Aleksandra Musiał

One Ride: Larry Burrows

and the Contexts of the Vietnam War Photography

UNIWERSYTET ŚLĄSKI
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Referee
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Introduction: Two Stories

In 1951, a book was published in America. It was cumbersome and heavy, as an object to handle lacking the easy convenience of a standard hardback that could be retrieved and enjoyed at any time, during a longish train ride or a solitary afternoon in a café. Its very form was demanding, calling for a comfortable domestic setting in order to be viewed, a slice of time and attention to be found in the day to actually pick it up and read it. Its title was *This is War!*, and its author, as printed on the jacket, was David Douglas Duncan.

But the book's content was not necessarily the standard stuff of coffee table literature, either. Being as it was an album of photography—a "photo-narrative in three parts," in fact, as the subtitle explained—and war photography at that, it offered its audience something new, a story of a war told entirely through intentionally captionless images, enabling the pictures to speak for themselves and the reader to engage with them personally and unburdened by words. In his introduction to the first edition of the book, Duncan ([1951] 1990) wrote:

> [*This is War!*] is simply an effort to show something of what a man endures when his country decides to go to war, with or without his personal agreement on the righteousness of the cause. This book is an effort to completely divorce the word "war" as flung dramatically down off the highest benches of every land, from the look in the man's eyes who is taking his last puff on perhaps his last cigarette, perhaps forever, before he grabs his rifle, his guts and his dreams—and attacks an enemy position above him.
>
> Believing that the look in that man's eyes tells more clearly what he felt, I am presenting this book to you without a single caption. […] [T]o learn their stories, each page of photographs must be read as

> carefully as you might read a page of written text in a novel. Asking you to read the story in their faces and hands and bodies, as they were feeling it themselves at the moment of impact, is only fair to them—and is asking more of you than ever before has been asked of the picture-viewing audience. ("In Explanation")

Duncan's words constitute something of a motto for the present volume. Even though, as shall be argued later on, war photographs cannot be divorced entirely from the rhetoric of the "highest benches," Duncan was right in pointing out that at the source of each picture, there are a lived experience and real emotion, captured by a skilled photographer at a moment that lays them bare for the contemplation of the viewer. He is also right in recognizing the potential of telling war stories through images. The photographs in his book, originally taken for *Life* magazine, focus mostly on the men of the U.S. Marine Corps deployed to Korea and offer a photo-by-photo account of an American troop's life while on active duty. The book's first part, "The Hill," details the so-called Battle of No-Name Ridge on the Pusan Perimeter in 1950. In the story, a few men keep reappearing throughout: unsurprisingly, these most memorable faces, which belong to the story's most easily identifiable protagonists, are captured in portraits and close-ups. In one of these, a young marine—identified by one source (Forney, 2018) as PFC Joe Dunford[1]—is seen in a powerful, almost intimate close-up, smoking a cigarette, palpably uneasy and alert as the preparations for battle take place (see Photo 1).[2] Another hero of the story emerges in the person of Corporal Leonard Hayworth, the central figure of some of the most remarkable photographs in the series: he comes into view in a succession of eight photographs that show him dirty with the battle grime, exhausted, and crying

[1] According to Forney (2018), Dunford was the father of Joseph Dunford, a four-star general in the U.S. Marine Corps and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff between 2015 and 2019.

[2] All the photographs referenced in this book may be viewed in various sources online. A list of links to the images is provided at the end of the book (see Appendix). For the reader's convenience, the list of links can also be found at https://onerideimages.wordpress.com, from where it will be easy to navigate to the sources.

(Photo 2). Arguably, this is the strongest moment of the narrative: the reader gets a very clear impression of the emotions involved, of the corporal trying to make sense of what has happened and slowly settling down, as he sits for a cigarette and a chat with a fellow marine. (Hayworth is devastated after having learnt that his unit has run-out of ammunition, a circumstance which also occasioned perhaps the best-known photograph of the series: the picture of the company's grave-faced commander, Captain Francis "Ike" Fenton (Photo 3). Hayworth is also one of the two marines to whom *This is War!* is dedicated; from the dedication the reader learns that he was eventually killed in action.)

Fifteen years after Duncan had photographed his marines in Korea, another photojournalist, in another war, set out to document the experiences of a "grunt" (marine) of his own, and the pictures he would take on that occasion embodied perfectly the principles of combat photography expressed in Duncan's words quoted above. Larry Burrows, a Londoner also on assignment from *Life*, found his subject among the U.S. troops, whose numbers had just begun to creep up, in Da Nang on the Vietnamese coast. The man he picked was a 21-year-old James Farley, a Marine lance corporal and crew chief of the eponymous helicopter of what was to become "One Ride with Yankee Papa 13," a photoessay published in *Life* on April 16, 1965, and reprinted almost four decades later, with changes and additions, in a posthumous album of Burrows's work done in Vietnam (Burrows 2002, 100–123).

Each version of the narrative begins differently. The changes are not surprising, of course: the magazine story is situated firmly in the immediate context of its publication, very much close to being news, or at the very least having the objective of informing its audience about the new American war. The book version of "Yankee Papa 13," on the other hand, has become something more akin to an art piece, part of Burrows's oeuvre, and so mediated by an artistic consideration that moreover, due to the passage of time and the organic development of historical memory, has rendered the story part of the American representation, or even cultural narrative (Neilson 1998), of the Vietnam War. The *Life* version began with pictures of a marine squadron

briefing, and then of Farley out and about on liberty in Da Nang (Photo 4).[3] In the book, the story opens with a simple, zoomed-in portrait of Farley grinning. The discrepancy is easily explained: while the purpose of the photoessay in *Life* was at least partly to inform the magazine's readership about the lives of the U.S. troops in Vietnam—hence the snapshots of Farley's antics on the streets of Da Nang—the book's version positions itself more clearly within the "innocence lost" genre of war storytelling, transmitting its central theme through the juxtaposition of the happy, smiling Farley in the first picture, and the devastated Farley in the final picture.

The story that follows is more or less the same in both cases, even though told in a slightly different arrangement of photographs: there is a shot of smiling Farley as he walks through the airfield, a heavy gun in each hand; shots of the eponymous Yankee Papa 13 (YP13) "chopper" being prepared for a mission, then of take-off. As the accompanying text in *Life* explained, Farley's squadron had been detailed to fly what was supposed to be a "milk-run mission"—trouble was not expected, in other words—to drop a South Vietnamese battalion in a landing zone not far from the base at Da Nang; as it turned out, once fire started coming up from the ground, the area was surrounded by the Viet Cong, equipped with anti-aircraft artillery. In the air, a photograph shows Farley manning the helicopter's machine gun, calm and seemingly bigger in his flight gear, squinting against wind, and then looking on as the Vietnamese troops disembark.

As Yankee Papa 13 touches down on its second run of the day, the text continues to explain, the crew spot another American helicopter, YP3, shot down and sitting on the ground nearby. Two wounded crewmates manage to make it from YP3, across a field of grass and in a storm of bullets, onto Yankee Papa 13. The succeeding series of photos focuses on Farley's failed attempt, under the unrelenting Viet Cong fire, to rescue YP3's wounded pilot still stuck in the cockpit (the bloodied and unresponsive man seemed dead to Farley, but would

[3] All issues of *Life* magazine are available free of charge in an archive hosted by Google Books. "One Ride with Yankee Papa 13" is available at https://books.google.pl/books?id=RlMEAAAAMBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false, cover + pp. 24–34C.

in fact be rescued later and survive). The cover photograph of this particular issue of *Life* would come from the very next sequence of dramatic shots: back in his own craft, Farley, now manning YP13's machine gun to cover their takeoff, shouts something in shock as the two injured crewmates lie on the helicopter's floor. Once the craft is out of the enemy's fire range, Farley joins in the efforts to save their lives. Soon, midflight and at some point between Burrows's published shots, one of the men, YP3's copilot Lt. James Magel, dies. The expression of dumbfounded shock is clearly manifested on Farley's face throughout the flight, and then turns into uninhibited anguish. Two pictures—not printed in *Life*—now show Farley looking out the helicopter door, his flight helmet off: he is crying, child-like, his face a stark contrast to the cheerfulness of only a few photos ago (Photo 5). Back in Da Nang, the wounded are taken off the aircraft, and Farley and crewmates relate to other marines what happened. Both stories end with the same powerful image—though cropped differently in the two sources—of Farley back in Da Nang, weeping, slumped over a stack of boxes and shielding his face away from Burrows's camera (Photo 6).

In this book, I will attempt to contextualize Burrows's photoessay, referred to thereafter as "Yankee Papa 13," and to interpret it within the frameworks of the Vietnam War photojournalism. Chapter one traces the milestones in the development of war and combat photography and its public reception, in order to provide some background and to investigate some of the traditions inherited by the cameramen in Indochina. The chapter also introduces some general problems resulting from the nature of photography—its subjection to connotation and change of meaning, its vulnerability to manipulation—and the close, almost seamless linking of images with the "reality of war." This is done to illustrate how the medium aids the arbitrary, and sometimes propagandist, portrayal of a conflict entrenched in the common perception, memory, and popular culture.

Chapter two examines the journalism of the Vietnam War, drawing on some of the works published on the subject, in order to locate it historically and politically, and to tackle some of the myths and misconceptions concerning the reporting of the war, including its supposed

antiwar stance, its impact on public opinion, and the importance of television coverage. The second part of the chapter looks at the photographs of the conflict, specifying some of the prevalent conventions of capturing it on camera and examining how the Vietnam War was defined through visual imagery as seen in photographs.

Chapter three proposes one way of investigating the transformation of the popular view of the war in Vietnam, a view that culminated in the characteristic image of the American soldier in the narratives of the war, thus introducing the final context within which—or against which—Burrows's "Yankee Papa 13" can be read. The photoessay is then placed within a framework that elucidates the historical and political circumstances of its conception, execution and publication; or, in other words, it is put in the chronological and ideological context of the Vietnam War reporting and the changes that occurred within it over the years. Finally, the photographs are interpreted as a narrative, the analysis drawing on some observations concerning war storytelling in general.

An undercurrent theme in the discussions of war photography throughout this study is the image of the American soldier. On the whole, as it will be seen, the photographers seem to remain sympathetic towards the troops they portray, perhaps because, equipped with cameras rather than rifles, they nonetheless share some of the same misery and danger of the frontline and the battlefield: when James Farley dashed across the distance between his own helicopter and the downed YP3, Larry Burrows was right behind him, and then crouched close to the craft to get some cover as bullets peppered YP3's fuselage while Farley reached inside to get to the wounded pilot. But the ways of photographing the troops, whether in the attempt to "capture that look in their eyes" or in trying to frame them meaningfully within their surroundings, change. It is by examining these changes that one may consider the practice of photography to better understand the perceptions of conflicts in society and in culture.

If, for reasons explained later on, the press photography of the Vietnam War did not register the massive transformation of the soldier's image—nowhere as evident as in the disparity between the pop-cultural portrayals of the heroes of the Second World War and the much ma-

ligned Vietnam War veteran—it nevertheless did help instigate a specific sensitivity and imagery that became the setting for the new war stories. Burrows's "Yankee Papa 13" is interesting in this respect as it occupies a spot at a crossroads, capturing a moment when the American soldier, still as an American hero, a once would-be cowboy, was thrust down the jungle road that would eventually take him into the heart of darkness.

A Note on the Text

I have decided to omit the diacritics that the Vietnamese script conventionally uses throughout the text of this book. Therefore, I use the Anglicized "Saigon" rather than "Sài Gòn," "Viet Cong" rather than "Việt Cộng" (or "Vietcong," for that matter, which is a spelling occasionally found in English-language sources), Ngo Dinh Diem rather than "Ngô Đình Diệm," and so forth. As for the name of the country of Vietnam, as should already be clear, I have similarly set on the conventional English-language "Vietnam" instead of the Vietnamese "Việt Nam" or the slightly outdated "Viet Nam" (except in quotations). "South Vietnam" and "North Vietnam" are also used throughout, standing for the official designations of the Republic of Vietnam (1955–1975) and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam respectively.

Chapter One

This is War: Combat Photography in History

"Clio of War"

The two stories with which this volume begins—David Douglas Duncan's "The Hill" and Larry Burrows's "Yankee Papa 13"—are products of different conflicts, and they depict different types of warfare and combat situations. And yet they also share much. Each focuses on young marines as its heroes. Each tells of a day on the front, the horror of that first contact, and of the emotions triggered by the experience. Both belong to the timeless canon of war tales—but each is also embedded in the context of its conflict. The war in Korea was photographed differently to the war in Vietnam, just as the visual framing of every previous major conflict had established its own conventions and imagery, resulting from contemporary perceptions and the socio-political milieu of a given war. In effect, in the words of Susan Moeller (1989),

> each war in the past hundred years has had a different feel, a definite texture, a distinct "persona" […] that, to a great extent, was created by the photography of battle. […] Through its repetition of images, [photography] has helped to foster certain physical and emotional stereotypes about each war. (4–5)

For one thing, the American war in Vietnam was the first one to be captured in color so extensively and, ultimately, successfully. Moeller (1989, 390–391) wrote, in fact, that, interestingly from today's perspective, in the 1960s color photography—especially color photography of war and combat—was thought by many to be unnecessarily sensationalist or indeed scandalous. It was *Life*'s contribution to the aesthetics of

the Vietnam War to show the war in color early and often; Burrows's 1963 story "We Wade Deeper Into Jungle War" was already shot in color. Apparently, taking color photographs of upsetting subjects was still considered controversial ("prettifying") in the early 1980s (Ritchin 1989, 440).

Burrows was in fact an early enthusiast of the new technology, and it is thanks to his and several of his colleagues' work that the conflict is now mainly remembered in the lush greens of the Vietnamese landscape, the khakis and browns of the Americans' sun-bleached uniforms and tanned skins. When we look back at images of wars, the black-and-white photographs—like those of the fronts and trenches of the First World War, of the theaters of the Second World War, of the battlefields of Korea—seem to us to be artifacts of the past, the people and events they portray now safely and definitely relegated to history. The images of the war in Vietnam, on the other hand, are invigorated by color: not only do they appear more animated and dynamic, conveying more immediately the sensory details of the Vietnamese surroundings to their viewers, but they also seem to considerably shorten the psychic distance between a contemporary audience and the historical event.

Politics, ideology, controversy, and the public opinion end up shaping the reception of a war's representation, too, of course. This topic will be discussed in more detail in further sections of the book, but for now let it suffice to bring up perhaps the greatest chasm between the perceptions and cultural memories of two conflicts in American history, namely, that between the Second World War and the war in Vietnam. In the case of the first, the continuing meaning of that conflict in American culture, as well as the patriotic-propagandic attitudes toward publishing frontline images at the time, still color the ways in which this photography is seen to this day. Even though contemporary audiences may be better aware of the frequently decidedly non-heroic realities of the Second World War, as well as of the political and cultural discourses that for the past seventy years have shaped it into America's "Good War," the inescapable fact remains that in the 1940s the U.S. forces joined in an alliance against powers that *would* very much prove to be among history's most depraved and contemptible—even if the American troops at the time had no way of knowing it (Fussell

1989, 129–143; 2003, 161–165). Consequently, even when the war's American-centered photography captured the misery of the battlefield and the suffering of the soldiers on the frontlines, these imageries are now filtered by the war's conclusion and the eventual revelations. The photographed experiences of those soldiers—who, after all, personally helped defeat the armies of Germany and Japan—are automatically translated into heroism, to put it simply.

Compare that to the controversies and complications of the Vietnam War, and it becomes evident that even though the photographs of that conflict do not diverge too much in terms of content and themes from their Second World War predecessors, today they seem to speak to a different political reality altogether. The tribulations of American soldiers in Vietnam caught on film are not usually perceived through the heroic or patriotic lens, but instead urge more complex questions about the righteousness of deploying young men to such a theater of war, the (supposed) moral ambivalence of the conflict's origins and outcomes, and the meanings of the American suffering endured in Indochina. Due to the Vietnam War's controversial status, the subjects of those photographs are not generally seen as unproblematic "heroes" of the "free world," but are instead enmeshed in an intricate fabric of victimization that positions them, as both perpetrators and victims, in entirely different cultural roles than those of their fathers before them. This somewhat ambiguous dynamic is related, of course, to another "complication" that the photography of the war in Vietnam brings in, namely, the presence of the Vietnamese, who can similarly be both victims and, from the American perspective at least, always potential perpetrators of violence against each other as well as the U.S. troops.[1] This presence is a unique feature in the history of American war photography, and one that greatly impacts the "persona" of the Vietnam War preserved in its images.

