fighting overseas sometimes seemed larger than life to the folks back home…they represented the best qualities in American life."[19] Soldiers such as James Stephens risked their lives to keep the American home-front safe, and the people in the United States understood that, which explained the importance soldiers held to their families and friends on the front.

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[18] George Raynor Thompson. *The Signal Corps: The Test*. Center of Military History: United States Army. Washington, D.C. (2003). p. 396.
[19] Allan Winkler. *Home Front USA: America during World War II*. Wheeling, IL. Harlan Davidson. 2000. p.32.

Though the soldiers fighting for victory of the Allies in the Second World War were revered by the American citizens, prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent entrance into war, the country was undeniably divided. This divide mostly ended in December 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the safety and power that the United States hoped would remain intact throughout the war compromised. Although isolationists had been previously insistent on the United States remaining neutral in the Second World War, with the attack on Pearl Harbor, they began to realize the imminence of entering into battle with the foreign forces. The pacifism and isolationism that had engulfed most of the country, dividing it in a trying time, turned to rage and necessary involvement for the United States as a single, unified entity with the attack on Pearl Harbor. Although there were surely still doubters among the American home-front, they were not as prominent and public about their thoughts on the situation. As Stephens recalled, "WWII was a national effort: socially, economically, [and] psychologically. Everyone supported it. It was a question of national survival. We were fighting a two-front war. Everyone supported the war in Europe. I'm told by people who should know that there were those who thought we should have negotiated a peace with Japan after Iwo Jima and Okinawa and thus avoided the use of the atomic bomb. If there really were folks stateside who thought that way, I think they had their heads in the sand—to put it politely."[20]

Similar to all young men in the United States on the brink of World War II, Stephens feared leaving his friends, family and his country. Being only twenty years of

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[20] Email Correspondence Interview with James R. Stephens. 24 February 2011.

age when the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred, he knew that his country would have an immediate need for him and men in a similar range of ages. While he was willing to leave the country to fight for the victory of the Allies, people on the home-front were sometimes more hesitant to allow their valiant soldiers leave their sides. Although the military and government censored graphic material from the eyes of the families and friends on the home-front until November 15, 1945, with the abolishment of the Office of Censorship, loved ones continued to fear, on a daily basis, that they would receive that fateful telegram preceding the awful news of their soldier's death.

Photographing the War:

Combat photographers were responsible for documenting the war as it happened in front of them with both a steady hand and a keen eye. Every aspect of the war had to be documented to serve as a reminder and proof of what happened in the world during the terror of the Second World War. Stephens documented the war in this manner, following orders and recording history as it happened before him. Although a confident young man, Stephens recalled how it felt to leave the United States for the first time as an American soldier:

> Waiting to leave the ship to make my first beach head on Leyte Island in the Philippines, I was so scared my knees would not stop shaking. I know now that was an adrenaline build-up with no outlet—couldn't fight, couldn't flee. My knees were trying to tell me that my legs should be carrying me away from the threat. In the thick of actual combat, taking no pictures but fighting as a foot soldier—and all us camera people were 'foot soldiers first, photographers second'—physical action drains away fear. Fighting back feels good.[21]

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[21] Email Correspondence Interview with James R. Stephens. 24 February 2011.

Initially afraid, as were many men faced with the daunting and grueling task that lie ahead, Stephens soon regained his strength and went on to fight off the enemy in addition to fighting the possibility that the world would forget such a tragic war. Although an official combat photographer for the Signal Corps, Stephens was responsible for shooting first with his gun, to eliminate the initial threat, and then, when not faced with a crucial or life-threatening mission, shoot with his camera to capture the truth of what was happening during the Second World War. This task allowed for the people on the home-front to get a glimpse of what was happening in the war-stricken areas of the world as well as to assist the Army in further military endeavors.

Although sent abroad to photograph the holistic view of the war, there were certain aspects of photographing the war where Stephens, most likely similar to many of his counterparts, fell short. As Stephens explained, "My personal policy in photographing war dead was—I didn't, on either side. I felt it violated the intrinsic value of human beings, no matter the uniform."[22] Although there is no specific rule to ban this type of behavior, the Army Signal Corps "played a crucial role in documenting evidence of Nazi atrocities and the Holocaust." Stephens could not bring himself to photograph such tragedy as dead soldiers, be they enemy or American, which illustrates a specific area where he would have missed shots in his photographic obligation. Photographing graphic aspects of war, such as this, was a major aspect of war that was later utilized on the home-front to encourage citizens to continue to support the war efforts through the purchasing of bonds and assistance in other areas of everyday life.

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[22] Email Correspondence Interview with James R. Stephens. 24 February 2011.

Although he felt as though he was not completing his entire job, Stephens also believed that he was doing a service to the photographic unit that others were disregarding. Stephens more thoroughly explained this in saying, "In one respect, I failed in my duties as a photographer whose mission it was to record the horrors of war. But I could not bring myself to record actions that were so inhuman that not only degraded humanity to an unthinkable level, but encouraged the 'actors' to commit such acts because a camera was making pictures of their actions."[23] The daily degradation of soldiers seemed to be detrimental to the advancement and successes of the war. If photographs of American soldiers being violent and cruel on the frontlines were continually sent home for the public to view on the home-front, it would negatively affect war morale, and the respect that people had for American soldiers. Therefore, to keep this harmful aspect of war from surfacing too often, Stephens elected to disregard some of the daily horrors presented on the frontlines.

With an understanding of both the war and photography, Stephens was capable of creating lasting images that impacted the recognition and remembrance of the Second World War as it happened in the Pacific. Honorably discharged in January 1946 as a Staff Sergeant, Stephens illustrated both the respect and strength necessary to be a successful combat photographer during the Second World War. The aim, of course, was to inspire the home-front public to support the war effort"[24] according to Stephens. Understanding the importance of creating photographs that would be beneficial for use on the home-front, Stephens created lasting images that are still studied and marveled today.

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[23] Email Correspondence Interview with James R. Stephens. 24 February 2011.
[24] Ibid.

Receiving War on the Home-Front:

Families on the home-front, similar to those of James Stephens and the other photographers previously discussed, were constantly confronted with the war in every aspect of their daily lives. In contrast to World War I, the Second World War laid the foundation for continued documentation of every step of the war via the media. People had more instant access to war information through newspapers, magazines, and radio. Therefore, in order to protect the country and the military, it was important that the types of photographs available to the public and media were properly censored and that the censorship was accurately regulated.

With the pending Second World War, there was an initial question of what the people on the home-front should be subject to view and know about the war. While Admiral Ernest J. King believed it best to "withhold all information until the end of the war, then announce who won,"[25] his idea luckily did not prevail. The constant question of how much information would satisfy the home-front, yet not disgust them to the point of not supporting the war efforts. Luckily, there was a "rapidly growing stock of death pictures to choose from"[26] which prevented the complacency of Americans, also negating any possible fear that there would not be enough terror present in World War II.

As people were confronted with more disturbing photographs, and even at the start of the war, there was very little problem with cooperation from the American home-front. As the war continued, people maintained the necessary involvement for the United States to succeed by purchasing war bonds and contributing to supplemental war efforts.

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[25] George H. Roeder Jr., *The Censored War*, Yale University Press, 1993, p. 15.
[26] Ibid.

Photographs and pictures of the war were present in every aspect of the war efforts present—on magazines, newspapers and on posters, to ensure that the Americans on the home-front saw much of the war on a daily basis. The continued illustration of war in a place that had no physicality of war destroying the country allowed people to feel connected to the war, furthering their desire to support the war. The government continually encouraged people to save wherever they could in their lives. One suggestion was that if "each American bought one less tin can a week…the nation would save 2,500 tons of tin and 1,900 tons of steel, which in turn could be used to produce 5,000 tanks or 38 Liberty ships."[27] Acts such as this convinced the typical American family that they were helping to build ships and tanks by just simply using one less tin can. The home-front was able to feel a direct involvement to the success of the United States. Although the ads presented to the public put a positive spin on the Second World War, this censorship was necessary to preserve the positive war morale present in the States.