Still, the tradition of war photography appears to be that of succession and augmentation rather than of radical novelty. It is true that in pictures the war in Vietnam looks different to the Second World

[1] I discussed the topic of victimhood in American discourses about the war in Vietnam in detail in Musiał (2020).

War, for example, but—with the obvious exception of changes in the geographical settings, the gear and equipment—the visual distinctions stem precisely from the appropriation of some themes and the rejection of others. Consequently, in order to understand the meanings of the Vietnam War photography, it is necessary to first investigate how the preceding conflicts had been captured on camera.

It is of little surprise that photography as a medium was so readily and so intimately embraced by warfare reportage. It has the advantage of being a perfect medium for storing visual records of history as well as commemorating events and periods, as a photograph alone can capture the essence of a conflict in a single memorable image. Susan Sontag (2003), for example, noted that,

> nonstop imagery (television, streaming video, movies) is our surround, but when it comes to remembering, the photograph has the deeper bite. Memory freeze-frames; its basic unit is the single image. In an era of information overload, the photograph provides a quick way of apprehending something and a compact form for memorizing it. (20)[2]

Perhaps even more importantly, however, when it comes to conflict reporting, photographs satisfy in a special way the audience's thirst for a good war story, a fascination which has anything but abated:

> We have an eternal and compelling curiosity about war—wars in which our own survival is at stake and wars long past. […] In a current conflict we fret about loved ones, but in all war reports we share vicariously in the terrible excitement of combat. (Evans 2001, 3)

Sontag (2003) saw the same allure in images of wartime suffering and pondered whether "an antidote to the perennial seductiveness of war" (95) could be found, while Moeller (1989) observed that

[2] This particular quality of photography has, of course, been noted often; see, for example, Sherer (1989, 391); Hariman and Lucaites (2003, 51; 2005, 201); Kennedy (2016, 15–19); Heusser (2019, 188–190).

> combat, no matter how peripheral, how Pyrrhic, how purposeless, is the heart of war. It is what young boys glamorize, old men remember, poets celebrate, governments rally around, women cry about, and soldiers die in. It is also what photographers take pictures of. (3)

The bond between war and photography was established almost instantaneously: the pioneers of "drawing with light" were developing the technique in the 1820s and 1830s, and already in 1855 a photographer went to war for the first time. This was Briton Roger Fenton, in the service of Prince Albert, and the occasion was the Crimean War (1854–1856), incidentally also considered the first conflict covered by war correspondents much as we understand the profession today. Some of the photographs taken by Fenton in Russia had to be staged for the simple reason that the technology available to him was rather finicky in use; but his, after all, royal assignment was not to capture what the war was really like—it was to capture it in a way so as to strengthen the British public's faith in the military endeavor (Knightley 2003, chap. 1).

Meanwhile, "over the pond," the American Civil War (1861–1865) was thoroughly covered by Matthew Brady and his freelance team, even though their pictures were not shown in the press at the time for lack of adequate equipment (Knightley 2003, chap. 2). What Brady's men could do, however, which their colleagues overseas could not, was to photograph pretty much freely, and consequently—if not inevitably—the taboo stakes were raised, with the first images of war dead, fallen Confederate soldiers in this case, made available to those who had means of accessing them other than newspapers. This is important, as the acceptance was accompanied by the sense that the photographer's role in war was not so much about furthering an official agenda, but to record history, truthfully if unpleasantly. The novelty of Brady's photographs and their significance for the development of photojournalism—described as "seismic" by one scholar (Manchester 1989, 14)—were understood already by his contemporaries: in 1862, *The New York Times* called Brady "the first to make photography the Clio of war," and that same year a writer at *The Times* remarked that "Brady has done something to bring home to us the terrible reality and earnestness of the war" (quoted in Manchester, 1989, 14).

That terrible reality, however, was not to stay in the homes for long, at least not for a long while, as "by the end of the nineteenth century, governments began to become sophisticated in their handling of the press in wartime" (Hammond 1990, 4). The reporters and photographers of the First World War found themselves in a situation that was altogether different than Brady's had been half a century earlier, with the access to battlefields severely restricted by the French and the British—and the Americans, once they entered the war. Accreditation was issued to selected correspondents, but the coverage was always heavily censored (Hammond 1990, 4–5). The reprisals of the British authorities were particularly harsh in regard to photographers: according to Phillip Knightley (2003, chap. 5) very few were actually assigned to cover the war, as their task was seen to have been to provide historical record rather than fashion "realistic" portrayals of the conflict for newspapers, and the punishment for any unauthorized person taking photographs at the front was the firing squad.

American journalists who covered the period of the country's involvement in the war (1917–1918) were required to conform to "voluntary" censorship: they agreed to cooperate with military and/or political censors in exchange of accreditation—the access to battlefield according to the set rules—and the arrangement would lay the foundations for the press-military relations in subsequent wars (Hallin 1986, 126–127). In effect, the fronts could, theoretically, be accessed by cameras in unprecedented close-up. In practice, censorship led to such selectivity, manipulation, and sanitation of what was shown that the published photographs of the Great War conveyed next to nothing of the "quantitative leap forward in the horrors of war" (Moeller 1989, 140) that Europe was experiencing.

Nonetheless, something of a cohesive imagery of the war did emerge. The misery of life in the trenches was photographed, although far more effective was the new favorite type of war image: soldiers in silhouette against a suitably "combaty" or dramatic backdrop. Moeller (1989) singled out one, taken by the British photographer Ernest Brooks, as "the prototypical photograph" (146) of this kind: six troops march across a flatland, with lowering sky shot through by a block of sunlight as background (Photo 7). The atmosphere in the picture is gloomy and

portentous, emphasizing the "preparedness, fearlessness and resolve" (Moeller 1989, 146) of the soldiers, and creating a sentimental and romantic impression which may easily be extended to the entire war.[3] This was the ideal perpetuated in American propaganda, and so in the American press. However, more candid photographs were also taken. Sontag (2003) found them to be in "the epic mode […]: the corpse-strewn or lunar landscapes left by trench warfare; the gutted French villages the war had passed through" (18).

But the enormity of destruction and the trauma of the Great War acquired also a haunting human face. A portrait, taken by Brooks, of a German POW sporting a magnificent moustache and with his head wrapped in a piece of cloth, is outstanding, as the painful experience and memory of millions, and the wordless questioning of the meaning of their suffering, seem captured in the man's eyes (Photo 8). The photograph was intended as part of historical archive rather than a newspaper story; nonetheless, the portrait is evidence that the photojournalistic profession was developing, becoming ever more attuned to the needs of intelligent, sensitive and truthful war reporting. Moreover, the image of the injured prisoner provides perfect illustration to David Douglas Duncan's words in regards to the very nature of photojournalism, and war photography in particular. That "the look in [this] man's eyes tells more clearly what he felt" is certainly clear; however, Brook's picture also suggests that it is the subject of the photograph, the person being captured, that ultimately dictates its success and emotional charge, and that the war photographer's skill is limited by serendipity—and often, in combat, by their own bravery under fire.

[3] Moeller (1989) references the photograph as appearing in a 1918 issue of *Saturday Evening Post* and illustrating "an article entitled 'There!'—a reference to the popular song refrain 'Over there, over there, send the word, send the word to beware. That the Yanks are coming…' The photograph, credited to Underwood & Underwood [a photographic service—A.M.], gave evidence that the Yanks had arrived over 'there'" (146). The author of the image, as noted above, was actually Ernest Brooks; the photograph depicts, in fact, British soldiers of the East Yorkshire Regiment during the Third Battle of Ypres in 1917, according to the archive record at the Imperial War Museum, which owns the picture.

The Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) may be considered the next milestone in the history of photojournalism—and due largely to one man and one photograph, Robert Capa and his "Falling Soldier," taken in 1936 and depicting a Republican fighter leaning backwards in what appears to be the moment of death by a bullet. Both became legendary, the controversies concerning the image's genuineness notwithstanding[4]: Capa as an icon among combat photographers, the image as the icon of its war as much as an icon of conflict photojournalism in general. Importantly, the photograph is not actually informative and would qualify as news only in the most circumspect sense. Instead, although the event it portrays bears little significance, the image itself is what matters. It had, or else came to possess, qualities that would provide a template for professional photographs of future wars: spectacle, shock value, eye-grabbing potential, clear symbolism, and finally the unsurpassed ability to both evoke the Spanish Civil War and offer a universal glimpse into the drama of warfare.

It was something of a happy coincidence for Capa that he took the photograph around the time of the emergence of the first picture magazines, or newsmagazines: the "Falling Soldier" was first printed in the French *Vu* (established in 1928), but rose to worldwide prominence with its 1937 publication in *Life*, which had begun circulation merely less than a year earlier. As it turned out, photographs such as Capa's found their perfect environment in this kind of magazines, responding to the readers' newfound interest in the gritty and harsh reality of war (Ritchin 1989, 420–421). A story can provide the fascinating and exciting details—and what better way to tell a story than to illustrate it, or indeed show it wholly, through the truest of media? A 1938 introduction in *Picture Post* to a photostory by Capa of the battle of the Ebro, entitled simply "This is War," read: "The pictures on these and the following pages […] tell the whole story of a counter-attack by Government troops. But they are not presented as propaganda for, or against, either side. They are simply a record of modern war from the

[4] For a discussion of the claims that the photo does not, in fact, portray a dying soldier, see Knightley (2003, chap. 9).

inside."[5] Fred Ritchin (1989) called this "a relatively early instance of a magazine's fascination with war as a spectator sport" (421): what it meant was that, as far as telling war stories to the mass audience went, photography was in.

By the time of the Second World War, much ground had been prepared in terms of convention and professional standards for photojournalists covering it. In fact, news reportage and photography had become so ingrained in the fabric of informing the public about the developments on the battlefields that war correspondence was considered a natural part of the U.S. public relations campaign to defeat the Axis. By the time of the Normandy landings in 1944, the system of controlling reporters and journalists had been perfected to the extent of becoming a top priority in military planning. But even despite considerable restraints of censorship and the emphasis from above to support the efforts of official propaganda, the journalists and photographers covering the war for the American public were largely happy to comply (Hammond 1990, 6; Knightley 2003, chap. 12; Manchester 1989, 27).[6]

That they were, and the reasons for it, would in the future have implications for the way the war in Vietnam would be reported, received and, indirectly, also remembered. Following trends extant already during the First World War (Hammond 1990, 4–5), the Second World War correspondents generally tended to follow either of the two dominant forms of reporting—providing the "big picture view" of the theatres and the conflict, or focusing on the individual soldier and going with the human interest story—in order to "mobilize public opinion in support of the war effort both by making the war seem understandable, within a perspective of military strategy, and by cementing the bonds of sentiment between the public at home and the soldiers in the field" (Hallin 2006, 283–284). The war these correspondents were covering was total, and thanks to the propaganda efforts of the Roosevelt administration it might have seemed to be fought all but directly for the American nation. This, coupled with the easiness of portraying the Axis as embodiments

[5] The quotation comes from a spread reproduced in Ritchin (1989, 419).

[6] This, of course, is a sweeping statement for the purposes of this brief chapter—but largely true. For an exhaustive discussion of Second World War reportage, see Knightley (2003).

of evil, translated into a unifying force, allowing for the image of the American G.I. as a hero, his conduct and exploits glorified as much as the entire undertaking of the war.

Photographers followed suit. Large number of cameramen covering the war for the American public, among them Capa and Joe Rosenthal, continued to exploit the "tough poetry" of war in their work, opting for aesthetics reminiscent of the First World War. A few adopted a more realistic and truthful approach, but the needs of propaganda—to project at least a positive, often heroic and glorified, image of the American soldier, to hearten and harangue the home front—were never compromised. The boom in popularity of G.I. stories had an impact on photographs, too. Alongside images of combat—far surpassing those of the First World War in volume, quality, and candidness—countless photographs of soldiers going about their more mundane daily business, portraits, homecoming photostories, and the like were published. The men in these photographs could be wounded, shell-shocked or otherwise distressed, all in the interest of underscoring the extent of their sacrifice and reinforcing the support and sentiment at home—and photographs were selected and published precisely towards this end (Moeller 1989, 239–244). The story of the images of American KIA's illustrates even more pointedly how the flow of photographs could be controlled and manipulated in order to achieve the desired emotional response among the public. No photographs of dead American soldiers appeared in the press during the First World War, and so was the case at the beginning of the Second World War. The taboo was broken in 1943, however, when *Life* published George Strock's photograph of three American casualties on Buna Beach, New Guinea—it was "OK'd by government censors, in part because FDR feared the public was growing complacent about the war's horrific toll" (Cosgrove 2013; see also Alinder 2012). It is worth pointing out, however, as Sontag (2003, 55–56) has done, that the corpses' faces prudently remain unseen in the photograph.

The photographs of the Second World War, therefore, reiterated the official line and furthered the agenda of the government's propaganda. None did more so than Joe Rosenthal's, of Associated Press (AP), 1945 "Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima." The image of five marines and a Navy

corpsman laboring to hoist up an Old Glory on a Japanese mountaintop shot to instant fame upon publication, being printed in hundreds of American newspapers a day after it had been wired, and temporarily turning the three living soldiers of the six photographed into celebrities. Rosenthal's photo, wrote Knightley (2003), was "used on a postage stamp, became the symbol of the seventh War Bond Drive, was used on 3.5 million posters and 175,000 car cards, and was the inspiration for the hundred-ton bronze memorial to the Marines at the edge of Arlington National Cemetery" (chap. 12, note). The photograph's other career highlights include also a Johnny Cash song about the life one of the marines in the photo ("The Ballad of Ira Hayes") and a $55-million-budget film *Flags of Our Fathers* (2006), directed by Clint Eastwood and telling, essentially, the story of the photograph and its heroes. Drawing its power from "the symbols of the American community: the barn raisings, quilting bees, the all for one and one for all" and signifying the "triumph of collective will" (Moeller 1989, 21), the photograph fulfilled the American public's need to see what they needed to see and what they imagined to be there, namely the heroism, the pride, the faithful service, and the struggle of the boys sent out to the hostile overseas. It seemed to capture dramatically the entire American experience of the war, and provided perfect concluding illustration to the heroic U.S. involvement and victory in the epic, monumental endeavor that was the Second World War.

"The Rhetoric of the Photograph"

The increasing popularity of war photography prior and through the Second World War corresponded to the public's growing desire to be shown war as it is. Photos were meant to provide—at least on the surface of it—an analogue representation of reality, as suggested by the shared, starkly declarative title of both Capa's photostory in *Picture Post* and Duncan's book on Korea: "This is war." But even as photographs had become the most legitimate form of illustrating conflict, they also turned into a potent vehicle for creating an understanding of a given war and storing the collective memory of it.

This function of war photography is, unsurprisingly, somewhat problematic. It also stems from the very quality of photography which allows it to participate in discourse as both its object (the originally "innocent" content of the photograph is endowed with symbolic or narrative meaning) and a contributor to it (the meaning of the photograph becomes attached to a politicized issue or an ideological stance, and thus seemingly "proves" or "exemplifies" it). While this two-tier reading of the medium instantly suggests its particular vulnerability to what Roland Barthes ([1957] 1972) in *Mythologies* defined as "mythical speech" (108), perhaps it will be simpler for our present purposes to turn to Barthes's other writings on the properties of images specifically. There, Barthes (1977) dubbed press photography a "message without a code" (17), meaning that at the source of each photograph, there is only denotation, a wholesome imprint of the captured moment. It is only upon publication and subsequent reception that connotation occurs and the image is endowed with a code—this is "the rhetoric of the photograph" (Barthes 1977, 19). The result is a paradox, ingrained in the very nature of the medium, which stems from the fact that a photograph is at once objective and "invested," "natural" and "cultural" (Barthes 1977, 20).[7] This paradox has further implications, as in a way it renders the medium deceptive. A photograph may, after all, be manipulated or staged—as indeed Fenton's and Brady's photos, and perhaps also Capa's "Falling Soldier," had been—but not necessarily. "Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima," which had achieved such persistent cultural presence and became the representation of the American involvement in the Second World War, was not staged, and yet the image is not exactly what it appears to be of: the circumstances of the raising were out of combat, some time after Iwo Jima had been won, and the flag was actually the second one to wave over Mt. Suribachi that day.[8]

This goes to prove that the range of photography's narrative tools is limited. In *On Photography*, Sontag ([1973] 2005) famously accused the medium of encouraging what she labelled "photographic seeing,"

[7] Sontag (2003, 22–25) introduces the same idea as a contradiction between objectivity and point of view.

[8] The story of the raising is recalled in an interview with Rosenthal in Moeller (1989, 244–247).

"dissociative seeing," which reduces reality to "an array of potential photographs" (75). Such mode of perception, according to her, leads to objectification and beautification of the image, but conveys no truth beyond appearance. Photography acknowledges and confirms an existence, but, unlike memory, offers no explanation and no understanding of this existence's place in history and context. John Berger (1980), too, in an essay intended as a response to Sontag's work, argued that photographs have become a replacement for memories, but one unable to preserve meaning; he, moreover, offered a distinction between private and public photography, the latter having "nothing to do with us, its readers, or with the original meaning of the event" ("Uses of Photography"), being as it is dissociated from constructive historical narrative.[9] Rosenthal's photograph reveals nothing of the fighting on Iwo Jima, of the Pacific Theater of War, or of the U.S. conduct in the war in general—in a similar way, "Falling Soldier" did not explain the Spanish Civil War.

In place of a meaningful narrative, then, photographs offer self-contained spectacles. They simplify history by reducing it to a sequence of symbolic representations of seemingly significant moments; in discussing the problems of multiple meanings carried by photographs, as well as their reductive approach to history, Sontag ([1973] 2005) concluded that their value is, in fact, the same as fiction (pp. 8–19).[10] In a sense a photograph in itself *has no meaning*—or, conversely, it has a *multiplic-*

[9] Berger (1980) continues by constructing a manifest-like claim for "an alternative photography" that should participate in the making of history and be "incorporate[d] [...] into social and political memory" and "social experience;" this, according to him, will be achieved once a proper context is created with words and other mnemonic devices, in order to place the photograph in a historic "narrated time" ("Uses of Photography"). For similar arguments on the importance of correct contextualization of photographs, see: Ritchin (1989, 441) and Moeller (2001, 112).

[10] A similar idea is again expressed by Berger (1980, "Photographs of Agony") who, while writing on the impact of gruesome and horrific photographs, argued for what may be labelled as discontinuity of time: a moment of agony (or any other moment, for that matter), as experienced in a war, is isolated in time in itself, as well by the sheer fact of photographing it. Therefore, "the image seized by the camera is doubly violent" (Berger 1980, "Photographs of Agony"). For a more positive view of these same qualities of photographs, see Hariman and Lucaites (2003, 42–43).

ity of meanings, and it lends itself to varying responses and interpretations. This particular property of photography is the one perhaps most often noted by the medium's theoreticians and critics.[11] This, in turn, is linked to the medium's reliance on both interpretation and the way it is presented to the viewer, the two issues themselves being intertwined. For purposes such as propaganda, a desired interpretation of images may of course be pushed onto the viewer by a multiplicity of means at the disposal of editors and publishers: a selection of photographs to be released, captions, cropping and sequencing of images, their layout; the space or the type of publication in which a picture appears also matter.[12] Such methods, when successful, effectively end up curbing the variety of possible readings within a specific cultural context.

This is precisely why, even if the truth behind photographs such as those of Capa or Rosenthal was significantly less heroic and dramatic than the end products—the images—suggest, this in itself did not rob them of their symbolic power.[13] "Falling Soldier" contributed a symbolic representation of the Republican soldiers' sacrifice in the Spanish Civil War. Rosenthal's image helped (and still does) perpetuate the prevalent myth of the American and Allied righteous struggle in the Second World War, the single-track understanding of the conflict which leaves out less obvious and more contentious issues. Paul Fussell (1989), the war's veteran and author of an excellent analysis of it, wrote about

[11] Barthes (1977): "[a photograph] has no denoted state, [it] is immersed for its very social existence in at least an initial layer of connotation;" this is "perceptive cognition," followed closely by "cognitive" one, whose signifiers are historical and cultural—epistemic and experiential (27–31); Berger (1980): "it is because […] photographs carry no certain meaning in themselves […] that they lend themselves to any use" ("Uses of Photography"); Kozol (1994): "photographs are polysemic texts, that is, they are open to different interpretations and can be read in a variety of ways" (18); Sontag (2003, 31–32); Sontag ([1973] 2005): "any photograph has multiple meanings" (17); Hariman and Lucaites (2005): "the icon [photograph] does not so much record an event as it organizes a field of interpretations to frame public response" (201).

[12] See Barthes (1977, 20–25), on "connotation procedures": ways of modifying reality as the picture is being taken, as well as methods of post-production. See also Moeller (1989, 14–15); Ritchin (1989, 417–418), Sontag (2003, 93–94; [1973] 2005, 83–85); Heusser (2016, 188).

[13] Ritchin (1989) discusses this issue in relation to the "Falling Soldier" (421–432).

this myth: "For the past fifty years the Allied war has been sanitized and romanticized almost beyond recognition by the sentimental, the loony patriotic, the ignorant and the bloodthirsty" (ix).[14] The Iwo Jima picture could be printed alongside these words.

But this very entanglement of war photography in ideological "mythical speech" has important consequences for the reading of historically and culturally anchored images. The "deception" of photographs, their tendency toward the spectacular and their ambiguity of meaning, would perhaps render meaningless any analysis that would attempt to use them to reconstruct significant historical narratives—but these very properties also make possible an obverse approach whereby we may trace the ways in which a culture thinks about its own history. For example: why, in the American culture at least, is the Rosenthal photo the most potent symbolic representation of the specifically American participation in the Second World War? Surely, one of the most significant images to come out of that conflict is that of the mushroom cloud. While, for obvious reasons, the photographic record from the ground soon after the explosions in both Hiroshima and Nagasaki is scant,[15] several photographs of the clouds do exist, providing, alongside pictures taken in German concentration camps, a somber testament to atrocity. And yet, the memory of the atomic bombs has never sat well with the American public, and the events are not nearly as integrated into the cultural memory of the war as Iwo Jima or D-Day. In fact, Marianna Torgovnick (2005) offered the following list of the American "holes in memory" in regards to the Second World War:

> […] internment camps for Japanese and Japanese Americans; incendiary bombings of cities in Germany and Japan; the atomic bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki; and, operating in a different register, the vital Soviet role in defeating the Nazis: while part of the public record, and

[14] See also Sontag (2003, 67–69) on collective memory, commemoration and perpetuation of events "chosen" as important in photographs. See also Hariman and Lucaites (2003, 37–38).

[15] Though not non-existent. Several photo galleries containing this record are available online; one of them is provided by *The New York Times* (Ives 2020).

> hence probably "known," such events have never registered in America's image of World War II or in America's image of itself. (4)

To a certain extent, this avoidance of memory is not surprising, of course. As a hegemon of the "free world," the United States can indulge in some of the historiographic privilege that the victors traditionally enjoy. The traditional exceptionalist American culture is also not immune to a certain vaingloriousness, and we can certainly point to other historical blind spots in the mainstream of American historical commemoration. Still, it is worth keeping in mind that the elusiveness of the cloud stands for an ideological disconnect between the culture that produced and dropped the bombs, and what the cloud signifies.

The photography of the Vietnam War has served a similar selective commemorative function. "Despite the heavy competition of television," writes Martin Heusser (2019), "the 1960s illustrated mass media print journalism acted as a singularly important repository for the continual recreation and maintenance of national collective memory" (190). But comparing the iconic images of the Second World War and those of the war in Vietnam reveals some interesting differences. The mushroom cloud photographs are of course marked by their absences: the absence of the perpetrator, the absence of the victims, and finally, their own absence from the cultural narrative of the United States at war. When we look at the photographs from Vietnam, on the other hand, it turns out that while a number of combat images that portray American soldiers are indeed well-remembered, the truly *iconic* photographs of that conflict all center specifically *Vietnamese* victims, or, at the very least, participants, of the war. It is of course difficult to accurately gauge the iconicity of cultural artifacts like war photographs; it should not be controversial, however, to state that Nick Ut's 1972 "Accidental Napalm Attack"[16] featuring young Kim Phuc is by far the most recognizable picture to come out of the American war in Vietnam. Like Ron Haeberle's pictures of the so-called My Lai massacre in 1968—another entry in the list of the war's most iconic—Ut's photograph has gone

[16] In applying this title to the photograph, I follow the original captioning at *The New York Times*; see Westwell (2011, 421, n. 1).

down in history as an indictment of U.S. imperialism, and despite the public discourses that since the 1970s have striven to position the American veteran as the most significant victim of that war (Musiał 2020, 14–49), the erasure of this particular context from "Accidental Napalm Attack" has not been entirely successful. The remaining photographs that, I would argue, should be classified as the "iconic elite" of the Vietnam War photography—Malcom Browne's picture of Buddhist monk Thich Quang Duc's self-immolation in 1963 and Eddie Adams's "Saigon Execution"—similarly capture Vietnamese persons in the midst of the political turmoil and war brought by American presence. The cultural endurance of these Vietnam War photos and the absence of the mushroom cloud speak both to the arbitrariness of photography as a vessel of cultural memory, and to the possibility of reading cultures through the photographs it chooses to represent itself.

"For Those Whose Christmas Is Now Forever"

The photographers who covered the U.S. forces in the Second World War were undoubtedly sympathetic to the cause and many, if not most—or all, willingly contributed their work to enforce the patriotic sentiment. But they also witnessed the horrors and atrocities of combat, the suffering of its victims, and the extraordinary plight of common soldiers, and their photographs reflected that. W. Eugene Smith, the author of some of the most known photographs of the fighting in the Pacific, began to condemn the war as it progressed, and would never photograph any other once it ended; although never overtly antiwar, some of his work has a certain edge to it. Smith's case also illustrates how pictures can be manipulated regardless of the photographers' intentions.[17] One of Smith's photos portrays a G.I. bandaging the hand of a buddy, who stands nonchalantly, with his other hand resting on his hip, and looks away, clearly not bothered by the (evidently) minor

[17] According to Sontag (2003), "the photographer's intentions do not determine the meaning of the photograph, which will have its own career, blown out by the whims and loyalties of the diverse communities that have use for it" (31–32).

wound, the dressing or the photograph being taken. A scrap of paper tacked to a wall above the soldiers' heads reads: "BRUTAL AMERICA," and below, in smaller type, "VIOLATES NIPPON HOSPITAL SHIP" (Photo 9). *Life*, where the photograph was printed in the January 22, 1945 issue, captioned it thus: "Japanese propaganda poster remains partly on a wall above two soldiers during Leyte [Philippines] fighting. Japanese posters tried to prove that Americans were simultaneously brutal and effeminate." The wounded soldier's pose is, of course, an answer to that accusation. It appears that by the time the photo was published, propaganda had already so deeply confirmed the positive image of America at war, that even such glaring statement otherwise could be printed without a smidgen of self-doubt or irony.

This rosy self-image would be obliterated in the aftermath of the war in Vietnam, but it began to change already in Korea. The war started in 1950, and after a brief spell of flirting with voluntary guidelines for journalists, General Douglas MacArthur, commander of the U.S. forces, imposed full-fledged censorship (Hammond 1990, 6–7). The written press, once again, obliged, and in the realm of photography pictures of combat were still the most common, remaining largely within the same aesthetic and symbolic framework as those of the world wars, romanticizing the fight and signifying the spirit and manliness of the soldiers (Moeller 1989, 314–315).

Such photographs were, however, counterbalanced by the new "signature" image of the Korean War: the close-up. Although portrait shots of soldiers were taken during the Second World War, their counterparts from Korea surpassed them in sophistication and emotional gravity. Rare cases from previous conflicts seem to have prefigured this newfound depth. Brook's exceptional portrait of the German POW is so candid as to be astounding for its time. Another example is W. Eugene Smith's photograph of a marine, taken on Saipan in 1944, which shows the man looking over his shoulder and beyond the camera, cigarette hanging off his lip, and conveys something of his tense uneasiness; the photograph bears some similarity to Duncan's shot of Joe Dunford in "The Hill" (Photo 10). But facial close-ups from Korea went further. Taken before, during and after combat, they intrigued and arrested their viewers because "they were a new perspective on war. Never before

had Americans at home been privy to the unguarded emotions of their soldiers in the field" (Moeller 1989, 313).

Indeed, some photographs taken of American soldiers in Korea exhibited an increasingly bitter vision of war, thus contradicting the upbeat attitudes of articles and editorials (Moeller 1989, 298ff). The close-up was just such a type of image that stood in such stark contrast to the cheerful tone of propaganda and the press. Duncan's Leonard Hayworth appeared in *Life* again on October 9, 1950, following the publication of photographs of him that would be included in "The Hill," holding the previous issue of the magazine and looking at his own face printed there (Photo 11). The caption was succinct—"Corporal Leonard Hayworth sees his picture in Sept. 15 LIFE story. Next morning he was killed in action"—introducing a dark note in opposition to the editorial which a few pages before saluted the American dead and praised their contribution to the "defense of the democratic world" (Moeller 1989, 301). Other photographs emphasized even more poignantly the growing ambivalence, the bitterness towards war and the sadness of combat. In the same story in *Life*, Duncan's close-up of a very young troop, in despair in the wake of a mine explosion, tugged at the viewers' hearts with the uninhibited nature of raw emotion, and was captioned accordingly: "Grieving not in pain but in sorrow, jeep driver is comforted by another Marine" (Photo 12).

Against the conventions of the photography of the Second World War, images of this kind were truly a novelty. Gone were the hurrah-optimistic patriotism, the resolutely triumphant tone, and the aura of glory. At Christmas, 1950, *Life* published yet another photoessay by Duncan, in large part made up of close-ups of Marines swaddled against the cold, staring wearily at the camera, holding their cans of rations. In the story, Duncan wrote that "this is what it was like for those who survived unhurt, for those who were wounded and pulled through and for those whose Christmas is now forever. […] Eyes of men who have looked at undiluted hell are not pleasant to meet soon after. […] There is no fear in their faces and no great hatred. They were simply fighting their way out and hoping to stay alive." The photographs and the words speak not of ideological struggle, but of the gritty, harsh and unforgiving reality of war.

Together with the subject-matter of photographs, the American public's views of combat were changing, too. The October 9, 1950 issue of *Newsweek* ran a story exalting an "upsurge of confidence, not only in the willingness of the American soldier to fight and die, but in his ability to win by boldness and superior organization." The article was illustrated by an Army photograph of an infantryman cradling a crying comrade, which became one of the more known images of the Korean War (Photo 13). In a letter to the magazine, a reader responded to the image, writing that it "should take its place in the annals of history alongside that other immortal classic 'The Marines plant the American flag on Suribachi,' which came out of World War II'" (quoted in Moeller 1989, 309–310).

The photography of the Vietnam War, although in many ways peculiar, was, nonetheless, indebted to the legacy of the images of previous conflicts. Brady and his men took their cameras to the battlefields to produce the first truthful illustrations of war; Capa got even closer. His "Falling Soldier" was the first in the long, ever-continuing succession of photographs that lodge themselves deeply in collective memory and popular culture, creating for each war a distinct and memorable visual framework. The photographs of the Second World War, themselves reusing and appropriating many of the themes established during the Great War, were exploited by propaganda to construct a lasting testament to the American hero—a testament whose reverberations would still be felt twenty and thirty years later when the hero left for Indochina, only to return humbled and defamed.