As Stephens related, it was difficult for combat photographers to constantly view and photograph the dead, injured and horrific pictures that were present in the war. Although faced with constant disturbing photographs, Stephens stated, "There were actions that I refused to photograph although I often had the opportunity."[28] For instance, Stephens refused to photograph a dead soldier, whether he was American or not. He explained this decision by stating, "I felt it violated the intrinsic value of human beings, no matter the uniform."[29] It was difficult for the combat photographer to take certain pictures, knowing

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[27] Allan Winkler, *Home Front USA: America during World War II*, Wheeling, IL. Harlan Davidson, 2000, p.35.
[28] Email Correspondence Interview with James R. Stephens. 24 February 2011.
[29] Ibid.

that they could pass censorship and reach the eyes of men and women on the home-front. It was this type of personal censorship that was the ethical outlook Roosevelt had longed to recognize in journalists and publishers in the United States. It is not unusual to be uneasy photographing the dead, whether they were on the side of the fighting soldier, it is still a helpless man being recorded for history. Understanding that photographers had this ability and impact on history caused the photographers to question what they should record and what they were required to report. Although the United States was ready to see dead soldiers toward the end of the war, photographers, with strong ethical values in place, like Stephens, felt a need to reject this complacent view of the war and dead soldiers and place their own beliefs before those of journalists and publishers in the United States. As Addams explained in his text, "America was not a battle zone in World War II, and most Americans never had to confront the devastation of war firsthand. What was happening overseas was censored by the government and media, so that civilians had only limited exposure to reality. The full truth, it was thought, would not be good for morale and the war effort. Ads showed the troops as happy warriors, boyish and eager to be at the front, like a scout troop at camp."[30] At least early in the war, it seemed more effective to censor the information for the betterment of a successful home-front for the soldiers to return to after a grueling war, which was something that both Stephens and many other combat photographers seemed to truly understand. Having to see the war through a different lens on a daily basis created photographers that could really see images for the good they would do, or pain the photographs could cause after production.

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[30] Michael C. C. Addams, *The Best War Ever: America and World War II*, Baltimore, MD. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994, p. 91.

Chapter Two
Case Study Two: Charles E. Sumners
Military and Personal Censorship of a Combat Photographer

Background:

To understand effectively the combat photographs recorded during World War II, one must first understand the trials and tribulations that faced the combat photographer. To accomplish that feat, this chapter will delve into the life of a combat photographer, Charles E. Sumners; exploring the personal relationships he had, the consequences of mobility, the official and personal censorship he faced throughout the Second World War and how this censorship affected his photographic output. This chapter, in addition to telling the story of Sumners' personal experience during the war, will communicate the effects this censorship had on most combat photographers in the Second World War.

The presence of a combat photographer during World War II was not an innovative aspect of war, but the capabilities and mobility of these soldiers were. Combat photographers during World War I did not have portable camera equipment, which was imperative to the intimacy of combat photography during World War II. New cameras allowed the photographers to photograph more effectively in combat situations. Many new advances to cameras used in the field,[1] such as creating more compact, lightweight, faster 35mm cameras, assisted in more efficient and effective photographs. These particular types of cameras were inexpensive to make and could be mass-produced, which allowed them to be utilized by the military in the wartime, when the demand for photographers increased. This, coupled with the durability and simplicity of

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[1] Some examples of 35mm cameras used in the field included Leica, Kodak, Argus, and Speed Graphic brands.

these cameras, made them the perfect type of camera to use during combat. Armed with these smaller cameras, faster film, and the popularity of 35mm film, the capabilities of the camera increased, thereby reducing the time needed to communicate intimacy that the photographer could illustrate through the photographs created. These advancements allowed photographers to get high-quality photographs that were closer to the action changing the world of wartime photography. The photographers of World War I had smaller cameras than previous wars, allowing increased mobility, but they were not as quick and durable as the later cameras, and therefore the photographers did not have the ability to get as close to the action as photographers during the Second World War possessed. These advances in both the technology of the camera and mobility of the combat photographer led to a more personal photograph, which changed the outlook and impact of combat photography on the home-front.

Commonly, at the start of the war and even as the war progressed, combat photographers had little training for the demanding task that lay ahead. As Sumners explains in reference to all American soldiers, "I think that the big difference between the German soldier and the American soldier was that the German soldier was trained to do exactly as he was ordered, while the Americans were not as well trained, but they would do things on their own without specific orders. Americans would improvise and make decisions in the field to overcome obstacles before them."[2] If the average American soldier was considered poorly trained, then the American combat photographer, due to lack of training, could be considered a nuisance on the field. Due to lack of availability

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[2] Charles E. Sumners. *Darkness Visible: Memoir of a World War II Combat Photographer.* McFarland and Company Inc. (2002). p.27.

and abundance of necessity, combat photographers were quickly, and usually insufficiently, trained and shipped overseas.

Combat photographers were commonly viewed as insignificant members of the force by other soldiers According to the Signal Corps' official military history, the combat photographer's mission was "was an irritating gadfly—sometimes to be slapped down, more frequently to be brushed away, and often merely to be ignored.'"[3] to the men who carried guns and were risking their lives in battle on a daily basis taking photographs seemed like an easy way out. However, it is important to remember, as Sumners explained, "every situation in every picture that you and I see that shows the cruelty and savagery of war had to be experienced—firsthand—and captured on film by the combat photographer. His life was at risk, with little backup and seldom a weapon, he was there to make sure that what happened would not be forgotten."[4] Without the photographs as a record for the Second World War, much of the action and experiences would seem unbelievable, and would likely be forgotten more quickly. The photographs that these men risked their lives to capture have preserved a time of despair, terror and pain, but it was preserved nonetheless for future generations to understand the density of the Second World War.

Training to be a Combat Photographer:

Even with their minimal training, and sometimes little respect from fellow soldiers, the combat photographers in the Second World War knew that the task that lay

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[3] George H. Roeder Jr., *The Censored War*. Yale University Press. (1993).
[4] Charles E. Sumners. *Darkness Visible: Memoir of a World War II Combat Photographer*. McFarland and Company Inc. (2002). p.xi.

ahead of them was a daunting one at best. Official combat photographers were trained to be careful photographers, as to provide the most realistic photograph that was not necessary to censor. As a youthful photographer, Sumners boarded a train for Camp Crowder in Neosho, Missouri in January 1943. Here he and 22 other men got their basic training for still and motion photography. In a matter of three weeks, Sumners and the other men were through with their basic training and spent a few more weeks at Camp Crowder before being given "a camera and a T5 rating," which was the highest rank a still photographer could receive.[5] A T5 rank signified that the photographer was a Technician Fifth Grade, which was similar to the rank of Corporal. As the highest rank a combat photographer could receive, this was a low rank, illustrating their limited training and little respect from other soldiers. Typically, combat photographers were ranked as privates, but some, like Sumners were able to rise up to their highest rank—T5, the rank just about Private First Class.

Combat photographers did not receive extensive training, but there were exceedingly high expectations for quality work to be produced from both the public and the military. These combat photographers were expected to be professional photographers producing the most up-to-date and enticing photographs for the public. While the media on the home-front wanted tantalizing photographs that would catch the attention of the public, the photographers had to be sensitive to the necessary censorship in place, and the ethical views of the people on the home-front. They did not want to produce photographs that would negatively impact the war efforts on the home-front, so

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[5] Charles E. Sumners. *Darkness Visible: Memoir of a World War II Combat Photographer.* McFarland and Company Inc. (2002). p.4.

it was imperative that they were constantly conscious of the photographs that were being produced on the frontlines. Combat photographers were also expected to be extremely careful as to not photograph in a manner that would be wasteful of the film or strategically detrimental. In other words, they could not photograph aspects of the war that were not usable under the censors enforced or that could illustrate a possible weakness of the country if discovered by the enemy. The photographer had to be aware of restricted material in the background, so that "pictures taken [would] be within the security limits for release to the press."[6]

While training at Camp Crowder, Sumners became acquainted with a motion picture cameraman by the name of Russ Meyer.[7] Known for his films, including combat films, Meyer was very precise in his work. He found it imperative to produce a film with continuity, the right exposure and close-ups. As Sumners recalled, "Russ was very exact in everything he did…He was totally unaware of anything other than what he was doing when he was filming."[8] His skill behind the camera carried Meyer through a career on the home-front filming in California.[9] Although Sumners had the guidance of censors illustrating where photographs should be cropped and how they should be captioned in order to pass the censorship enforced, Sumners typically looked to Meyer for assistance with his photographing abilities. Meyer knew what it was like to be in the thick of it all, and understood that one could not walk into the battlefield and photograph in the middle

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[6] Brian J. Whetstine. "Combat photographer at sea." *World War II*. Leesburg: May 2001. Vol 16, Iss. 1; p.34-41.
[7] Russ Meyer is better known for his independent soft-core films created after the Second World War. The precision and discipline that he learned in the military transferred to his films, in his accuracy of each shot.
[8] Charles E. Sumners. *Darkness Visible: Memoir of a World War II Combat Photographer.* McFarland and Company Inc. (2002). p.168.
[9] Ibid.

of enemy fire. He understood the composition of a good photograph and was willing to work with Sumners to assist him in becoming a better combat photographer. Sumners recalled that once his unit formed, "and we were together, there seemed to be a bond of friendship that grew daily."[10] Meyer and Sumners worked side by side in the unit, with Meyer assisting Sumners whenever it was necessary. As Sumners explained, "He took me aside and we went through this and that, and he showed me everything that he thought I needed to know. I never considered myself a great photographer, but if you were up there where the action was going on—and there was action everywhere—then you just had to point the camera, click the shutter and make a combat picture."[11] Sumners' belief that he was not a great photographer is disputed through the images that he produced during World War II. One photograph of his with the caption, "Infantrymen of 6th Armored Division, 3rd U.S. Army, pass dead American killed by sniper in Oberdorla, Germany," is a world-renowned photograph from the Second World War, so Sumners must have learned something useful about effectively photographing a scene while working under the 166th Signal Photo Company. Similar to other combat photographers, Sumners' photographs illustrate the despair, exhaustion and pain associated with war. Through his photographs, Sumners illustrated for the world the importance of photographing the war through a respectful, yet true manner, to truly understand the complexities of the war in which their soldiers were fighting. As the *Neosho Daily News* in Neosho, Missouri, explained, "The men of the 166th faced enemy

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[10] Charles E. Sumners. *Darkness Visible: Memoir of a World War II Combat Photographer.* McFarland and Company Inc. (2002). p.168.
[11] Ibid.

fire as did other fighting men, but their job was to record the war and its events rather than return the firepower necessary to silence the opposing guns. They trudged all over Europe carrying both still and motion picture cameras right onto the front lines as well as the more quiet areas of occupation."[12]

Survival of the Photographer:

The combat photographers who were in the midst of it all knew what it meant to sacrifice in war, and even with their short training they understood the importance of clever survival skills if they wanted to survive the war having only a camera with which to shoot the enemy. In order to photograph the war, one must survive the war. This idea remained at the forefront of the minds of Charles E. Sumners and each combat photographer, during the Second World War. Sumners was a still photographer in the 166th Signal Photo Company, U.S. Army Signal Corps, attached to the Second Army, First Army, and when activated, to General Patton's Third Army.[13] Like most combat photographers, Sumners documented the war anywhere there was fighting, which enabled him to receive an extraordinary five battle stars during the Second World War. Because they seldom carried more than a sidearm and a camera, the combat photographers of World War II had to be tactical, cautious and clever when photographing battles and the enemy. Similar to Vaccaro, Sumners reflected on aspects of war in which he had to think quickly in order to avoid harm: "I looked up and saw a German plane up ahead of us diving straight down for the convoy. I saw a road off to my left that went under a small

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[12] *Neosho Daily News*, November 6, 1985.
[13] Charles E. Sumners. *Darkness Visible: Memoir of a World War II Combat Photographer.* McFarland and Company Inc. (2002).

bridge. I cut off the main road in such a hurry that I scared the rest of the unit. Lieutenant Moore asked me, 'Where in the hell are you going?' But by that time I was already stopped under a railroad bridge and two planes had made a couple of runs over our convoy."[14] In this situation, the planes did not do much damage, but in many cases, quick reactions would mean the difference between life and death for soldiers, and especially under-armed combat photographers. As Sumners explained, "Many soldiers in any war owe their lives to other soldiers. Some survive close calls because of fate—kismet—luck—prayer. Call it what you may. I know of many times when a split second made a difference in life or death; when suddenly you realize the tenuity [sic] of life and how precious is every breath drawn."[15]

Combat photographers had a tremendous amount of freedom and mobility, a rarity considering their low-ranking status of privates and noncommissioned officers.[16] Sumners recalled continually moving to where the action was, which made these men the vagabonds of the military. Because combat photographers moved so often, they had to be thoughtful in creating their own quarters nightly. If a photographer could not find quarters in a building, he had to resort to "digging slit-trenches, and fox holes and camouflaging our vehicles."[17] This happened when the weather got poor, in Sumners' case: "We spotted an old barn with double doors on the front, so we headed over to it, opened those doors, put our jeep inside and closed the doors. There was no livestock in the barn, and I didn't see a house, so it possibly had been destroyed already...we just lay

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[14] Charles E. Sumners. *Darkness Visible: Memoir of a World War II Combat Photographer.* McFarland and Company Inc. (2002). p. 145.
[15] Ibid. p. 143.
[16] Peter Maslowski. *Armed With Cameras*. The Free Press. New York, NY. (1993).
[17] Ibid. p. 37.

down on some hay on the barn floor and went to sleep."[18] Sumners and another combat photographer had to sleep in this barn to avoid enemy fire and the bad weather conditions, since they had such freedom and mobility and lacked nearby living quarters. Regardless of the lack of defined living quarters, this freedom to move about the field allowed photographers to capture more of the action that the war had to offer and assisted in creating lasting images. While typical soldiers were tied to a specific unit and were required to take part in particular battles, the photographic units in which combat photographers were a part were much more fluid in their ties to specific battles. These men were expected to follow the action, ensuring that they provided the public with the most innovative photograph. In order to be in the middle of the action from the very beginning of the war, "combat cameramen parachuted down behind enemy lines with the airborne troops, and landed in the first waves of the big invasions. They made a full pictorial record of the way the United States trained an army of eight million men, and of how those men lived, fought, and died on the African desert, in the mountains of Italy, on the Normandy beaches, in the Aleutian wastelands, and in the tropical jungles."[19]

The freedom that combat photographers possessed also came with a price. Because these men were allowed the liberty to roam between companies as they pleased, they were commonly on their own, with only the protection of a jeep, a sidearm and a camera. This made them easy targets for enemy capture, which again made it important

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[18] Charles E. Sumners. *Darkness Visible: Memoir of a World War II Combat Photographer.* McFarland and Company Inc. (2002). p. 83.

[19] George Raynor Thompson. *The Signal Corps: The Test*. Center of Military History: United States Army. Washington, D.C. (2003).

for them to be very tactical in their movements. If combat photographers were on the move, getting situated to photograph an upcoming battle, they could easily be captured by the enemy, or worse, killed by them because of the small groups in which photographers traveled. Although official combat photographers were vulnerable in the sense that they had little protection against enemy fire, they had one advantage when faced with a fierce battle that typical soldiers did not possess. As Sumners explained, "The best part of our job was that we could leave at any time the situation got too hot for us, but, of course, the infantrymen had to stay and carry on the fighting. One of the reasons many of the combat photographers lived through the war was the face that we *could* bail out if the action got too bad."[20] These men were there to take photographs of battles, but if they felt threatened, they knew that it was possible for them to leave. Tony Vaccaro, too, was clever in both his positioning and his strategy during battles. As Vaccaro recalled, "I selected certain battles that I felt I could take great photographs and not be killed. I was not foolish; when it was very tough I stayed where I was supposed to stay."[21] These men understood that they were only lightly armed, and therefore could not be even the least bit careless when in the center of a battle.