Korea, finally, as an element of culture and common consciousness has been somewhat "unlucky," so to speak, eclipsed by two decidedly more show-stealing wars that preceded and followed it. But despite strict censorship, it occasioned a torrent of photographs depicting the sorrows of the life on the front and the sordidness of war, and in that their authors foreshadowed—and, without doubt, also influenced—the work of correspondents and photojournalists reporting America's next big war. The photographs from Korea also illustrated the changing attitudes toward combat and its participants among the audiences at home. Photography is not an innocent medium, and is often deceptive, but it both generates and carries the ways in which a society views

its wars, incomplete though these perceptions may be. Still, audiences have watched eagerly as men holding rifles and men holding cameras walked hand in hand from Gettysburg to Guadalcanal to Inchon. They would continue their torturous stroll together through the rice paddies and jungles of Vietnam.

Chapter Two

Oh, What a Lovely War: The Vietnam War in Pictures

"Those Bastards"

The American war in Vietnam went down in history for many notorious reasons, and not the least among them was its journalism, at least from the American home-front perspective. Building upon the foundations laid in earlier conflicts, the reporting of the Vietnam War differed, nonetheless, from its predecessors, due in part to a changed socio-political milieu of 1960s and 1970s America, in part to the nature of the war itself and the way it was waged in both the field as well as from the rooms of government agencies in Washington. These facets certainly need to be taken into account when assessing any Vietnam War photograph or story, but it is equally important to look at them through the prism of the myths and preconceptions that have accumulated over the years around the war—and also the way it was reported and photographed.

The most significant aspect of Vietnam journalism was the lack of censorship. Early in the period of American involvement in the war, U.S. military and government authorities considered enforcing rules and restrictions like those implemented during previous conflicts, but it was soon decided that it would be impractical: censorship could not be imposed in the U.S., since this was to be an undeclared war; correspondents could always file their stories from offices in Tokyo or Hong Kong; and issues of legal jurisdiction of South Vietnam would have to be taken into account (Hallin, 1986, 127). As a result, by the time the first American combat troops disembarked on the beaches of Da Nang in March 1965, a set of voluntary guidelines, rather than strict censorship, had been put in place, part of the optimistically labelled

Operation Maximum Candor, which continued more or less intact until the U.S. withdrawal in 1973. Official information and updates were channeled through public information officers. Daily briefings were held for the press corps in Saigon, although the more inquisitive journalists questioned their value, and the meetings came to be known as the "Five O'Clock Follies." Without censorship, however, getting a good story was easy. Accreditation was issued virtually indiscriminately, regardless of nationality, and also to freelancers with nothing more than two letters from newspapers or agencies stating they would buy the story or photographs off the given journalist. The result was a motley gang of reporters, apart from the "usual" kind including, according to Knightley (2003),

> specialist writers from technical journals, trainee reporters from college newspapers, counter-insurgency experts from military publishers, religious correspondents, famous authors, small-town editors, old hands from Korea, even older hands from the World War II, and what Henry Kamm of *The New York Times* called "proto-journalists," men who had never written a professional word or taken a professional photograph in their lives until the war brought them to Saigon. (chap. 17)

An accredited reporter would then be provided with extensive support of the armed forces, including transport, access to military facilities, and opportunities to interview high ranking officers.

And yet, despite such favorable conditions offered to journalists, the press and the military clashed—or something, at least, had happened between the two in Vietnam, that would give rise to one of the most persistent notions concerning the war. In the aftermath of the conflict some, notably the military, accused correspondents of so skewing the events as to turn the American public against the war, and of effectively contributing to the country's failure in Vietnam. Others reiterated that the press presented an accurate and truthful image of the war, in heroic opposition to the attempts by the generals and policymakers to misinform the nation. What the two sides shared was the belief that the press was highly critical of the U.S. involvement, and also that it successfully steered the public opinion (Hallin 1986, 3–5; Wyatt 1993, 216–217).

A number of authors, however, have since undertaken to analyze these issues in depth, and their findings suggest that the peculiarities of the Vietnam War rendered the problems of the military-press relationship far more complex.

In 1963, with 16,000 U.S. military advisors to the Army of the Republic of Viet Nam (ARVN) in Indochina, the conflict entered the American press. For example, on January 25, *Life* published a photoessay by Burrows, ominously titled "We Wade Deeper Into Jungle War." Far more important, however, were two separate stories: the battle at Ap Bac, fought and lost by the ARVN against the Viet Cong, and the "Buddhist Crisis." The first, an eye-opener to the deficiencies of the South Vietnamese forces and by extension the American-backed South Vietnamese regime, was reported as such by the press corps in Saigon, much to the annoyance of the U.S. military who wished the affair not to be publicized widely (Hammond 1990, 29–38). The second was occasioned by the self-immolation of Buddhist monk Thich Quang Duc in opposition to the repressive and pro-Catholic government of President Ngo Dinh Diem, an event made famous by AP's Malcolm Browne's photograph. The Kennedy administration reiterated by launching a public relations campaign, accusing the Saigon press corps of undermining American foreign policy and misinforming the public about the conflict; David Halberstam of *The New York Times* even became an object of personal vendetta by President Kennedy (Hallin 1986, 34–43, 50–58).

One of the reasons the 1963 reports are important is that they had foreshadowed the later trends of Vietnam journalism. In the face of attacks against them, Halberstam and others insisted that they were *not* opposed to the American involvement, but that they were criticizing the Diem government and the U.S. strategy for their ineffectiveness. As it turns out, their colleagues would be even less critical in the subsequent years. The Johnson administration's penchant for what in American scholarship is sometimes euphemistically referred to as "news management" has been widely known: throughout the war's first phase, the White House was able to carefully structure the flow of information, downplaying the escalation of U.S. military personnel numbers being sent to Vietnam and the eventual deployment of combat troops in 1965.

Woven into these quiet policy changes was the so-called Tonkin Gulf incident in 1964, which remains a controversial issue, used by Johnson to convince Congress to, essentially, allow him to fight an undeclared war in Vietnam. Even at this point the press did not pick up on the dubious nature of the event, and dutifully reported the official statement. There were a few reasons for this apparent journalistic apathy. One was that the American Cold-War ideology made the commitment to support South Vietnam against the "communist threat" practically unopposable. Another was the ideal of "objective journalism." As a result, the reporting of the war from 1965 through 1967 remained remarkably conventional and uncritical. As in the Second World War, the newspapermen offered their readers general overviews of the conflict alongside personal stories of soldiers in the field and projected an optimistic outlook, emphasizing American successes and predicting victory. In doing that, the press merely followed the line given by the Johnson administration, although it should be noted that most of the fault lay with editors and publishers in the States, who found it difficult to reconcile what their correspondents in Vietnam were filing in with what was being said in Washington—and they usually chose to go with the latter.[1]

The image of the American soldier also remained largely intact. Prior to 1968, negative stories in the press concerning G.I.'s were remarkably rare. One famous exception was Morley Safer's 1965 TV report for CBS from the village of Cam Ne, in which U.S. marines were shown burning huts with Zippo lighters, in the end destroying a total of 150 houses, killing a baby, and wounding several elderly villagers in the course of an operation that failed to yield any significant results. In the conclusion to his report, Safer presaged later criticisms of the American conduct in Vietnam, saying that, "today's operation shows the frustration of Vietnam in miniature. There is little doubt that American fire power can win a military victory here. But to a Vietnamese peasant whose

[1] These aspects of the government-military-media dynamic at the onset of the Vietnam War has been widely discussed in all histories and studies of the topic. See, for example, Hallin (1986, 8–10; 2006, 280–282); Hammond (1990, 385–386); Knightley (2003, 377, 382–383); Moeller (1989, 386–388); and Pach (1994, 72–75) On the emphasis on soldier stories on TV, see Hallin (1986, 134) and Pach (1994, 72).

home means a lifetime of backbreaking labor, it will take more than presidential promises to convince him that we are on his side" (CBSN Brand Account, 2015, 3:22). James Landers (2004), who analyzed the coverage of the war in *Time*, *Newsweek* and *U.S. News & World Report*, found that before 1970, only twenty-six articles mentioned any negative issues, such as atrocities, morale problems, drug abuse, racism or mistreatment of civilians—and nineteen of these came only after the highly publicized American crime at My Lai hit the news in 1969 (98–99).

In fact, Johnson's campaign to present the war as going well for the Americans contradicted the dawning realization among some politicians and officers—as well as correspondents in the field—that the strategy in Vietnam was, at best, flawed. In November 1967, General William Westmoreland, commander of U.S. forces in Indochina, assured the public that the end of war and American victory were imminent. Merely two months later, however, on January 30, 1968, the massive Tet Offensive began. Planned and coordinated by the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and the National Liberation Front (NLF, popularly known as the Viet Cong), the offensive consisted of a series of coordinated surprise attacks launched during the traditional ceasefire for the Vietnamese new year celebrations. Over one hundred targets throughout South Vietnam were hit, including major cities, such as Saigon and Hue, district capitals, towns, villages, and American bases, airfields and other military installations. Back in the U.S., the shock and intensity of the operation seemed to call into question the administration's competency in Vietnam—as well as its credibility at home, especially after General Westmoreland's request of some 200,000 additional U.S. troops to be sent to Indochina, the demand both a reality-check to the American public as to how things were *actually* going in the war, and the metaphorical straw on the camel's back that eventually pushed the Johnson administration into seeking de-escalation and, ultimately, peace.

The common myth has it that prior to the offensive, the American public had been favorably disposed and supportive of the war, but that it turned antiwar after it. But this turns out to be not quite true. Throughout 1967, polls indicated that the support for the war had already been in decline—which furthermore dispels the myth of the press' role in driving the nation's opinion. That year, articles and newspaper

pieces began showing signs of growing dissatisfaction about the conflict in Vietnam, as well concern about the government's honesty—but far from spearheading the shift in attitude, the media, in fact, merely reflected the pre-existent changing sentiments of the people (Landers 2004, 99–101; Kennedy 2016, 14–15; Wyatt 1993, 167–177). The most probable, and often suggested, reason for decreasing public support is that the U.S. casualty numbers were mounting, but there was no conclusion to the war in sight. Daniel Hallin (1986), for example, drew a parallel with an earlier conflict to show that this phenomenon was not exclusive to the Vietnam War:

> It should not be forgotten that public support for the shorter and less costly limited war in Korea also dropped as its costs rose, despite the fact that television was in its infancy, censorship was tight, and the World War II ethic of the journalist serving the war effort remained strong. (213–214)

Besides, more than the tone of editorials, people were registering the subtler signals conveyed by the media, such as the more evident split among politicians concerning policy and strategy, as well the budding decline of morale among the troops in the field (Hallin 2006, 285–290; Hammond 1996, 626; Pach 1994, 79–83; Wyatt 1993, 216–219).

The Tet Offensive did have an impact on the relationship between the military and the correspondents in Vietnam. Despite the cooperation enabled by Maximum Candor, tensions existed, as not all military welcomed the press:

> These ranged from officers who felt that correspondents were undermining the war effort […] to G.I.'s who resented the correspondents' freedom to choose whether and when to risk their lives. "Those bastards," one rifleman said, watching a jeepload of correspondents drop Michael Herr and drive away. "I hope they die." (Knightley 2003, chap. 17)

Tet deepened this rift. The offensive certainly came as a shock to the American public and seriously undermined the confidence in the Indochina endeavor—but it was not a communist success, as not only did it not inspire a revolution in South Vietnam, as Hanoi had hoped, but the

fighting also put a considerable strain on Viet Cong resources and resulted in massive casualty numbers which proved an irrevocable drawback (Hastings, 2018, chap. 19). Nonetheless, the press has since been accused of portraying the offensive as an American failure, which—as is believed—contributed considerably to the country's ultimately losing the war. This is not entirely false, but needs to be put into perspective. In fact, the coverage of Tet illustrated perfectly the conventions of Vietnam War journalism: the focus was almost exclusively on American troops, and drama was desired. Therefore, the correspondents followed the most vicious areas of fighting—from Saigon and the spectacular overtaking of the U.S. embassy by the Viet Cong, to the long-drawn combat at the citadel in Hue, to the besieged marines at the northern outpost of Khe Sanh—ignoring along the way other, cooler news which would offer a more accurate portrait of the offensive and its outcome.[2]

Following the offensive, the reporting of the war became less positive, although still not as overtly critical as usually thought. When in 1969 Seymour Hersh began researching the massacre of Vietnamese civilians by U.S. troops at the village of "My Lai" (the hamlet was actually part of the village Son My), no major newspaper or magazine would buy the story—"out of the question," said an editor at *Life*—until a small agency, Dispatch News Service, agreed to distribute it.[3] But Hersh's effort was one of a few notable exceptions. Nixon's fresh policies—of Vietnamization and de-escalation—and his promises of ending the war were once again taken at face value by the press, much as Johnson's manufactured confidence had been (Hammond 1996, 622). But Vietnam was rapidly losing its prime spot in the media, as the public was growing war-weary (Wyatt 1993, 189–193). By the time the American withdrawal began in 1969, the press had already abandoned its previous gung-ho rhetoric, and the tone changed to highlight the human (American) cost of the war; that same year, *Life* ran ten funereal pages of photographs of all

[2] The reporting of the Tet Offensive was analysed in depth by Peter Braestrup in his 1977 book *Big Story. How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet in Vietnam and Washington*. The brief discussion here is largely based on Wyatt (1993, 180–188).

[3] Thirty-six newspapers agreed to run it, including the London *Times*, *Boston Globe*, *San Francisco Chronicle* and *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (Knightley 2003, chap. 16).

but twenty-five of the 242 U.S. troops killed that week in Vietnam, providing the boldest testament to the unmerited waste of life (Photo 14).[4]

An analysis of the Vietnam journalism, certainly in the early years of the American engagement and through the Tet Offensive, but also later, defies much of the myth of a watchdog press radically opposed to war, as well as of the key impact of media coverage on public opinion. Instead, newspapers and other media tended to follow the ebb and flow of sentiments in the nation, reacting to rather than dictating what the people thought. For the most part, however, they complied with the official story, during the Johnson years joining in the self-assured and zealous mood, changing the tone only when political divisions rose. Controversies concerning the war stemmed not so much from investigative reporting—although there were some prominent examples—but from the concealments, inconsistencies, and contradictions resulting from the gap between what the officials were saying and what was actually happening in Vietnam.

"Take the Glamour out of War!"

One catchy phrase applied to the Vietnam War particularly often is "the first television war," or the "living-room war." The battlefields of Vietnam were the first to be attended regularly by TV crews, and news footage from the front poured nightly into the American homes. But despite the common perception, what the audiences were shown was remarkably tame. Combat scenes were rare, and graphic material mostly non-existent, due to network editors' fears of offending or upsetting their viewers. Effectively, as TV critic Michael Arlen observed, television offered a

> generally distanced overview of disjointed conflict which was composed mainly of scenes of helicopters landing, tall grasses blowing in the helicopter wind, American soldiers fanning out across a hillside on foot, rifles at the ready, with now and then (on the soundtrack) a far-off ping

[4] For discussions of the story in *Life*, see Hallin (2006, 285–287) and Moeller (1989, 395–400).

> or two, and now and then (as the visual grand finale) a column of dark, billowing smoke a half mile away, invariably described as a burning Viet Cong ammo dump. (Quoted in Pach 1994, 80)

The Tet Offensive occasioned some more hardcore imagery, with the street fighting in Saigon and Hue appearing on TV, as well as the (in)famous footage of South Vietnamese police chief Nguyen Ngoc Loan executing Viet Cong operative Nguyen Van Lem. But the standard stuff of the war on television was short, edited down and highly stylized.[5]

Photography filled in the visuals. The Vietnam War is remembered mostly in photographs; the conflict produced a number of iconic images, now so deeply ingrained in collective memory and popular culture, that they are practically unavoidable when thinking of Vietnam. The shooting death of Lem during the Tet Offensive was made far more famous by AP's Eddie Adams's iconic photograph known as "Saigon Execution." At the time, the coverage of the event inspired real outrage and debate on the handling of prisoners by the U.S. and allies—the Viet Cong was shot almost upon capture, without trial—which led to the government authorities pressuring the military command in Vietnam and U.S. embassy in Saigon to improve control over the troops' conduct and adherence to laws of war. But its real impact on the public opinion of the conflict was probably negligible. The meaning of the event seems to have been somewhat lost on the Stateside audiences, in fact: some 20 million viewers in America watched the execution on TV, but NBC received only 90 letters pertaining to the footage; of these, 56 accused the network of bad taste, the rest—of running it at a time when children could be watching, and only a solitary few actually alluded to the Vietnam War itself (Hammond 1990, 350–354).