Military Censorship

As Sumners soon realized, the censors did not have the same understanding of the necessity for safety as the official combat photographers held. The censors preferred the photographers to take photographs in the wide open, where they would surely be shot,

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[20] Charles E. Sumners. *Darkness Visible: Memoir of a World War II Combat Photographer.* McFarland and Company Inc. (2002). p. 80.
[21] Tony Vaccaro Interview. August 30, 2010. Conducted at the USAHEC by Molly Shoener.

rather than a distanced picture from a safe area during the battle. Throughout his career as an official combat photographer, Charles E. Sumners' photographs were continually reviewed by military censors in order to present the most effective wartime photographs to people on the home-front. The photographs were typically evaluated by the censors and returned to the original photographer to provide him with feedback. Unless the photograph could not be improved upon, the photographer would find crop marks on the photograph which indicated where the photographer should have been standing to take a more effective photograph. Typically, the censors indicated that they wanted a shot taken from closer to the action. As Sumners recalls, though, "Moving up closer for the shot, in most cases, would have made it better, but many times it would also have exposed the photographer to open fire."[22] In many cases, photographers were forced to stand further away when taking a shot because of their limited protection and the increased vulnerability of using a camera. When looking through a viewfinder, the photographer lost the ability to use peripherals, leaving him open to attacks from many angles. Military censors did not take this information into account when making suggestions on photographs of combat photographers. The military censors were simply looking at the photograph and deciding ways in which the combat photographer could improve his image, rather than the most appropriate place for him to be during a battle. Although standing behind a rock in most cases was a safer place for the photographer to be, it did not always make for the best picture. Because these men were hired specifically to photograph the war, it was necessary for them to understand that better photographs

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[22] Charles E. Sumners. *Darkness Visible: Memoir of a World War II Combat Photographer.* McFarland and Company Inc. (2002). p. 39.

could be taken and to learn what they needed to do in order to improve their abilities. Military censors often reprimanded photographers for wasting shots or taking photographs that they claimed could not be utilized for production.[23]

Sometimes censors reprimanded photographers because of material in the background that could be detrimental to the safety of the country or because the photograph had little to do with the main facets of war, but they soon began to realize that the war had many different faces and could be illustrated through different photographic creativity. Sumners experienced difficulties with this Service when photographing soldiers who were resting in a jeep alongside the road. As Sumners recalled, "We drove on to our location and sent the film with this picture to Army Pictorial Service. They sent me an ugly critique back telling me that I was wasting film on things like this and that this was not the type of picture that we were sent out to take."[24] Even though taking all possible opportunities to recover was a common occurrence during the war, it was not something that the Pictorial Service wanted to use as representation of the soldiers. However, as Sumners discovered, "Weeks later, I saw this exact picture in the *Stars and Stripes* or some other publication. They had used my picture, which I thought was a good picture, for a human interest story."[25] Though the censors reprimanded Sumners for his poor choice in recording a specific moment during the war, they were able to utilize it in a publication, inadvertently admitting that it was an acceptable photograph. The censors had a specific photograph in mind that they wanted to illustrate the war, but came to

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[23] Jorge Lewinski, *The Camera at War: A history of war photography from 1848 to the present day*. Simon and Schuster Publishing, NY. (1978).
[24] Charles E. Sumners. *Darkness Visible: Memoir of a World War II Combat Photographer.* McFarland and Company Inc. (2002). p. 41.
[25] Ibid.

realize that many different photographs could assist in presenting the wholeness of the war. They began to understand, even though they reprimanded photographers who were "wasting film," that all aspects of war should be captured on film.

In addition to actual photographs being censored during the Second World War, photographers many times had their captions censored. Captions for the pictures passed through two American military censors before being sent to Washington, where they were censored once more. Clearly, the pictures and text that accompanied them were thoroughly reviewed before publication. This was because there were few restrictions placed upon the combat photographers. The censors were expected to restrict the objectionable material and release the acceptable material, which is why photographs and captions had to pass a multitude of censors before being released for publication. Because censors were far more likely to get reprimanded for allowing a questionable photograph or caption through which should have been blocked than for restricting one they might have released, they more commonly restricted an image or caption than let it pass to protect themselves.[26] Sumners had direct experience with censored captions:

> Many times we would get a print back that only had the words "Confidential—Not to be Published—Field Press Censor" stamped on the back. At other times, the information would be there, but certain words would be marked through with blue marker to indicate that the marked words could not be used in the captioned information. Those would be stamped: "Passed for Publication as Censored. Field Press Censor." You could look at it and not really see why, but I guess that there may have been something in the particular picture or description that, in the wrong hands, could give the enemy information they could use against us. I did get a lot of prints back from Army Pictorial Services that were stamped "Censored" on the back.

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[26] George H. Roeder Jr., *The Censored War*. Yale University Press. (1993).

Many of the photographs that Sumners took were censored in one way or another, be it through the captions or the actual photograph being removed from publication. These decisions to censor photographs from a military standpoint were put in place for the protection of both the country and the family members of the soldiers that were abroad. Captions that were too revealing could present people with information that they should not have, and revealing photographs could be detrimental to the safety of the country.

Personal Censorship:

While there were not always strict censors placed directly upon the photographers themselves, they often self-censored their photographs in order to protect the families of soldiers as well as the country in general. Combat photographers understood what would pass censors, and usually did not waste much time photographing something that they knew would not be approved. Even though they knew that the work would be censored by the military, many combat photographers self-censored to protect themselves and families on the home-front. "Respect for the feelings of soldiers' families also counted…because of such legitimate considerations, as well as for the more questionable purpose of manipulating public attitudes, some images remained forbidden from the beginning to the end of the war…A rule maintained throughout the war forbade publication of any photograph revealing identifiable features of the American dead."[27] Combat photographers were careful not to photograph fallen soldiers in an identifiable fashion largely because they understood the anguish that families would feel if they discovered that their loved one had died through a picture. Sumners' sister-in-law, Ann

[27] George H. Roeder Jr., *The Censored War*. Yale University Press. (1993). p. 15.

Sumners, explained this constant fear that Sumners' mother experienced during the war: "Did she worry? Did she have many sleepless nights? Did she hang on to every word from any source? You bet she did. When the telegram came about her son being wounded, she was beside herself."[28] Mothers relied on magazines, news and the radio to learn about the war. It should be understood that this war was before the time of constant live television updates, so mothers did not get up-to-date information on a daily basis. They relied on the photographs to be connected to the soldiers abroad, and looked to the media to deliver the information. However, because the photographs were censored before they could reach the eyes of the public, the military was also protected from family members discovering the death or injury of a child before the telegram could arrive.

Although many photographs of fallen Americans were censored to protect people on the home-front, one photograph that Sumners took of a fallen American did pass the censors and was chosen as one of the Best 100 Photos of the European Theater. The photograph was captioned with, "Infantrymen of 6th Armored Division, 3rd U.S. Army, pass dead American killed by sniper in Oberdorla, Germany." Although this was a photograph of a dead American, the photograph was taken in April of 1945, by which time the censors had become less stringent and were presenting the public with the most brutal photographs of the war. The soldier in this photograph is not easily identifiable, which kept the family of the soldier from finding out about his death in this way. The photograph, although of a dead soldier, is not gruesome or tasteless in its presentation. It

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[28] Email correspondence with Ann Sumners. 10 Feb 2011.

illustrates the continuation of the soldiers in pursuit of the enemy, even after their comrade has perished, which illustrates the diligence of these men. Therefore, this photograph illustrated the resilience of the soldiers, rather than just the death and destruction of war. It is an inspirational photograph that would cause people on the home-front to rethink the war and continue to support it.

Combat photographers were continually faced with trials that were atypical to other soldiers—having to find defined living quarters and a constant curiosity of where they would be stationed next. They worked on many missions in small groups and had little protection from enemies. Being encouraged to photograph in dangerous situations, close to the front lines and having their work under constant criticism by their superiors and the censors created trying times for these photographers. As Sumners explained, "It cannot be forgotten that every situation in every picture that you and I see that shows the cruelty and savagery of war had to be experienced—firsthand—and captured on film by the combat photographer. His life at risk, with little backup and seldom a weapon, he was there to make sure that what happened would not be forgotten."[29] Through all of the terror and exhaustion they faced during the Second World War, these men came out on top, capturing photographs that would help the world remember this war for the brutality and terror it illustrated.