However, Adams's picture confirms photography's claim to be the finest tool of recording the spectacle of war:

> Although NBC and other television networks replayed [the] film several times, it never received much attention. Television could provide at

[5] For discussions of Vietnam War TV coverage, see Hallin (1986, 129–134); Hammond (1990, 236–238); Knightley (2003, chap. 17); Pach (1994, 60–90); Wyatt (1993, 144–148).

> most a fleeting if shocking impression of what had happened. Adams' photograph, on the other hand, appeared again and again, winning for the photographer a Pulitzer Prize and a host of other awards. (Hammond 1990, 350)

It is easy to see why. Adams captured the scene at the moment perhaps fractions of a second before the bullet entered the skull. Loan, the executioner, stands on a Saigon street, his revolver-holding hand extended towards the executionee's head; Lem, the executionee, in a plaid shirt, his eyes tightly shut, winces as he shifts away from the gun slightly. Another soldier looks on—and the viewer looks with him. The pithiness of the moment as photographed combines with high intensity and drama to render the image brutal not only in what it portrays, but also in the way it forces itself violently upon its audience.

Footage was also recorded in Trang Bang in 1972, after a friendly fire air strike by the South Vietnamese forces had destroyed the village and sent a group of terrified children running down a country road. Again, it was a photograph—by Nick Ut of AP—that catapulted the event to fame. "Accidental Napalm Attack," also a Pulitzer winner, depicts five Vietnamese children darting away from a cloud of smoke, headed by a boy with face convulsed in a haunting scream. The center, more or less, of the composition is dominated by a naked girl—Phan Thi Kim Phuc—whose clothes had been burned away by napalm. Contrast to the children's agony and terror is set off by a group of seemingly impassive soldiers, following the victims, whose attitude as apparent in the photograph has been described as "business as usual" (Hariman and Lucaites 2005, 203). Coming in 1972, and so towards the end of American involvement in Vietnam, Ut's image offered a befitting conclusion to this stage of the conflict and acquired, over the years, an undisputed status as *the* icon of Vietnam as well as of the suffering of wartime in general.

The two photographs reveal the inefficiency of the medium in weaving a meaningful historical narrative. The events they show, the summary execution and the napalm strike, were neither exceptional nor significant in the course of the war (except for those immediately involved, of course), but are rendered such by virtue of being captured on camera. They do, however, constitute excellent examples

of photography's ability to reflect an entire popular understanding of a war. "Saigon Execution" is more firmly set in its immediate context, the Tet Offensive, to which it provided the most memorable illustration. "Accidental Napalm Attack," on the other hand, is more general; like its iconic predecessors—"Falling Soldier," "Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima"—it lacks straightforward news value, providing instead a striking and lasting portrait of its war. These photographic portraits alone evince just how differently the war in Vietnam has been remembered. There is something significant in the fact that the images most strongly associated with the conflict—Ut's and Adams's photographs, Browne's self-immolation of Thich Quang Duc, and sergeant Ron Haeberle's picture of the civilians slaughtered at My Lai—focus exclusively on the Vietnamese. Perhaps they lasted in their status because they had underscored the scope of suffering and victimization in Vietnam, confronting the American people with strange new ways of dying appropriate of this new confused, confusing and terrible war, in which there seemingly was no place for heroism and glory as there had been in the Second World War.

These images, however, acquired their iconic status over time. While the war in Vietnam was still being waged, the bulk of photography published in the press, as the news stories and articles it often accompanied, tended to concentrate on the American soldiers (Landers 2004, 75; Moeller 1989, 373–374). Nonetheless, the correspondents and photographers in Vietnam were divided: rivalries and antipathies existed between reporters and cameramen, agencies and newspapers, as well as between journalists covering the war primarily from Saigon and those venturing out into the field. Perhaps the most significant antagonism was that between the "young" and "old." The latter, veteran reporters of the Second World War and the war in Korea, were more likely to give positive and optimistic accounts, happily used by military information officers and publishers at home. Their younger colleagues, not necessarily less experienced, were more prone to become more critical and disillusioned, especially as the war progressed (Halberstam 2002, 9; Kennedy 2016, 14–15; Knightley 2003, 379–383; Moeller 1989, 356–358; Shawcross 1983, 7).

The veteran correspondents wished to see the Vietnam War as a continuation of American military endeavor, and their reports often adopted the simpler terms and rhetoric of the Second World War. The marines landing unopposed in Da Nang in 1965 were described as "storming ashore"; most actions "produced emotive comparisons—'the biggest since Inchon,' 'the second biggest since Normandy'" (Knightley 2003, chap. 16; see also Pach 1994, 73). Many photographers recalled similar traditions in their work. In its November 26, 1965 issue, *Life* published a story illustrated with Paul Schutzer's photographs of marines "hitting a beach" at Cape Batangan. The opening images present the landing within the aesthetic framework familiar from the Second World War, and especially the island campaign in the Pacific, but not only: the first photograph in the series (Photo 15), in composition as well as dramatic content, resembles "Into the Jaws of Death," the famous picture taken by Robert Sargent at Omaha Beach on D-Day (Photo 16). (The title of the story in *Life*, for which Schutzer's photograph provides a two-page-spread opener—"In They Go—to the Reality of This War"—may very well be a conscious reference to Sargent's work.)

No photographer, however, could out-Duncan David Douglas Duncan, professedly not prowar, but "vehemently promarine" (Moeller 1989, 406; Duncan had served as a cameraman in the Marine Corps in the Pacific during the Second World War). His photographs of the sieges at Con Thien in 1967 and Khe Sanh in 1968 (originally published in *Life* and reprinted in Duncan's 1970 book, *War Without Heroes*), were if anything even more spectacular and dramatic than his work from Korea. Vietnam is present in these photostories in the form of choppers and medevacs, airplanes, masses of technology—all staple motifs of the war's visual record. But there is not a single Vietnamese face. Instead, the eye-grabbers are again the marine close-ups. One of them, a portrait of a young marine at Con Thien, which made covers of both *Life* (on October 27, 1967) and the book (Photo 17), is strikingly similar to the photographs Duncan took in Korea in December 1950. Some of Duncan's photographs from Khe Sahn, printed in *War Without Heroes*, reappropriate the theme into the context of the Vietnam War, capturing visual signifiers that would become iconic of the American "Vietnam" imagery, resulting from the progressively more lax regulations concern-

ing the rank-and-file's uniforms and equipment. One photograph shows a marine squeezed between sandbags, his rifle propped against them, tugging at guitar strings (Photo 18); another one has its marine subject staring melancholically at the camera, playing cards tucked behind his helmet strap for luck; in another portrait, a smoking soldier's eyes are obscured by his headgear, which he had adorned with graffiti, including monthly countdown of his in-country tour. The marines in these three photographs are clearly in Vietnam, but their portraits fall in line with the conventional framing of U.S. infantryman as tough, manly, and able to make it through the worst. Duncan unabashedly acknowledged that he saw the war in Vietnam as no substantially different to the earlier conflicts he had photographed: in *War Without Heroes* he wrote that "very little seemed changed in combat photography—for me—between the battlefield of Viet-Nam, today, Korea, in 1950, and the Solomon Islands, during World War II" (1970, 252; see also Moeller 1989, 258). In his copy to the October 27, 1967 story in *Life*, he wrote that "the men view Con Thien in the same light as Tarawa and Iwo Jima and are proud and happy to have held this hillock in a remote land."

Many photographers in Vietnam shared Duncan's opinion of the war and his aesthetic tastes. Some, however, did not. Philip Jones Griffiths, a Welshman on assignment from Magnum, believed the war to be fundamentally wrong and in 1971 published *Vietnam Inc.*, a book that was the result of three years spent in the country and which remains perhaps the most searing photographic criticism of the conflict. His work is unique in that it focuses mostly on the Vietnamese civilians and their ordeal, and the scope—both of the issues undertaken by Jones Griffiths, as well as by the sheer amount of destruction and suffering captured by his camera—is vast and holistic. There is something of an almost anthropological attempt to engage with the Vietnamese culture, traditional lifestyle, even language in Jones Griffith's work, against which the breakdown of the entire society resulting from the war, and from the much loathed American presence, becomes all the more glaring. In his photographs and in the accompanying text, Jones Griffiths, espousing the vocabularies of both anti-American-imperialism and anticolonialism, makes no secret of his sympathy for—or better, deep empathy with—the civilians, a feeling only enforced by his clear respect

and admiration for their way of seeing the world and of coping with reality. (This is perhaps an understatement, as Jones Griffiths has no shortage of compliments for the Vietnamese, whom he is as likely to call naturally beautiful [{1971} 2001, 186] as "intellectual giants" [{1971} 2001, 13].)

Jones Griffiths's antipathies are similarly unrestrained: there is much contempt for the ARVN troops in his words,[6] but the brunt of criticism is borne by the U.S. war machine, its policymakers and generals, and most of all what he calls the "automatization" of the war. In a series of photographs depicting Operation Cedar Falls, "the largest single 'relocation' operation of the war," Jones Griffiths ([1971] 2001) draws barely concealed comparisons when in one of the captions he writes that "[the camp into which the people were concentrated] was a piece of barren ground on which had been erected 40 long tents, in each of which 800 people were destined to live. The camp […] was officially described as a 'center.' It was surrounded by barbed wire and at the entrance was a sign saying 'Welcome to Freedom'" (89).

As noted, the photographic material in Jones Griffiths's book is large and varied: there are photographs of everything from burned villages to destroyed cities, great many images of children, pictures of beggars, POW's, refugees, prostitutes, peddlers and hustlers, of the dead, the wounded, the maimed, and the grieving, of peasants being forcibly moved around or else forcibly made to interact with well-meaning marines, scenes of urban living as well as of urban fighting (most notably at Hue during the Tet Offensive), and so on. Yet the clearest indictment of the war and the men running it is provided by Jones Griffiths in

[6] A caption for a photograph of a captured Viet Cong in *Vietnam Inc.* reads: "It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the effect of the American involvement in Vietnam has been to differentiate the most admirable Vietnamese from the most deplorable. The values that the Vietnamese regard most highly are possessed almost exclusively by the Vietcong" (Jones Griffiths [1971] 2001, 41). In a similar vein, a picture of a group of South Vietnamese troops is described thus: "ARVN soldiers off to loot in Cambodia. Many Americans interpreted their enthusiasm as proof of a new-found aggressiveness. In Laos, opposed this time by well-equipped troops and finding absolutely nothing to loot, the soldiers retreated with spectacular speed" (Jones Griffiths [1971] 2001, 38–39). For accounts of the revision in recent years of the views concerning the ARVN and their effectiveness, see Beidler (2007) and Wiest (2002, 21–22).

the final part of the book, in which photographs from hospitals are printed. Here, too, the variety of anguish and destruction to human body and mind is enormous, but it is also at its most harrowing. The first of these images, although far from the most graphic in the series, is greatly suggestive: five people, all of them "classed 'terminal' and sent home to die" (Jones Griffiths [1971] 2001, 201), lie on stretchers placed on the floor, each a representative for the innocent demographics most afflicted by the conflict—two elders, a boy in his early teens, and a mother with a naked infant at her breast—all but the baby with plaster casts on their legs, and all but the baby looking up at the camera and the viewer, creating an uninviting wall of gazes (Photo 19). The photographs that follow are a catalogue of suffering: there are amputees, old men, and babies ("Father holds his three-day-old baby daughter, hit by artillery fire that severed her leg when United States guns opened up on their village" [Jones Griffiths [1971] 2001, 214]); mothers fanning their sick children and old women tending to their wounded husbands; napalm burn victims; a shot of a naked boy on a bare bed, chained by his ankle, who went insane "[a]t the age of two" when carried by "his fleeing mother when she was killed by a helicopter gunship outside their home," and who still "goes berserk trying to shut out [the] sound [of helicopters passing overhead]" (Jones Griffiths [1971] 2001, 218–219).

Jones Griffiths's book is special simply because so few journalists set out to document thoroughly the plight of the civilian victims of the war. In fact, the demand for photographs and stories concerning the Vietnamese was so low that Jones Griffiths struggled to find buyers for his pictures.[7] The American soldier was what the audience wanted to see and read about.[8] In *Vietnam Inc.*, there is a noticeably small number

[7] A fact that led, moreover, to suspicions among the military information officers who routinely issued accreditation to pressmen, but *not* to authors, one of whom Jones Griffiths actually was, working from the outset towards his book rather than to supply Magnum with pictures for newspapers and magazines (Moeller 1989, 360, 399; see also Kennedy 2016, 34–51).

[8] Although the American public's interest was mostly in the American soldier, it does not mean, of course, that the Vietnamese were not photographed at all. The most iconic images of the conflict, after all, portray the natives; Jones Griffiths's *Vietnam Inc.*, too, became a bestseller and created some stir after it was published in 1971. For most of the war, the photographs of the Vietnamese to appear in the American press,

of photographs of G.I.'s, and the photographer's attitude towards them seems ambivalent, as he notes their loneliness in the face of the natives' hostility or, at best, fake and calculated friendliness, and the peculiar kind of tragedy of being sent to such a seemingly incomprehensible war in a seemingly incomprehensible land. However, not once does he refer, in words or photographically, to the American troops in a heroic or glorifying tone. This equivocal stance reveals itself also in the link made between the soldiers' actions and the civilians' suffering, as in a photograph that shows a Vietnamese man carrying his wounded infant son "past those American troops who fired the shots" (Jones Griffiths [1971] 2001, 150); or another one, of a Vietnamese mother with a child moments before they die, overlooked by a mildly interested soldier (Jones Griffiths [1971] 2001, 58–59). But the burden of guilt is never expressly shifted from the upper-echelon warmongers to the "grunts" in the field.[9] A less explicit, but nonetheless menacing and suggestive example is given by Jones Griffiths in a shot taken in Saigon during the Tet Offensive, in which an American sniper takes aim out of a window of an abandoned apartment. The elegant chair he sits in, and the items scattered around on the floor—a photo frame, a bowl, blankets, a headless doll—all imply the *absence* of previous inhabitants and the ruin of their lives, the space of their home now taken over by the imposing figure of the soldier (Photo 20).

There were, however, other ways of photographing American soldiers. While Duncan's representations of marines harked back to the Pacific and Korea, the younger vanguard of photojournalists became perfectly attuned to the peculiarities of the war in Vietnam. One prominent

apart from those of politicians, were of the ARVN (an ally on the battlefront and the military pillar of the allies in politics), the Viet Cong and the NVA (whose elusive tactics of existence and military engagement turned every capture, real or "suspected," into a small triumph, always worthy of a snapshot), and the civilians (more often than not in moments of suffering). For a discussion of the representation of the Vietnamese in the photography of the war, see Moeller (1989, 399–403).

[9] This particular tendency in Jones Griffiths's photography from South Vietnam is also noted by Kennedy (2016, 35–45), who in a discussion about *Vietnam Inc.* points out that the photographs of Vietnamese children, and civilians in general, accompanied by G.I.s usually force a sense of "corruption" (in the sense of indecency or depravity) and unease generated by the American presence.

representative of the young pantheon of photographers in Vietnam was Tim Page, an English teenage drifter in Southeast Asia; if Duncan and Jones Griffiths may be considered to best represent certain other stances that photographers and reporters could take toward the war, Page is a hyperbole of the new hip. Acclaimed as a freelance photographer, his legend was made in *Dispatches*, the 1977 memoir-slash-New-Journalism-piece by *Esquire* and *Rolling Stone* correspondent Michael Herr, who was Page's friend in Vietnam. Herr (1978), enamored with the particular counterculture of Americans in Vietnam, wrote:

> There were more young, apolitically radical, wigged-out crazies running around Vietnam than anybody ever realized; between all of the grunts turning in and tripping out on the war and the substantial number of correspondents who were doing the same thing, it was an authentic subculture. There were more than enough within the press corps to withstand a little pressure from the upright, and […] Page was the most extravagant [example of this]. […] 'Page is a crazy child.'" (189)[10]

Consequently, "Page has become part of the Vietnam War mythology […] identified with a particular cool, buccaneering attitude towards the war" (Page 1983).[11] Apart from being strongly associated with the drug-using, rock-and-roll-blasting subculture of troops and reporters, his fame as a photojournalist was won, perhaps most of all, by being one of the few photographers ready to take extraordinary measures and risks to shoot pictures: he was wounded four times, the last occasion near fatal and requiring the removal of a large portion of brain tissue (Moeller 1989, 379–382; Shawcross 1983, 7–8). Herr (1978) recalled that soon after the surgery, a British publisher wrote in offering Page a deal to "do a book whose working title would be 'Through With War' and whose purpose would be to once and for all 'take the glamour out of war'" (198). Page was aghast, and his incredulous response as recorded by Herr is well-known and often quoted:

[10] Herr had some input in the writing of the script for Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*, and Page was supposedly part of the inspiration for Dennis Hopper's character (Shawcross 1983, 12).

[11] This is a quotation from the blurb on the cover of the referenced book.

> Take the glamour out of war! I mean, how the bloody hell can you do *that*? Go and take the glamour out of a Huey, go take the glamour out of a Sheridan… Can you take the glamour out of a Cobra or getting stoned at China Beach? It's like taking the glamour out of an M-79 […] [W]ar is *good* for you, you can't take the glamour out of that. It's like trying to take the glamour out of sex, trying to take the glamour out of the Rolling Stones […] I mean, you know that, it just *can't be done*! (Herr 1978, 199; emphases in original)

These words explain well Page's attitude, and go far as an illustration to his photography. Moeller (1989) observed that many very young photographers turned up in Vietnam uninvited, so to speak—Page among them—without any previous experience whatsoever, but seduced by the war and the prospects of fame, and then drawn in by the atmosphere of it all, or what they perceived to be the atmosphere; what they did, in fact was romanticize "their only war" (380). Page's infatuation with the American soldiers is evident, as is his pleasure in capturing on camera the "psychedelic side of the G.I. culture, the inanity of their predicament and the refuge they took in dope and rock" (Shawcross 1983, 13). He had an eye for the troops' sense of bitter irony and twisted humor: a photograph shows a chopper pilot, his face away from the camera, with the emphasis on a number of badges on the man's headgear that read, in descending order, "Bomb Saigon Now," "Bomb Hanoi Now," "Bomb Disneyland Now," and finally, "Bomb Everything." Another shot, this one in color, is of a trooper in Saigon in 1968, shielding himself under a pink umbrella and with the word "hippie" written on his helmet.

What is interesting about Page's photographs, too, is their particular "Vietnam" "feel"—coolness and madness, brutality and fun—that would reappear again in some of the better-remembered film productions of the war, such as *Apocalypse Now*, but above all *Platoon*. In some respect, Page's photographs are daring, and not only because of his readiness to "go places for pictures that few other photographers were going" (Herr 1978, 189), but also because in taking them he did not shy away from playing openly with some of the darker issues concerning the soldiers' conduct in Vietnam—and the word "playing" is used here very deliberately. For example, he took individual pictures of a three-man fire team

he found on patrol in a paddy in the Mekong Delta, "stoned day in and day out." One portrait is particularly memorable and shows a soldier sitting in the tall grass, puffing on an opium pipe decorated with colorful raffia, sweaty, greasy-haired, and staring off into the distance with that singular half-alert, half-deranged California-surfer-on-acid-sent-to-fight-a-jungle-war look in his eyes. There is more to Page's war than drugs, though. In an album accompanying an exhibition of his work (*Tim Page's Nam*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1979), there is a close-up shot of a trooper attending, as the caption explains, a Bob Hope show at Long Binh in 1966. The man is laughing heartily, but he also has a bone that he is holding up to his face as a grotesque mock moustache. The bone's origin is unknown, yet the photograph is unsettling and repulsive, nonetheless, not in small measure because the soldier is clearly having a good time, happily displaying his plaything. While not entirely out of place—in the sense that a photograph such as this one could be taken during the Vietnam War, and there certainly are far more gruesome images to have come out of this conflict—the picture is included in a chapter entitled "Rock and Roll Flash," which otherwise consists of benign shots of soldiers smiling, laughing, watching Ann Margaret at the same venue, and the such. What the soldier-with-a-bone photograph implies, therefore, being placed where it is, is not criticism or bitterness, but rather a profoundly nihilistic statement of the decadence found in much of Page's work, as well as in the version of the Vietnam War engendered photography like his, and later diffused in some of the American literature about the war as well as cinema.

The (at least, but not only) visual inspiration of filmmakers is, of course, not taken exclusively from the photographs of Tim Page. The war in Vietnam came to possess its own characteristic imagery, whose "stock" scenes and motifs are found in the works of many, if not indeed all, of the photographers who made their name in Indochina. Moeller (1989), for example, classified the following new types of images:

> There had been established by the time of Con Thien in the fall of 1967 and Khe Sanh in the early spring of 1968 a recognizable, new genre of combat images appropriate to the military tactics in place in Southeast Asia. This genre consisted of three broad subject areas: men slogging

> through paddies, men calling in artillery, and men leaping out of choppers. (1989, 405)

In the same vein, Liam Kennedy (2016) noted the particular American obsession of the war:

> [T]he published imagery [of press photography] repeatedly presented similar scenarios, motifs, tropes, and points of view: helicopters taking off or landing; troops springing from helicopters and fanning out on foot; troops on patrol through paddy fields and wading across rivers. The helicopter became a key icon in this imagery, with point of view shots of terrain from helicopters being common. Indeed, the cameras rendered the helicopter (on which the photographers were very often dependent for their own movements and war coverage) the ubiquitous motif of the war, one adapted by cinema at war's end. (2019, 16)[12]

More generally speaking, the landscape and terrain of Vietnam provided an unmistakable setting to the American war that tore them apart: the jungle, the elephant grass, the reviled rice paddies, the barren dusty hills, the hamlets and villages, all as inevitable a background as they endow the photography of the war with its specific visual placement. This landscape is disrupted not only by the American soldier, the intruder, but also by the machinery he had brought with him. Jones Griffiths has some pictures in *Vietnam Inc.* of huge piles of G.I. helmets, tires, discarded equipment, even skeletons of vehicles, all peculiar junk mementos left by the withdrawing Americans to be scrapped and resold by the ever-industrious Vietnamese, the mounds of military trash eerily reminiscent of the infamous 1892 photograph of a massive stack of buffalo skulls, thus, perhaps inadvertently, providing additional commentary on the link between American frontier mythology and culture, and the Leo-Marxesque intrusion of American technology into natural environment. Elsewhere in Jones Griffiths's work, the technology and the gear are infallibly the villain's device. But, again, Jones Griffiths is pretty much alone in such attitude. Even if photographs do not display

[12] On the Vietnam-War-specific imagery and iconography, see also Herzog (2005, 47–49).

outright fascination with the high-tech—as, for example, do the pictures by Page, whose love for "Jesus nuts," or the mast nut, is apparent and well-known, or indeed Burrows's "Yankee Papa 13"—the helicopter, as the flagship American novelty of the war, is omnipresent. In addition to their function as machines for killing the sometimes innocent Vietnamese on the ground, in photographs the "choppers" are inexhaustibly photogenic as they loom in the skies, provide medevacs, drop off troops, and as they become a perfect means to take aerial shots of the land and the destruction. Even when they are absent and their presence merely implied, as in the numerous pictures of soldiers signaling to guide the craft to landing zones, they make good photography. Another showcase for the Americans' technological might was the so-called air war, an umbrella term for a range of mostly bombing and defoliating operations in both South and North Vietnam, whose heroes—the pilots—were photographed often, in gear and sunglasses that made them manly ancestors to Tom Cruise's Maverick. The coverage of the air war will be discussed further in chapter three.

As for images of soldiers, the bulk of the strictly combat situation photographs or the more chance snapshots remained within the "standard" framework seen in the Second World War as well as Korea, but many seemingly more deliberate representations of the new kind generally oscillated between the two poetics exemplified by Duncan on the one hand and Page on the other. Frontline blues and melancholy, even despondency, is one common theme. Page excelled at extracting such faces from the surroundings: in one of his photographs, a very young infantryman has his eyes dejectedly on the ground, and a single tear is just about visible on the cheek; the man seems fragile and the photograph understated, funereal rather than anguished. Burrows, whose work is often similar to Page's in style and subject matter, has another good example in a portrait of a marine glancing sadly away from the camera, cradling a dog in his arms at Khe Sanh in 1968 (Photo 21), part of his series documenting Operation Pegasus, published in the album *Vietnam*. Context for this particular type of soldierly sorrow is again provided by Jones Griffiths ([1971] 2001), who wrote that

> most G.I.'s search desperately for sincere friendship during their stay in Vietnam. They discover they cannot find any or buy any, even from the prostitutes. Often it is a Vietnamese dog that becomes their best friend. It is estimated that more dogs than wives have been taken back to the United States by returning G.I.'s. (33)

The new framing of the men could be done differently still, but with no less gravity. The more lenient dress code in place in Vietnam, especially as the war progressed, meant that the soldiers could enhance their get-ups with various accessories, such as bandanas, pendants, beads and the like, and decorate their helmets with graffiti, which became one of the favorite details to photograph. Among the images of headgear displaying monthly or daily countdowns, names of cities and girls, cocky proclamations and kill-em-alls, Bible quotations and so forth, one is especially memorable: Horst Faas's 1965 close-up of a young bright-eyed soldier, looking up at the camera with a hint of a smile, the writing on his helmet strap fairly inconspicuous but pointed: WAR IS HELL (Photo 22). There is some correspondence of this photograph to Smith's Second World War "Brutal America" shot, which also utilized text to introduce ironic ambiguity. Moreover, both seem to have gone somewhat against the mainstream of their time: Smith's picture engaging with the hushed side of the American presence in the Pacific, Faas's bringing in a candid critical note at a time when the general attitude toward the war in Vietnam was highly positive and supportive.

Overall, as far as the press and press photography was concerned, the G.I. in Vietnam remained a hero. Schutzer's November 26, 1965 *Life* story of the amphibious landing at Batangan, mentioned above, continues with a photograph of a Vietnamese woman holding her wounded baby and, next to it, an image of an American corpsman dashing across the beach under sniper fire with the child in his arms ("so he can treat the baby in safety"). These pictures illustrate yet another trend within the Vietnam War photography. It is not a coincidence that the authors of the pictures considered to be the best from the war distinguished themselves in their willingness to go out and join the troops in the thick of battle, as opposed to those who remained in Saigon: as a result, in Vietnam the action got closer, in the sense that the fighting and all its

attendant horrors and heartbreaks were photographed almost without inhibition. This was not unlike in Korea, but the Vietnam War pictures acquired far greater speed and immediacy, as if the action was unfolding in real time, right before the viewer's eyes. Many of these photographs, in fact, resemble film stills (Moeller 1989, 407).

The effect was a large number of images that accentuate the soldiers' ordeal: the sheer physical exertion and the casualties. Something of a subgenre of this new kind of hyper-action combat photographs are series of images focusing on medics and corpsmen at work, still in the midst of the battle or in the immediate aftermath. Two of these were photographed by Associated Press's Henri Huet, an icon in the Vietnam-War pantheon of photographers, who would die, alongside Burrows and fellow photojournalists Kent Potter and Keizaburo Shimamoto, in a helicopter shot down by the NVA in Laos on February 10, 1971. One series of photographs by Huet depicts the efforts of a boy-faced medic, James E. Callahan, to aid a wounded man under sniper fire, performing artificial respiration, and then looking up straight at the camera in desperation (Photo 23). The other Huet story, this one ran by *Life* on February 11, 1966, shows a Cavalry unit struggling in paddies in the Central Highlands. The spotlight of the final four photographs, better than and somewhat separate from the rest, is an almost blinded medic, Thomas Cole, treating the other wounded despite his affliction (Photo 24).

Occasionally, a comparison of photographs taken by different reporters betrays something of the very nature of photojournalism in the Vietnam War, and provides a glimpse into the realities of covering combat there: the intensity of the action, but also the intensity of the coverage. One of the images in "Marines Blunt the Invasion from the North," a story discussed below (Photo 25), is one example. The original photograph, as printed, for instance, in Burrows's *Vietnam* (2002), has the photographer Catherine Leroy snapping pictures to the right. In *Life*, she was cropped out. As Moeller (1989) observed, magazines were reluctant to publish photographs that would betray the presence of a reporter, in order to offer the readers the sense of looking at as true as possible a record of an event, without the distraction of being aware of any mediation (395–396). (In the same way, a man with a camera

is more often than not removed from the "Accidental Napalm Attack" photograph.) As for this particular Operation Prairie image, a very similar photograph of the exact same moment was taken by Page, who must have been standing beside Burrows right at the time. There is also a pair of photographs, taken by Page and Jones Griffiths, of a Vietnamese boy crying as he stands over his twelve-year-old brother's bloodied dead body laid out in a truck: the two reporters, again, clearly took the pictures side by side. Finally, a South Vietnamese soldier squatting by a wounded woman and looking up gravely in Saigon in 1969 was photographed, from only a slightly different perspective, by both Burrows and Jones Griffiths (the latter's black-and-white version is the more famous one, and usually included in the "best-of-Vietnam-photography" lists that can be found online). These three examples illustrate just how extensively photographed the war was, but also reveal something of the unpleasantness of a photojournalist's profession, if one imagines a swarm of men flashing their cameras as a soldier, a civilian—or a child—dies, or is wounded. A somewhat well-known photograph, taken in 2010 by Nathan Weber in Haiti, depicts this aspect well: a group of photographers hover over a body of a teenage girl, Fabienne Cherisma, shot by police.

But there are few contenders to rival one particular story by Burrows when it comes to the action-packed, casualty-strewn, life-and-death photography of the Vietnam War. On October 28, 1966, *Life* printed a story from the Operation Prairie near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), photographed by Burrows and Co Rentmeester (Photo 25). Two or three of Burrows's pictures from the series are famous. One, with crisp, lush green of grass as background, depicts four marines carrying the body of their fallen comrade at the double, under fire, each holding the dead man's limb. Next, the photographs show the troops and corpsmen on a muddy hill, receiving the wounded. The cover image of the issue is a close-up of two faces, a White marine cradling a Black buddy in his arms, the latter with half of his head bandaged. In the story, there is a picture of another wounded and bandaged marine—Gunnery Sergeant Jeremiah Purdie—being helped to cross a shallow ditch. Purdie would be seen again in another photograph taken that day by Burrows, which was not printed in 1966, but instead published in the

February 26, 1971 issue commemorating Burrows after his death earlier that month. There, Burrows's camera caught Purdie mid-step, his arms outstretched towards a visibly traumatized, mud-caked friend on the ground, their eyes locked in a moment of heartbreaking intimacy and concern (Photo 26; Kennedy, 2016, 27–29).