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[29] Charles E. Sumners. *Darkness Visible: Memoir of a World War II Combat Photographer.* McFarland and Company Inc. (2002). p. xi.

Chapter Three
Case Study Three: Tony Vaccaro
Limitations and Restrictions of the United States' Office of Censorship

Background:

To comprehend fully the complexities of combat photography during the Second World War relative to the United States, one must first recognize the limitations and restrictions associated with the Office of Censorship and the Office of War Information. Official combat photographers in each branch of the military were responsible for conveying on film the war in which they partook in response to the guidance they received from their superiors. This chapter will seek to evaluate the experience of one combat photographer, Tony Vaccaro, as he matured professionally in light of the restrictions enforced by personal, military and government censorship. This chapter will not only tell Vaccaro's personal story, but will draw larger conclusions regarding the offices that influenced his work throughout the Second World War. It will demonstrate that… Tony Vaccaro, a combat photographer, was drafted into the Army in 1944 and understood and experienced the entirety of military censorship during his time in the Second World War.

With the start of the Second World War, the Office of Censorship, coupled with the Office of War Information, had an overwhelming influence over actions taken by the military in the United States. The Office of Censorship "administered voluntary censorship inside the United States and mandatory censorship of information crossing the nation's borders,"[1] while the Office of War Information "formulated and executed

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[1] Michael S. Sweeney. *Secrets of Victory*. University of North Carolina Press. (2001). p. 4.

information programs to promote, in the United States and abroad, understanding of the status and progress of the war effort and of war policies, activities, and aims of the U.S. government."[2] These two offices worked in collaboration to maintain the security of the military, government and country during the Second World War. The Office of Censorship was established at the start of the Second World War in order to protect the secrets of the United States military and prevent treasonous activity on the home-front. This office was solely created for the wartime purpose, to protect the United States and the public throughout the United States involvement in the war, and no longer. The Office of Censorship was one federal office that had a direct parallel to the Second World War. This office was founded in the days following the attack on Pearl Harbor and at the close of the war, when Japan stopped the fight against the United States [even though war didn't officially end until xx, xx 1946), the Office of Censorship ceased to exist.[3] The censorship managed by this office therefore did not overstep the necessity of censorship during wartime by continuing long after the war.

The Office of War Information was established by Roosevelt in 1942, six months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. It included two units of photographers and was responsible for documenting the mobilization of the United States during the start of World War II.[4] This office strove to inspire and encourage Americans to support the war through war bonds, joining the war efforts, and assisting in the work force. The Office of War Information also conducted surveys to see what Americans thought of the war and

[2] National Archives, *Records of the Office of War Information (OWI)*, Accessed March 7, 2011, http://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/208.html#208.2
[3] Michael S. Sweeney. *Secrets of Victory*. University of North Carolina Press. (2001).
[4] Library of Congress, *The Office of War Information*, Accessed March 5, 2011, http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsahtml/owiinfo.html

created propaganda posters and advertisements.[5] These two offices commonly overlapped, striving to ensure censorship of newspapers, radio, and other means of communication.

While the Office of War Information dealt primarily with propaganda and the response of Americans on the home-front to the war, the Office of Censorship was more focused on the "mandatory censorship over all international communications not covered by military censorship and over domestic information originating from military installations and certain industrial facilities with military contracts. Its censorship of most other domestic information, however, relied on voluntary compliance by the press and the public with its guidelines."[6]

The photographs taken by combat photographers were censored by two theater military censors, and were then passed along to Washington for an additional censor.[7] Though Vaccaro did not always agree with the censor, he was aware that if he did not present the requested material, that of a less violent war, the material would be censored and confiscated. This censoring of debatable material was a precautionary measure that had to be taken by the Office of Censorship and Office of War Information. The offices and censors were much more likely to censor a questionable photograph than to let it through the censor. This was because they were far less likely to be punished for a photograph that was ethical and thereby acceptable to be viewed by the public, than for presenting an offensive photograph to the people of the United States. These offices

[5] George H. Roeder, Jr. *The Censored War*. Yale University Press. (1993).
[6] Ibid. p. 8.
[7] Ibid.

were in charge of ensuring that the public was not exposed to the explicit tragedy of photographs such as Vaccaro's; therefore, he experienced a situation where his photographs were confiscated immediately and never returned.

The Start of World War II:

For the first 21 months of the Second World War the censorship enforced was largely the same type of censorship that was installed during World War I, except the photography was now more realistic to the public. During the First World War, Americans were only shown happy soldiers eating and relaxing with friends. These were the types of photographs that were taken when the soldiers had a free moment to relax or enjoy time with their comrades. Experiences such as these occurred only while soldiers were not enduring the terrifying battlefields. They were typical in the sense that men were not always fighting the enemy but abnormal as a representation of the overall war that was being fought by the American soldiers. The people on the home-front were not shown the danger inherent to fighting in the Second World War. At the start of the entrance of the United States into the war, the public was kept unaware of the exact practice of their soldiers in the war, because of the censorship that was in place. It was thought that this would keep from immediate opposition to the war on the home-front. Although censorship during World War I assisted in the necessary realization that "transparently upbeat depictions of the wartime experiences of American soldiers" should be avoided in the Second World War, the extent to which Americans should be exposed to the tragedies of war was not yet defined.[8] To keep people from believing that war was

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[8] George H. Roeder, Jr. *The Censored War*. Yale University Press. (1993). p. 7.

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as horrific and tragic an occurrence as it was, many photos were withheld in the Chamber of Horrors during the Second World War; even to this day some have never been released to the public. The Chamber of Horrors is a secret file that holds all photographs that were too gruesome to display for the public, and remained untouched and out of view of the public's eye.[9] When the censorship laws were put into play it was assumed that "the public would accept strict government control over information from combat areas, and that withheld images were less likely to rouse skepticism than prettified ones,"[10] and for the most part it was successful at the opening of the Second World War. However, soon people on the home-front were left feeling disconnected from the experiences abroad, especially when the injured began to return home with numerous stories, which hindered the wartime morale necessary for such a war as World War II. It was understood that censorship had to be enacted in order to protect the Americans on the home-front, but there was a fine balance between the presses illustrating too much or too little information to the public. People on the home-front longed to be provided with true photographs from the war, but photographs that exemplified too gruesome or revealing of a scene was not acceptable. At the start of the Second World War, this balance was not yet established; therefore, the offices maintained a heavy influence over the type and extent of photographs that were available to the public, censoring more photographs than would later be necessary.

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[9] George H. Roeder, Jr. *The Censored War*. Yale University Press. (1993). p. 10.
[10] Ibid.

Censored Photographer:

Photographers especially felt this presence when submitting their photographs to their superiors. During the First World War the United States government had attempted to "restrict photographers' access to the front lines," but during World War II these combat photographers could "move freely on battlefields and accompany naval assaults."[11] It was now recognized that combat photographers were important in all aspects of war, needing the information recorded on their cameras to entice the people on the home-front, and photograph enemy weapons and technology that could be useful in future battles. Although photographers could move onto the battlefields from which they were once restricted, they were still limited on other levels of their photographic abilities in the battlefield setting. In the Second World War, censorship occurred of the photographs, not the photographer, as it had during World War I.[12] As a combat photographer, Tony Vaccaro explained how his wartime experience was different than most soldiers: "Like other GIs, I carried a rifle in my hands, but what set me apart was the Argus C-3 35mm camera hanging around my neck always ready for the next shot. By the end of the war I had taken nearly 7000 photographs."[13] Vaccaro, though caught in the action of war, was very strategic in his techniques of photographing the war. He understood that he had to practice safety if he wanted to provide the American people with the truth of war, so he only photographed battles he knew he would be safe photographing, and he illustrated extreme caution while photographing—always staying a step ahead of the enemy.[14] As

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[11] Kenneth Kobre, "Photojournalism: The Professionals' Approach." Elsevier Inc., (2004). p. 364.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Tony Vaccaro. *Entering Germany*. Taschen. (2001). p. 17.
[14] Tony Vaccaro Interview. August 30, 2010. Conducted at the USAHEC by Molly Shoener.