Such preoccupation with the action, the movement and energy of combat, did not exist in a vacuum. While television may not have been the defining medium of the war, it still exerted some influence on the expectations as to what the Vietnam War should look like. Moreover, TV news reels from the frontlines were mostly context- and plotless, free-floating episodes in a conflict too multifaceted and convoluted to construct a meaningful visual narrative. Therefore, if epic was the mode striven for in the Second World War, and the close-up became the signature framing of the war in Korea, in Indochina—as it became clear with time—the preferred mode to present photography in the press was "collage" (Hariman and Lucaites, 2003, 41–42). Moeller (1989) wrote of the pictures of the Vietnam War that

> photographs that put the individual soldier sharply back into the context of the conflict took precedence; the political and moral concerns raised by Vietnam caused such images to become a more fitting mode. The new style of the Vietnam War photography broke with the aesthetic of the past two wars. Instead of careful compositions isolating decisive moments of combat, the images that seemed to dominate and characterize the bulk of the photographs from Vietnam appeared simply to arrest randomly selected scenes—random, yet all the more significant for their seeming representativeness precisely because they were "random." (407)

Unsurprisingly, to illustrate this point Moeller used Burrows's Operation Prairie photographs. She noted on the positive response from the readers, expressed in the letters sent to *Life*, who more than anything else referred to "the implied concern between the black and white G.I.s," and the images as "transcend[ing] the 'great racial problems' of the American home front" (Moeller 1989, 409). She further observed, however, that the pictures could evince strong emotional reaction precisely because of their seeming lack of thought-out composition, the randomness of the moment they portray, the fact that they were

completely unposed; as such, they appeared all the more genuine. In another analysis of the Operation Prairie photoessay, Kennedy (2016) also noted that

> the tableau-like effect of the image [of Purdie published in 1971] is powerful, conjuring symbolic references that transcend the immediacy of the scene. […] While the moment of recognition in [the marines'] gaze is elemental and universal, it also has more specifically American connotations as black and white soldiers symbolically connect in a moment of interracial brotherhood. (28)

The emphasis on the apparent racial amity in the face of the violence and tragedy of the battlefield, transmitted in the story not only by the Purdie photograph but also the 1966 cover, the one with a White marine tenderly holding a bandaged-up Black companion, is understandable in the context of the first war fought by a truly desegrated American armed forces[13]—which still generated enough racism and racial tensions that the twin issues of the experiences of specifically Black Americans in Vietnam and of their relations with White comrades would become some of the defining tropes in the American cultural narrative of the conflict. Such readings of these images speak also to the broader cultural significance of the war in Vietnam and the imagery that it occasioned, not only against the particular backdrop of the 1960s and the ongoing civil rights struggle, but also within a framework in which the conflict represents something universal about American men in Vietnam: their

[13] Racial segregation in the U.S. military was abolished by President Truman's 1948 Executive Order 9981, but the various branches of the armed forces reacted to the new legislation with varying degrees of enthusiasm and speed. The Army proved the most reluctant to integrate Black troops into previously all-White units. In consequence, the rate of desegregation at the time of the Korean War remained patchy across the different branches, with the Army especially "leaving for Korea in a mostly segregated state" (Knauer 2014, 129). Ultimately, what pushed all the branches, and the Army in particular, into fully meeting the demands of the Executive Order 9981, was a matter of pragmatics: only when the number of new recruits to replace casualties in the White units dwindled, did the military force integration by filling the gaps in the ranks with Black soldiers.

American brotherhood transcending all lines of potential social strife.[14] But Kennedy (2016) saw the symbolism of the photograph—"of all of Burrows' images, [this one coming] closest to achieving iconic status" (28)—also in its ability to evoke the sense of "disillusionment" that eventually came to veil the entire American endeavor in Indochina, among the American public at home as much as among the soldiers deployed to the muddy battlefields of Vietnam. "By 1971 and thereafter," Kennedy (2016) concludes, "it was an emblematic illustration of the 'quagmire' that the Vietnam War had become in American perceptions" (29).

It is easy to see why Kennedy would single out this photoessay as a particularly potent representation of the American experience of the war in Vietnam. A story like "One Ride with Yankee Papa 13," Burrows's other masterpiece, is too neat and too linear, its easily graspable narrative, despite the tragedy unfolding in the photographs of James Farley, still too susceptible to a certain romanticism of war that may translate the death and trauma into an expected outcome of battle: a high price paid for a cause that may yet turn out to be righteous. In the "collage" of the Operation Prairie photographs, on the other hand, simple causality disintegrates among the chaos of mud, blood, and wounded bodies. The meaningful look on the marines' faces is not the destination of the story, its painful but ultimately significant ending and universal moral; instead, the gaze exchanged, the arms outstretched, are only brief anchors in a sea of senseless suffering and dying. A comparison of the two stories by Burrows thus incidentally exemplifies the chasm that would open in the public perception of the war as the time went on.

***

[14] Much has been written on the symbolic function that the Vietnam War would take on in the public discourses of the 1980s in the U.S.: the still-fresh memory of the conflict, a revisionism of its history, and a cultural probing for its "meanings," would serve to restore a supposed sense of unity and patriotism among Americans—according to a logic derived from the popular American memory of the war as the cause of a painful societal rift that now needed mending. See, for example, Beattie (1998) or Musiał (2020, 14–49).

To sum up this brief survey, the photography of the Vietnam War seemed to be an ultimately true representation of the reality of its war. The photographs were candid and reflective of the nature of the fighting—and the experience of the American soldiers engaged in it—to an extent perhaps not to be found in the images from the Second World War or even Korea; portrayals of the Vietnamese were also more common than of Koreans twenty years earlier (Moeller 1989, 399).[15] Nevertheless, for the most part the Vietnam War photography did not stray far from the government's official line, accepted after all by the very publications that printed the pictures. As in the press, the U.S. soldier remained the good guy—a little bruised now, perhaps, suffering more openly than his predecessors in Europe and Asia had done, the physical as well as mental consequences of combat evinced in the many faces of G.I.'s photographed in Indochina—but overall he was still an all-American kid protecting a peasant society from the menace that was communism, under the watchful eyes of his John-Wayne-look-a-like senior officers.

This positive image was indeed so deeply ingrained that it came out undamaged from the variety of styles within the Saigon press corps. The three photographers whose work is discussed in some detail above illustrate it well: if Duncan continued in his unwavering common feeling with the marines—and his photographs prove it—Page displayed just as much empathy, even enthrallment, with the G.I.s, albeit in the newer, Vietnam-War-specific style. Even Jones Griffiths, in his exceptional concern for the civilians and decided anti-American stance, refrained from too-harsh, too-frequent criticism of the soldier. In fact, even though the wartime experiences and the victimhood of the Vietnamese are always centered in his work, the break in the causal relationship between the actions of individual troops and the suffering of the innocent often visible in his photographs is symptomatic of a more general trend toward at least some degree of sympathy for the American soldiers—sympathy that is rarely afforded to brutal armies of invaders. When Vietnamese civilians were photographed, these were

[15] This is not actually saying much, given that coverage in the American press of the Koreans in their war was microscopic.

the images most clearly condemning the war, but, with the most glaring exception of the photographs taken during the My Lai massacre, there are few well-known images explicitly making the connection between the dead, or wounded, or otherwise ailed civilian, and the American boys fighting the war.

A photograph may render an event meaningful, but a mass of images can create a reality, or realities (think, again, of Duncan, Page, Jones Griffiths) for a war, and so was the case with Vietnam (and other wars too). Television certainly had some part in this, and though it was photography that first brought war to the living room, it is ironic that by the early 1970s *Life* closed, eclipsed by the new medium and hurt by the drastic fall in advertising revenue, thus providing a symbolic ending to an era. But in the case of the war in Vietnam it would be wrong to understate the huge impact of the imagery offered by photojournalism. Quite to the contrary, an argument could be made that instead of being routinely branded as the first television war, the American conflict in Indochina should, in fact, be remembered as the last true photography war. Burrows's "One Ride with Yankee Papa 13" occupies an important spot in this particular tradition, and it remains to see why it does, how it fits, and how it does not.

Chapter Three

War is Hell: "Yankee Papa 13" in Contexts

"John Wayne Must Die"

Larry Burrows's "One Ride with Yankee Papa 13" was printed in *Life* on April 16, 1965, and so a mere fortnight after the first U.S. combat troops had disembarked in Vietnam. While the Vietnamese had been fighting for decades, the conflict—as "police action," since it had not been a declared war—was relatively fresh on the American agenda, and it was certainly fresh in the American minds. The timing of the story's publication, in chronological as well as historical and political sense, is therefore important, and it is one framework within which it should be interpreted. Other contexts invite themselves: Burrows, for one, was a man of a certain ideological conviction and a method of shooting pictures; *Life* was a magazine that had a tradition of printing photographic essays in a certain way. In addition, "Yankee Papa 13" is a narrative and as such it merits interpretive approaches as a war story in general and as a Vietnam story in particular.

First, however, a more broadly cultural concern demands attention, as not only will it be relevant to Burrows's story in *Life*, but it will also tie in the beginning of the war with its aftermath symbolically by way of a transformation of the image, and self-image, of the American soldier and of America itself. This concern is the figure of John Wayne. Wayne's name is one that comes up in the narratives of the Vietnam War as often as any (MacPherson 1988, 81).[1] There are a couple of reasons for the

[1] For discussions about the significance of John Wayne to the "Vietnam Generation," see Anderegg (1991, 15–32); Hallin (1986, 142–145); Herzog (2005, 17–25); Kinney (2000, 11–42); Musiał (2021); Rollins (1984).

figure's endurance as such a potent symbol for the "Vietnam Generation." For one, the importance of the Second World War as a mythical force in American culture on the eve of the country's invasion of Vietnam (and beyond) cannot be understated, as indeed "the dominant framework for understanding war in American culture is derived from World War II" (Hallin 2006, 290). More importantly, of course, out of the many semi-mythical figures influencing the imaginations of war and combat in pre-Vietnam America, all of them, it should be noted, associated with the Second World War—John F. Kennedy, Audie Murphy, the veteran fathers—it was mostly Wayne that had

> [a] connection to the complicated process of shaping American soldiers' views of Vietnam prior to their involvement in combat and of creating society's expectations for the ideal warrior. […] [By the 1960s, Wayne] had already approached his present status as cultural icon representing traditional American values of patriotism, courage, confidence, and leadership. Over the years the man and his screen character had become one and the same—a mythical figure. [In Vietnam] the name of John Wayne was invoked as a verbal shorthand to describe the larger-than-life character of the American warrior-gentleman and to represent for young males the elements of manhood. […] [A] soldier routinely found himself comparing battlefield reality with a John Wayne movie. (Herzog 2005, 17–19)

Apart from being a figure of Second World War films, notably *Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949), where as a marine sergeant he witnessed the iconic raising of the flag on Mount Suribachi, Wayne was also the embodiment of the uniquely American figure of the cowboy and the attendant concepts of grit and spirit, of the frontier living and the frontier struggling. The frontier rhetoric easily—and famously—found its way into John F. Kennedy's harangues on the eve of the war in Vietnam, a war that was to be an extension of that all-American endeavor, in a land that was to be a new frontier (Hellmann 1986; cf. Musiał 2020, 50–52; Neilson 1998, 100–102). Consequently, when in *Full Metal Jacket* (1987) Private Joker does a Wayne impression during a spat with Animal Mother, and the latter responds—"You talk the talk. Do you walk the walk?"—the

reference and the comeback seem deliberate in bringing up both the man's myth and the reality it came up against in Indochina.

This reality was a matrix of factors and frustrations, contradictions and controversies, which warrant a historical analysis the like of which cannot be undertaken here; in lieu, some very general observations should provide some background as to what made the war in Vietnam "different":

> (1) the relatively short length of an infantryman's tour of duty (thirteen months in the Marine Corps, twelve in the Army), which meant that troops worried more about surviving their "time" than about overall victory, and which supposedly undermined the typical soldierly bonding among men in units;
>
> (2) the controversial and unjust selective service practice that sent large numbers of reluctant draftees into combat, to fight, be wounded, and die in an ultimately "meaningless" war;
>
> (3) the limited war policy that had real consequences for strategy and maddeningly ineffective tactics;
>
> (4) Relatedly, the lack of distinct battle lines, no front, the prevalence of small unit engagements, such as during patrols or search-and-destroy missions, over battalion-size and larger battles, which were exceptionally rare;
>
> (5) Relatedly, the lack of visible progress as "strategic" positions would be fought for and abandoned soon after, to be reclaimed by the ever-replenished enemy;
>
> (6) the ineradicable presence of the National Liberation Front (NLF, or the "Viet Cong") throughout South Vietnam, as well as the hidden presence of massive North Vietnamese Army (NVA) units in the jungles, and the continuous threat of falling victim to their ambushes, sniper fire, and booby-traps, all of which translated into a near-constant state of paranoia while in the field;
>
> (7) the passive hostility of the civilian population, the inability to distinguish innocents from the enemy, and the resultant indelible belief among the U.S. rank and file that "they were all V.C." ("Viet Cong");
>
> (8) the oppressiveness of the climate and the difficulty of the terrain;

> (9) the unprecedented antiwar opposition to the war at home, the perceived hostility of "hippies" toward veterans, and the lukewarm or antagonistic societal reception of returning soldiers, all of which were said to have exacerbated the trauma of homecoming, the feeling of alienation, the sense of shame at having served (and lost) in an unpopular and polarizing war, the pain caused by the people's betrayal and their denial of recognition, and so forth. (Musiał 2020, 7)

On the home front, especially, the Vietnam War proved an unpopular and controversial conflict, inspiring a homegrown antiwar faction that, even if not as widespread as usually thought, was nonetheless exceptionally vocal and proactive within the countercultural movements of the already tumultuous 1960s. Although issues of international law or indeed of American imperial policy abroad, or even of the American-sponsored democide happening throughout Indochina (Rummel 1997), turn out not to have been the highest up on the antiwar agenda—it was, in fact, the draft—and although the protesters rallied mostly against the politicians and policymakers, in the process the image of the American soldier suffered as well.

The previous chapter discussed briefly the decline in public support for the war in America as the conflict dragged on and the human cost rose. It also explained the position of the press in the reporting of the war, and the general tendency of editors and some journalists to follow the official statements of the Johnson administration. Following the spell of shock of the Tet Offensive, and with Richard Nixon now in the White House, the attitude of the media returned to normal, so to speak, with the new president's promises of de-escalation (gradual withdrawal of American troops) and Vietnamization (handing over the fighting of the war to the South Vietnamese) dutifully and, for the most part, uncritically repeated (Hammond 1996, 622). Some things changed, though. A number of high-publicity cases—My Lai, the police shootings at the Kent State University in Ohio in 1970 in relation to protests against the impending invasion of Cambodia, the publication in *The New York Times* of the damning Pentagon Papers in 1971—proved an unredeemable damage to the public perception of the war.

As for the developments in Vietnam, the tone of the reporting was different, too. With My Lai all over the news, other stories of maltreatment and crimes began resurfacing. Apart from that, the morale of the soldiers in the field hit a low, and the correspondents' copies increasingly focused on the problems gnawing through the ranks: the racism, the drugs, the despondency. One consequence of Nixon's change of policy was that even as the war was winding down for the Americans, with ever more soldiers returning home, those left in Asia were still being wounded and killed, now clearly "for no reason." As no G.I. wanted to be "the last one to die in Vietnam," discipline among the troops deteriorated, with instances of refusal to fight and "fraggings"—killing, accidentally on purpose, those officers and NCOs who were too gung-ho, too lifer, too demanding—occurring more often.[2]

What does this all have to do with John Wayne? John Wayne killed many Japanese, John Wayne won wars, John Wayne could ride off into the sunset, jumping fences and firing off his six-shooter into the sunset sky. The American soldiers in Vietnam, who as boys watched the films and idolized the man, could kill many Vietnamese, but perhaps these were not the right kind of Vietnamese. These American soldiers could not win the war. America could talk the talk, but, ultimately, it could not walk the walk.

Hence what Tobey Herzog (2005), in a work on the Vietnam War narratives, identified as the "John Wayne Syndrome," a common theme in the stories resulting from the discrepancy between the expectations and the experience (17–24). In fact, comparisons and references to Wayne seem to be made by authors describing all stages of a soldier's career: from "boot" (Wayne as an inspiration to enlist) to "grunt" (Wayne as an explanation for irrational "heroic" behavior on the battlefield/Wayne as the metaphor of losing one's innocence) to veteran (Wayne as a symbol of disillusionment and embitterment) (Musiał 2021, 188–190). This tendency reveals just how prevalent and profoundly internalized the man's myth had been among the young American men being sent to Vietnam.

[2] For discussion of post-Tet coverage of the war, see Hallin (1986, 159–210); Hammond (1996); Landers (2004, 99–116); Wyatt (1993, 189–215).