Vaccaro explained, "I wanted to give people the truth, and save my life at the same time. Because once I am gone, then I cannot give them the truth."[15]

Tony Vaccaro made it a point to photograph all that was around him, be it positive or negative, in order to provide others with a fuller experience of the Second World War. Combat photographers like Tony Vaccaro, an enlisted soldier and photographer in the 83rd Infantry Division during World War II, understood from the start the type of photographs the Army wanted to see and those that would not pass through the censor. As noted in *The Censored War*, "[p]hotographers, knowing that 'unpleasant material is censored,' did not take such shots because 'photographers don't waste their plates on censorable material.' But some of the war's most effective photographers recalled that they did not let this influence them."[16] Vaccaro was one of the photographers who did not let military censorship hinder his instinct and the creativity of his work. At the beginning of the war, he was an unofficial photographer and thus, was permitted to photograph without interference—assuming the military did not have access to his images. Vaccaro photographed what he saw, be it beautiful or horrible, not letting the censors affect his photographic eye on the field.

While Vaccaro was capable of photographing what he saw as important to the portrayal of the war without much reservation, the combat photographers of World War II experienced not only the censorship of themselves, but also the censorship of their commanding officers and of the Office of Censorship. Vaccaro explained, "Superior officers stated that it would be good if we don't show American dead soldiers to people

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[15] Tony Vaccaro Interview. August 30, 2010. Conducted at the USAHEC by Molly Shoener.
[16] George H. Roeder, Jr. *The Censored War*. Yale University Press. (1993). p. 92.

back home. [This is] where I did not agree, I felt that the photographer should give the people the truth."[17] Although he felt that the people should be given the truth, by simply photographing the truth, Vaccaro could not ensure that his photographs would reach the people in the United States uncensored. However, this did not stop him from producing real depictions of the war. Vaccaro felt as though he was forced into showing a false war to the people, but when he continued photographing in the way that he believed to be true, he recalls that "The censor took ten of my rolls and destroyed them."[18] Vaccaro had intended on mailing photographs of the landing on Normandy that he had captured to his sisters in the States, but because of censorship all of the images were confiscated and never returned to him.[19] This was a risk that Vaccaro accepted when he continued to create photographs that did not abide by the censorship enforced by the military and by the Office of Censorship and Office of War Information, a risk that did not always end in the way he had hoped. Although Vaccaro's photographs were a more realistic depiction of the war, the American people were not to be subjected to such extreme imagery at this time in the war.[20] As Vaccaro soon learned, this censorship had to be tolerated, or the photographer's imagery would be confiscated and destroyed.

Just as Vaccaro did not agree with the practice of sugar-coating the war for the public, neither did the President of the time, Franklin D. Roosevelt; however, Roosevelt understood the necessity of these censors for the welfare of the United States public. As he stated, "All Americans abhor censorship, just as they abhor war. But the experience of

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[17] Tony Vaccaro Interview. August 30, 2010. Conducted at the USAHEC by Molly Shoener.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Tony Vaccaro. *Entering Germany*. Taschen. (2001).
[20] George H. Roeder, Jr. *The Censored War*. Yale University Press. (1993).

this and all other nations has demonstrated that some degree of censorship is essential in wartime and we are at war."[21]   At the beginning of the Second World War, it was important to protect the American people, so the censorship was very strong; all photographs of "dead and badly wounded Americans" were placed in a secret file known as the Chamber of Horrors, located in the Pentagon.[22]   Here officials "rationed photographs of the American dead more stingily than scarce commodities such as sugar, leather shoes, and rubber tires. This was intended to protect the public from the brutality of war, but the objective of the strong censorship fell short, especially as the victories of the Allied forces increased. People did not believe that the original photos presented under the censor were genuine or realistic. Being that the American people had already experienced the First World War, they did not find the idea of war as appealing or idealized as they had during the First World War. People understood that there was sure to be pain and suffering along with the war, so they did not believe that photographs of smiling soldiers realistically illustrated what was happening overseas. As the war continued and the United States and the Allies had more success in the war, people began to feel complacent about the war. Because the attitudes of the public were changing, the more tragic photographs began to surface.[23]

Altered Censorship:

Just as Vaccaro believed that the people needed to see the truth, the censors at the Office of War Information and Office of Censorship soon agreed, making censors more

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[21] *Franklin D. Roosevelt,* Press Conference, December 16, 1941.
[22] George H. Roeder, Jr. *The Censored War*. Yale University Press. (1993).
[23] Ibid.

lenient and allowing more gruesome photographs to pass their inspection of photographs. To explain his thought behind the lack of censorship that he practiced, Vaccaro stated, "Photographs are like words—they have meaning, meaning with which the brain thinks and comes to certain conclusions, and if we don't give the brain this meaning the brain doesn't care, doesn't know, and we don't know what war really is then."[24] As Vaccaro explained, people needed to be exposed to these censored photographs in order to fully understand the complexities, tragedies, and even strategies of war. If they were not exposed to these photographs, like words, they would never comprehend and understand the meaning of the war. While no photographer or other respondent likes to be censored, the alternative would provide similar problems. There were voluntary censors, put into place willingly by radio, news, and other communication means to keep the country safe during time of war, in the United States. These were meant to protect the American people as well as the United States government from treasonous activity, which was what censorship ultimately attempted to resist: "What the press and radio appreciated about the voluntary censorship program was that it was better than the alternatives. Complete lack of censorship would have helped the enemy. Complete government control would have been intolerable in a nation that had been born during a revolution in which the press played an active role and that had cemented freedom of expression in the First Amendment."[25] Some type of censorship was necessary on the home-front, so that the government and people remained protected throughout the war, but this censorship had to be more effectively regulated, so that the American people knew what was happening

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[24] Tony Vaccaro Interview. August 30, 2010. Conducted at the USAHEC by Molly Shoener.
[25] Michael S. Sweeney. *Secrets of Victory*. University of North Carolina Press. (2001). p. 5.

abroad. Shielding people from the truth of the war, as Roosevelt and the censors of the Office of Censorship and Office of War Information learned, only led to false security and unsubstantiated assumptions that the war was not as devastating as it was and that there were fewer casualties than there truly were: "An OWI memo warned that the public was getting the impression that 'soldiers fight, that some of them get hurt and ride smiling in aerial ambulances, but that none of them get badly shot or spill in any blood.'"[26] Therefore, the censors had to be altered in order to provide the American public with a more accurate depiction of the war, a depiction that would prepare them for the time when soldiers returned with injuries, both mentally and physically.

Censorship Overseas:

The military censors present overseas, with whom Vaccaro commonly dealt, were stricter than even the Office of War Information. As Roeder explained, "Nothing was voluntary about censorship in American combat zones. There the military allowed only accredited photographers pledged to abide by its rules, which varied over time and among services."[27] As the war went on, the Office of War Information in conjunction with the Office of Censorship became more open and less censored. The general public was becoming more confident about the war because of victories over the Germans in 1943.[28] Something had to be done to keep the American people providing toward the war efforts and encouraging the military forces, so the censorship of the wartime photographs was altered. The Office of Censorship and the Office of War Information began to uncover

[26] George H. Roeder, Jr. *The Censored War*. Yale University Press. (1993). p. 10.
[27] Ibid. p. 9.
[28] Ibid. p. 11.

more violent and horrific illustrations of the war in order to encourage the public to buy war bonds, to become more invested in the war, and to illustrate that although there were victories, there were still many losses of soldiers for which to account: "In May [1943] *Newsweek* ran photographs of Americans badly injured in the Pacific campaign, and announced that 'to harden home-front morale, the military services have adopted a new policy of letting civilians see photographically what warfare does to men who fight.'"[29] While the newspapers and the Offices were enthusiastic about the lightening of the censorship to provide the American people with a more realistic view of the war, the military branches were not interested in providing the Offices and the newspapers with the disturbing photographs. "In August, however, OWI's news bureau complained in internal memos that the Army Signal Corps was again growing more restrictive in giving OWI access to material."[30] Because of the closeness to the soldiers and the reality of the war, numerous branches of the military, including the Army, to which Vaccaro belonged, put a stop to providing photographs to the Office of War Information and the Office of Censorship.[31] The thought of revealing photographs of dead Americans made the military uncomfortable. The fear was that the photograph would travel more quickly than the military could, and an American family would find out that their son or daughter was killed in war through a news article with a revealing photograph rather than through the military. Ultimately, the military refused to provide such photographs and so the censorship continued. Although the photographs did get more graphic, photographs of

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[29] George H. Roeder, Jr. *The Censored War*. Yale University Press. (1993).p. 11.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.

dead Americans were still withheld. Vaccaro joined the war late, being drafted into the war in 1944, and still he recalls that the Army requested that soldiers not photograph horrific sights even late in the war. As he recalls, "The army censored American dead soldiers. They didn't want to see dead American soldiers."[32]

Although the officials in the military felt that photographs of dead American soldiers would cause a poor response from Americans on the home-front, it was not a stance that Vaccaro was willing to take. He carefully created his photographs to keep from showing any revealing angles of a dead American but continued to photograph the dead, seeing them as a part of war. Vaccaro felt a need to show the Americans the reality of war, and the death of American soldiers was one of the realities that had to be illustrated. He recalled typical wartime photographs and movies he had seen that depicted war in a false way. Photographs of soldiers being thrown back after being shot by a bullet were impossible and he felt they were false in their depictions of the war. Vaccaro longed to illustrate what really happened in the war so that others could better understand its reality.[33]

Vaccaro did not want to produce photos that illustrated a version of war that did not exist, so he photographed sights that would not meet the censorship guidelines by which he was entitled to abide, "Typically photographers submitted exposed film to field censors, who, after classifying photographs in accordance with policies set by military and civilian leaders, would send them back to the US for further review and for

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[32] Tony Vaccaro Interview. August 30, 2010. Conducted at the USAHEC by Molly Shoener.
[33] Ibid.

distribution."[34] Instead, Vaccaro secretly kept many photographs hidden away from the censors. As he explained, "Over 300 pictures, that I took in Normandy, that I photographed in Normandy, no one saw. So from then on, they didn't know that I took other pictures, I hid them; I was carrying them in my pack."[35] He continued the work that he believed in, unlike many combat photographers at the time. While other photographers were willing to abide by the censorship enforced by the United States military, Vaccaro knew that the truth needed to be revealed to the American public; therefore, he continued photographing the war that he saw. The most effective photographers attempted to see the war in the same light as Vaccaro, "Although [the photographers] received few guidelines from the military, they knew fairly well what was likely to be acceptable and what not…[they] took whatever pictures seemed most important to them, and hoped that eventually their best pictures would find viewers."[36] These photographers wanted to get the same idea back to the people on the home-front as Vaccaro did. They wanted to make certain that the people in the United States understood the complexities and tragedies of war. In response to the censorship present, Vaccaro reflected, "So I would say that censorship, the order for censorship, did not affect me. I didn't give a damn…I was going to take my picture." This is not to say that Vaccaro was the only photographer that felt this way, but he was likely in the minority.

With similar ideas about the public exposure to truth, Chief of Staff George C. Marshall urged generals to "give effective and enthusiastic support to their photographic

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[34] George H. Roeder, Jr. *The Censored War*. Yale University Press. (1993). p. 9.
[35] Tony Vaccaro Interview. August 30, 2010. Conducted at the USAHEC by Molly Shoener.
[36] George H. Roeder, Jr. *The Censored War*. Yale University Press. (1993). p. 92.

units and send Washington material that would 'vividly portray the dangers, horrors, and grimness of War."[37] The insistence allowing people to see a realistic portrayal of the war's tragedies likely influenced a drastic change in tone of the photographic units as well as a change in tone in the feelings of soldiers. These men had previously been encouraged to view the war through a positive lens: as a heroic, noble and happy experience; therefore, they were able to see the war in a different light, which likely boosted morale and gave them hope. They were now being asked to see the war for the grimness that it was, for the instability of their lives and for the horror that they experienced on a daily basis—they were forced to see the war through their lens as war. Many soldiers likely felt uncomfortable and longed for the time when they were asked to keep the revealing and tragic photography to a minimum. However, it seemed that this change in censorship was crucial, considering the influx of self-righteousness on the home-front: "The War Department's Bureau of Public Relations (BPR) reexamined more than two hundred photographs from the Chamber of Horrors and cleared dozens for release. Most showed intact bodies and revealed little of the agonies of death. Some, however, did have the power to shock."[38] This change was necessary in order to keep the public interested and supportive of the war. Without the revelation of more grotesque photos, the Americans on the home-front would have remained complacent with the war, not seeing the truth of the Second World War. "The *Washington Post* said it was time that the government treated Americans as adults, and the photographs 'can help us to understand something of what has been sacrificed for the victories we have won.' The

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[37] George H. Roeder, Jr. *The Censored War*. Yale University Press. (1993). p. 12.
[38] Ibid.

paper advised, however, that 'an overdose of such photographs would be unhealthy.'"[39] An overdose of these photographs would cause the public to turn strongly against the war and in favor of its immediate end. However, just the right amount of death and destruction would illustrate a definite need for more assistance with the war efforts, encourage the purchasing of more war bonds, and emphasize the need for continued support of the war.

As the war continued, censorship was loosened, to allow a more realistic portrayal of the war, which paralleled Vaccaro's view on censorship. The newspapers and government regulated the amount of censorship, and as time continued, more photographs were being exposed to the public, but the Office of Censorship and Office of War Information continued to ensure that many photographs—either those that were too revealing of soldiers' identity or too graphic—remained censored and in the Chamber of Horrors.[40] Although the censors were becoming less strict, there was still an insistence that the photographs revealing identities of dead American soldiers be withheld from the public eye; however, photographs of unrecognizable dead American soldiers were becoming more prevalent in magazines and newspapers. On September 20, 1943, *Life* magazine published a photo of three dead American soldiers on Buna Beach in New Guinea, taken by George Strock.[41] Photographs such as these were both shocking and disturbing to the Americans at home; however, they were important to the illustration of

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[39] George H. Roeder, Jr. *The Censored War*. Yale University Press. (1993). p. 14.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Kenneth Paul O'Brien, "Censorship and Images of Modern War: America in World War II." Reviews in American History, (1994).

what was being sacrificed abroad for their safety. Even the *Washington Post* stated that it was vital for Americans to see these pictures to truly understand the war.[42]

Photographing the Aftermath:

These more graphic photographs of dead soldiers ensured the continued support of the American people until the close of the Second World War. As the war drew to a close in Germany, the support of people on the home-front was still necessary for the war that continued in the South Pacific. Though Vaccaro was required to remain in Germany, where the war had ended for the United States soldiers, other American men were still fighting and dying in the South Pacific.[43] Instead of being called over to Japan, as Vaccaro feared would happen, he was ordered to return to the US and civilian life. However, Vaccaro was not ready to leave Europe as quickly as one would think. Interested in what would happen after the war in Germany, Vaccaro made arrangements to remain and photograph the aftermath of the war in Germany. As Vaccaro recalls, "I wanted to become a Professor of Linguistics, so I wanted to rush home in 1945, but then I thought to myself, 'Tony, what's going to happen here is going to be incredible. All these abused people, what do they need to do to become normal? How are they going to begin working normally again?' It's an incredible thing to do with a camera—to cover it. So I remained in Germany."[44]

Vaccaro became a photographer with the U.S. State Department at the Audio Visual Aids (AVA) section and photographed the aftermath of the Second World War as

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[42] Kenneth Paul O'Brien, "Censorship and Images of Modern War: America in World War II." Reviews in American History, (1994).
[43] Tony Vaccaro. *Entering Germany*. Taschen. (2001).
[44] Tony Vaccaro Interview. August 30, 2010. Conducted at the USAHEC by Molly Shoener.

it affected the German people. Although at this time the Office of Censorship's focus shifted to the South Pacific, there was still continued censorship of the aftermath of the war in Germany. This is apparent in the type of photograph that was common after the close of the Second World War in Europe. Typical photographs included people kissing, smiling and waving American flags, but that was not the same experience that Vaccaro shot. As Vaccaro remembered, the liberation was not quite as liberating as one would believe. "We have the feeling that the war was over and everyone started dancing—it didn't happen that way. It took three to five months for people to begin to forget the war. It may be this way for those who did not experience it, but not for those who experienced it."[45] As Vaccaro reflects, the end of the war did not occur in the same way that the photographs portrayed it at the close of the Second World War. People on the United States home-front saw the liberation as a time of relief and joy. The American people celebrated the end of war and the return of their soldiers. Soon they would celebrate the end of the war in the Pacific theater as well. The American men were sent back to the United States and returned to civilian life. According to the perspective of most Americans, the Second World War was over and everything returned to normal. However, in Europe and the Pacific there were many displaced people, families, and soldiers; life was far from being "normal." Americans on the home-front would recall the liberation and close of the Second World War as a time of happiness, but soldiers who remained in Europe and the Pacific during the aftermath of the war remember a far more different experience at the close of the war. The photographs of people dancing in

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[45] Tony Vaccaro Interview. August 30, 2010. Conducted at the USAHEC by Molly Shoener.

the streets and kissing are not the reality of the aftermath that Vaccaro photographed. People who did not experience the war on their home-front, in the way that the Germans and other countries had, may have felt joy and happiness, but for most everyone in the war the time of liberation was a time of continued sorrow and despair. Many people were displaced or were without their family; therefore, the dancing that is typical of liberation photography did not accurately portray the aftermath of war. As Vaccaro describes, "I began to photograph and this is what I noticed, people were in a state as if they lost someone in the family and you suffer for that. And if you look at my pictures taken in 1946-1947, people walk the street like that. The eyes and the mind [are] still not convinced that life is normal."[46] Vaccaro photographed the continued poverty in Germany and illustrated for the American people that everything was not back to normal for the rest of the world. However, these photographs did not reach the United States very often. The American people continued believing that the war was over and it was a time for celebration for all, while Vaccaro photographed a dismal and poverty-stricken world in Germany following the war.

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[46] Tony Vaccaro Interview. August 30, 2010. Conducted at the USAHEC by Molly Shoener.

Conclusion
Stephens, Sumners, Vaccaro
A Final Journey through the Lens

When I began the daunting task of compiling information and interviewing combat photographers for use in this thesis, I had general questions in mind, and believed that I could predict the answers to these queries. In questioning the use and the ethicality of the censorship imposed, I assumed that the combat photographers, whom I interviewed, would be largely against the censorship, resenting the restrictions felt on the front lines. I assumed that because these men had risked their lives to photograph the war, they would be offended by the censors that removed their photograph or examined it and returned it with crop marks, stating that the photographer should have been closer to the action. What I found was largely contrary to what I had conditioned myself to expect from these men.

The sole interviewee who seemed to resent the censorship imposed on him was Tony Vaccaro. Although none of the men photographing the war enjoyed being censored, many understood the importance of censorship to the security of the country and the military and to maintain an ethical perspective of the war throughout the entire confrontation. Originally a private of the 83rd Infantry Division, Vaccaro was capable of photographing in his spare time, and only later in the war, and following the war did he officially photograph for the newspapers and magazines. Therefore, he received even less respect in the military than did the official combat photographers. After having many of his photographs censored upon attempting to send them back to the United

States, Vaccaro illustrated his intense disgust at the idea of censorship.[1] He had experienced the power of censorship, never having access to his photographs from the landing on Normandy again, and was not fond of it. Possibly, if he had received an initial position working as a combat photographer, he would feel less betrayed and would better understand the necessity of censorship that existed during the Second World War.

Aside from the comments of Tony Vaccaro, the men interviewed understood and agreed with the censorship that was utilized during the Second World War to maintain an ethical outlook of the war on the home-front. This sense of ethicality remained an important aspect of combat photography throughout the entire war, and remains important even today. Combat photographers are responsible for taking official photographs to document the war, but must be conscious of the photographs that are being recorded, ensuring that they do not compromise war morale or support on the home-front. James R. Stephens mentioned that he felt the censorship kept men from behaving indecently, or at least from the embarrassment of a photograph being published of their improper behavior.[2] It allowed men to feel somewhat freer on the frontlines, which may seem contradictory to the purpose of the censors, but in context can be further understood. For instance, the present-day example that comes to mind is the disgrace felt by the military and the soldiers involved in the improper photographs of soldiers posing with Iraqi POWs. A problem similar to the one in which Stephens feared surfaced when American soldiers were taped performing their duties inappropriately and causing fear and embarrassment to Iraqi prisoners of war in the War against Terror. Captured on

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[1] Tony Vaccaro Interview. August 30, 2010. Conducted at the USAHEC by Molly Shoener.
[2] Email Correspondence Interview with James R. Stephens. 24 February 2011.

video and film, these American soldiers were illustrated as tyrannical and quickly lost respect by the Americans on the home-front. As Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt (1954) explained to Central Broadcasting Service (CBS) News in April of 2004, "Frankly, I think all of us are disappointed by the actions of the few. Every day, we love our soldiers, but frankly, some days we're not always proud of our soldiers."[3] In his recollections of inhumane acts of his fellow soldiers, Stephens recalls a similar feeling to that of Kimmitt in regards to happenings at war. Things were not always pretty, but Stephens refused to photograph instances where soldiers were acting in ways that he did not believe were proper, in order to extinguish problems with soldiers and to deter them from acting in questionable ways. Unfortunately, there was not a photographer present in the instance that occurred in 2004, to illustrate for the improper soldiers the ways in which this behavior would dishearten citizens on the home-front. Perhaps, if the photographer had refused to photograph this debauchery, the soldiers would have ceased this behavior more rapidly.

Because soldiers now are allowed the freedom of the instant communication with the home-front via personal cameras and telephones, photographs cannot be as carefully monitored, and thus, disturbing photographs that cast a poor light on the military inadvertently surface in the media. This lack of the ability to successfully enforce censorship has negatively impacted the view of the military by many people on the home-

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[3] Rebecca Leung, "Abuse of Iraqi POWs By GIs Probed." Created on April 28, 2004. Accessed on 10 March 2011.
http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/04/27/60II/main614063_page1.shtml?tag=contentMain;contentBody

front, and is an illustration of the necessity of censorship, in order to maintain morale among Americans.

Although men like Charles E. Sumners continued to rely on fellow combat photographers for advice in the production of more effective photographs, the censors also allowed combat photographers to understand how a photograph could be more enticing to people on the home-front, which would allow it to be better utilized in the media. As Sumners mentioned, though, they did not always understand that standing in the middle of a battlefield would open the man up to open fire, which made many of their suggestions, although true, completely unobtainable without the chance of death.[4] The censors that reviewed the photographs before presenting them to the media and government assisted the combat photographers in creating more desirable photographs captions that would aptly pass the censorship in place at the time.

Ultimately, the combat photographers that I researched gave direct examples and opened up the opportunity to retell personal stories in a setting that illustrated each man's connection to a larger experience during the time of war. Not only were common falsities revealed, such as the belief that all censorship is abhorrent, but it allowed a more delicate history to be revealed and examined to create an ethical history of combat photographers during the Second World War. Although these men fought in different areas of the world, Stephens being in the Pacific Theater and Vaccaro and Sumners being a part of the European Theater, and photographed at different times, Stephens and Sumners primarily photographing during the whole war and Vaccaro photographing the

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[4] Charles E. Sumners. *Darkness Visible: Memoir of a World War II Combat Photographer.* McFarland and Company Inc. (2002).

end of the war and the reconstruction of Germany following the war, their stories are impressively similar. Though all over the world, these men all experienced a common censorship, distaste for the terror of war, and the ability to capture it all on film. These three men have been largely influential in the material that is presented today in textbooks, classrooms, and lectures. Censorship may have limited the amount of photographs seen by the public to ensure the remainder of ethicalities among Americans, but the photographs, even gruesome photographs, exist because of these men who risked their lives to get the shot.

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