The soldiers were not the only ones sharing in such sentiments. The U.S. forces withdrew finally in 1973, ten years after *Life* had published Burrows's "We Wade Deeper Into The Jungle War," and leaving behind a country so wrecked as to be beyond saving. In 1975, Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese. In the United States, the collapse of South Vietnam left an aftertaste of biting disappointment, even disillusionment, and the humiliation of defeat.[3] Vietnam, after all, was "the first war America has ever lost," and in a society with such an intimate relationship to its military and strong identification with its troops as representatives and agents of the country abroad, some of the failure at least had to fall to the fighting men. Besides—and this is very important here—the press coverage of the latter part of the conflict which underlined so many negative issues, up to and including war crimes such as My Lai, seems to have been the one that persisted in popular memory (Hallin 2006, 290). The postwar discourses that ended up shaping the American cultural narrative about the Vietnam War are a complex topic (undertaken in some detail in Musiał 2020); it is enough to note here that the seemingly unproblematic heroism of the Americans who fought in the Second World War and even Korea was by the 1980s a thing of the past, and even the rhetorical attempts on the political right, coming most notably from Ronald Reagan himself, to rewrite the Vietnam-era G.I. as a figure worthy of admiration and patriotic praise always ended up revisionist and defensive in tone. Instead, in the centrist and liberal mainstream of American culture, Vietnam veteran would remain seemingly tainted by his own victimhood and trauma, the American dead in Vietnam—symbolic of the supposedly senseless waste of young American life, sacrificial to the destructive politics of the 1960s. As such, the myth of John Wayne goes some way towards illustrating the profound transformation in both the nations' relationship to its warriors and the soldiers' image that occurred in the decade the American military spent fighting in Vietnam.

The full scope of the change is discernible furthermore in the war's narratives. If many of the Vietnam novels and memoirs continue the

[3] See Gloria Emerson's ([1976] 1992) *Winners & Losers*, an excellent account of, among other things, America right after the collapse of Saigon.

tradition of the masters of the war tale genre in exploring the canonic theme of corruption of innocence through combat (Carpenter 2003, 31–32; Herzog 2005, 31–44; Rollins 1984, 422–423), the convention is frequently overlaid with yet another major motif, recognized as specific to the Vietnam context, namely the "heart-of-darkness trip" (Herzog 2005, 25–31; see also Hellmann 1986, and Myers 1988, 105–139; cf. Musiał 2020, 110–115; Neilson 1998, 129–130). It seems to have been established as the major framework for literary and semi-literary (or artistic) treatment of the war, engendered in texts such as Michael Herr's *Dispatches* and Philip Caputo's 1977 memoir *A Rumor of War*, and visualized most memorably, if somewhat superficially, in *Apocalypse Now* (1979; Cahir 2004). One might also argue that it is visually nascent in the photographs of Tim Page, or that elements of the heart-of-darkness tension between wilderness and civilization, "savagery" and "morality," is traceable also in *Full Metal Jacket*'s central philosophical tenet of Jung's "duality of man."

In such narratives, the protagonist is often a spectator and a witness to the horrors and the depravation that are elevated to an almost metaphysical level, whereby the simple moralistic melodrama of an inferior war story (a John Wayne film, for example) is substituted with a density, and intensity, of more or less slightly racist concerns: confrontation with the self, the lack of civilizational constraints, evil, primal emotions, chaos, the conflict between idealism and reality, violence, vengeance, hatred, power—and so the list goes on. These "trips" become a setting for, and the spectator-narrators the agents of, the American soul-searching triggered by the Vietnam War and its many failures, political and military as much as moral and human. Importantly, the darkness is found to be sitting within, be it in the fictional embodiments of evil (the Conradian Colonel Kurtz in *Apocalypse Now*, Sergeant Barnes in *Platoon*, 1986, likened to the Melvillian Ahab in the film), in the omnipresent figure of the war-crazed and psychopathic foot soldier on one tour too many, in the lifer warmongering officer characters like *Apocalypse Now*'s Lieutenant Colonel Bill Kilgore of the "I love the smell of napalm in the morning fame," in the kid troopers a little too enthusiastic, a little too business as usual, about killing (*Full Metal Jacket*'s Animal Mother, *Platoon*'s Bunny, and countless others in

films and books), finally in the real-life men returning to the United States with drug addictions, posttraumatic stress, and sometimes with court-martials for war crimes.

Caputo (1977), a Marine Corps volunteer who had envisaged himself as the next John Wayne upon his deployment to Indochina (16), ended up writing *A Rumor of War* as a story of "what war does to men," which in his case meant being court-martialed for his implication, as the junior officer responsible for his men's actions, in a murder of innocent Vietnamese civilians. The darkness he encountered, like the other darkness of Vietnam, necessitated a treatment, an exposure that would begin to alleviate it—consequently, Caputo's memoir becomes a prime example of an author's attempt to "depict himself as a youthful victim of war" (Rollins 2008, 369). On the other end of the spectrum, so to speak, Daniel Lang's October 10, 1969 *The New Yorker* article, "Casualties of War" (later turned into a book and made into a 1989 film), is a story of "Sven Eriksson," an infantryman who witnessed a premeditated kidnapping, multiple rape, and murder of Phan Thi Mao, a Vietnamese girl, by his squad leader and buddies. Again, as in so many of the narratives, Eriksson was the passive witness, although he did report the crime and saw the men brought before court-martial. The solution as to how to deal with the darkness offered here is Eriksson's immaculate and determined morality.

What these two stories ultimately share is the gloomy realization that the darkness is ineffaceable and inescapable: "*Heart of Darkness* is Vietnam" (Ward Just, quoted in Herzog 2005, 25). They also illuminate well the rapid transition of the archetypal American G.I. and the confrontation, even the clash, between the ideal and the actual, between the moral and the sinister, that occurred in the Vietnamese settings of the fictions and non-fictions of the war—what Katherine Kinney (2000), in a seminal study on American representations of the war in Vietnam, has dubbed "friendly fire," an apt metaphor for "the violence Americans are doing to each other rather than to the Vietnamese" (110). This is not, of course, to say that every single American soldier in Indochina was a bloodthirsty psychopath. What matters here, however, is the public perception, the image in popular culture, the common imagination, and these are inevitably shaped by the defining narratives and the blurring at

the edges between the factual and the fictional. Only stories stay; Robert Hariman and John Lucaites (2003) quote a Vietnam veteran, who says,

> What has really happened is now so thoroughly mixed up in my mind with what has been said about what happened that the pure experience is no longer there. […] The Vietnam War is no longer a definite event so much as it is a collective and mobile script in which we continue to scrawl, erase, rewrite our conflicting and changing view of ourselves. (54–55)

From this point of view, a Vietnam veteran could write, in an essay recounting America's infatuation with Wayne on the eve of the war, that "John Wayne must die" (Flynn 1994) as a pacifist statement against the American culture of violence and power. But when in *Platoon* the evil Sergeant Barnes in cold blood shoots the good Sergeant Elias, an unquestionably positive hero in one of the war's most notable and influential narratives, the scene is symbolic in implying that in the stories, at least, having gone through Vietnam and having confronted the darkest corners of his soul, the model American soldier of the Great Generation is finally, once and for all, dead. Only Chris Taylor, the witness, is left.

"A Picture That Shouldn't Be Shown"

With John Wayne—as but one figurative manifestation of a whole complex of social and cultural phenomena that tied together issues of mythology and violence, media representation and masculinity—symbolically gone, his ideal not so much shattered as unrealized over the period of a decade, "Vietnam […] became the era's most powerful symbol of damaged ideals and the loss of trust, unity, shared myths, and common values" (Isaacs 1997, 6). Set against this postwar background, Burrows's "Yankee Papa 13" story seems to belong to another era, and considering the transformation suggested in the preceding part of this chapter, so it actually does. The narrative's hero is a successor to the Second World War framework, with significant debts to the emotional gravitas of the Korean War photography, rather than a straightforward

template for the disturbed, metaphysically violated protagonist of a Vietnam War heart-of-darkness trip.

As indicated, the first major context within which "Yankee Papa 13" should be read is the timing of its publication, right at the very beginning of the American ground war in Vietnam, when the public opinion was overwhelmingly in support of the deployment, with the mythic, feel-good heroism bestowed upon the U.S. armed forces and extended to the views on the country's military engagements, still intact and celebrated in the mainstream. This provided the receptive ground, a public ready to be shown photographs of a violent and tragic event, whose upsetting nature was nonetheless eased by the faith in America's mission in Indochina as much as in the Cold War in general.

The same ideology and sentiment operated among the press, publishers, and editors but, at the time, also most of the correspondents in Vietnam, hence the self-censorship and the compliance with the official statements outlined in chapter two. In the context of photography, good illustration is incidentally provided by Burrows himself, who in a memorandum to *Life* editors concerning the captions to the "We Wade Deeper Into the Jungle War" story in 1963, wrote:

> *Important*: The pilot in this picture, the man who actually fired these rockets, is an American pilot. But since, publically at least, Americans are only there as advisors, it would probably do considerable harm if we publish that fact, although it has been hinted at before. It is probably better to refer to the man here as a Vietnamese pilot, since there's nothing in the picture that would give him away as an American, we hope. (Quoted in Moeller 1989, 399–400. Emphasis in original.)

In fact, Burrows was a hawk, at least initially (Kennedy 2016, 29–33; Robertson 2006, 187). He had been part of the initial tiny press corps in Saigon, having arrived as early as 1962 as the sole *Life* photographer in the entire Southeast Pacific (and, next to Horst Faas, one of only two Western photographers in Vietnam (Kennedy 2016, 16)), and by 1965 he was still staunchly pro-American and pro-war. The idea that would eventually become "Yankee Papa 13" was conceived in 1964, as the American war in Vietnam was beginning to escalate, and fell, in

fact, well within the typical Second World War practices: to photograph a few days' or weeks' worth of the everyday experience of the American soldiers in Vietnam, thus producing a human interest story that would inspire greater identification of the public with the fighting men, in order to foster greater support for the war. As Burrows himself explained, his aim was to show the readers "how big a part the Americans were playing in this war and how hopeless it would be for the Vietnamese if the U.S. withdrew their help" (Moeller 1989, 389–395). The turnover in Burrows's subject matter, as well as his personal views on the war, would come only in 1969, with a story in the September 19 issue of *Life*, significantly titled "A Degree of Disillusion," in which the photographer admits to having been "rather a hawk" (Kennedy 2016, 29–33; Robertson 2006, 187). Focused on the Vietnamese civilians, these images have far more in common with Jones Griffiths's work than anything Burrows, or many of the other photographers, had done.[4]

Something needs to be said about Burrows's methods. Firstly, he belonged to the elite of the Vietnam press corps, in the sense that unlike most he spent a considerable time in the country (from 1962 until his death over Laos in 1971), thus thoroughly learning the war and its particularities (Halberstam 2002, 9–10; Kennedy 2016, 19–20). Besides, like Tim Page or Henri Huet, he became famous for the lengths he was prepared to go to shoot a story: he once strapped himself to a gaping doorway of an airborne plane, to shoot photos of the inside and outside at the same time (the result is Photo 27; Burrows 2002, 124). This readiness to take risks for photographs is implicitly present also in "Yankee Papa 13," namely, in the images of the James Farley's attempt at saving the wounded pilot: the realization, after scrutinizing the perspective from which the pictures are taken, that Burrows was right behind, amidst the flying bullets, is mortifying. In *Life*, Burrows relates the story:

> Farley barreled out of the copter and raced over to Yankee Papa 3. I chased after him. From a stone building some 70 yards away a Vietcong machine gun was spraying the area. […] I was kneeling on the ground

[4] Though see the cutting analysis of "A Degree of Disillusion" in Kennedy (2016, 29–33). The topic is picked up again, briefly, some paragraphs down.

> alongside the ship for cover against the V.C. fire. […] Machine-gun bullets were tearing holes into the aircraft's skin all around Farley. It would have been certain death to hang around any longer. So, crouching low, we ran back to Yankee Papa 13.

Secondly, Burrows's stories were thoroughly thought-out and prepared. For example, Burrows spent nine months taking pictures for a story on the American air war in Vietnam, and at one point the Air Force indulged him by ferrying in craft from three different countries for one photograph (Burrows 2002, 124; see Photo 27). In "Yankee Papa 13," the photograph of the protagonist Farley manning the helicopter's machine gun was made possible by a camera mounted on the fuselage, operated by an extension wire from the inside. The essay, as mentioned, was conceived the previous year; as with all his projects, "[b]y the time he was in the field, he had already laid the story out in his mind: which photos would be needed, and whether they should be color or black and white" (Halberstam 2002, 10). As a matter of fact, Burrows rarely shot in black and white, believing color to be more realistic, and "Yankee Papa 13" remains a notable exception in his work. Milton Orshefsky, a reporter for *Life* in Saigon and co-author of the idea for the story, once commented that if color was more suited for the spectacle of war, then black and white was better for capturing human emotions, and similar considerations may well have influenced the choice of the latter for the essay (Moeller 1989, 390–391).

It is worth pointing out here also that Burrows could plan a story a year ahead, and then execute it at will, because he worked for *Life*. Feature photographers and reporters for magazines, in contrast to their counterparts at daily newspapers and news agencies, were not bound by strict deadlines, nor were they required to follow the action to cover the most newsworthy events of the day, and as such they enjoyed far more time and leisure to do their job. As a result, correspondents like Burrows could spend considerable time carefully preparing for, executing, editing, and polishing a project. In a picture magazine like *Life*, the editors had, of course, the final word on the selection of images and the composition of the story; the material they worked with, however, was limited—they could not ask a photographer for a re-shoot, after

all, or sift through an array of similar pictures taken by a number of reporters—and, as a consequence, the most powerful and emphatic photographs had to be chosen for centerpieces to convey the desired meaning. *Life* had, moreover, an established tradition, or a "representational strategy," again reaching back to the stories of the Second World War, of crafting photoessays in the form of coherent, easily identifiable narratives (of which "Yankee Papa 13" remains a model example), suffused with "simple formulations and concrete symbols" (Kozol 1994, 44), in order to create the appearance of veracity and objectivism.

However, in a highly critical monograph on *Life*, Wendy Kozol (1994) regarded the magazine's "realism" to be yet another photographic style, and as such argued that "claims of photographic universality misdirect our attention from the ways in which visual images mobilize particular ideological meanings in specific historical contexts" (15; on the history of *Life* and the development of the photoessay, see also Gervais 2017, chap. 3). For the interpretation of "Yankee Papa 13" it matters, therefore, not only that its author was pro-war, but also that *Life* as a magazine traditionally had Republican leanings and was openly hawkish about the war in Vietnam, at least at the time of the essay's publication. Time Inc., the publisher of *Life* since 1936, was founded by Henry Luce, a lifelong and influential Republican Party member and a devoted anticommunist, who remained editor-in-chief of all his publications, including *Life*, until 1964. He was succeeded by Hedley Donovan, who advocated a more neutral stance, although a shift in the coverage of the Vietnam War, in *Life* at least, toward more critical becomes more apparent sometime in 1967, and outright only in 1969 with the publication of the "One Week's Toll" photostory, discussed in the previous chapter (Kozol 1994, 28–41; Landers 2004, 33ff).

Kozol (1994) also observed that in *Life*'s imagery, a particular "powerful technique of realism […] was metonymy, the use of 'ordinary' individuals to represent broader social conditions. *Life* explained abstract or complex problems, issues, or events through visual portraits of 'real people'" (9). Burrows chose his "ordinary man," the 21-year-old marine lance corporal and crew chief James Farley, deployed in a helicopter squadron based at Da Nang, "because he seemed almost like an ingenue, with simple, all-American boy looks. He was, Burrows said, like

the kid next door" (Burrows 2002, 100)[5]—or, within a different framework of American self-mythology, like "the American Adam" (Heusser 2019, 204–205). Elsewhere, Farley himself paraphrased Burrows: "He said I had a baby-looking face. 'You're thin, you look good, you're sort of all-American. You know, big ears, short hair. Yeah, you're the one I want'" (Hendrickson 1997, 137).

As an "all-American kid next door," Farley proved a natural successor to the subjects of photographs who had brought the realities of the Second World War closer to home thirty years previous. A detail of Farley's biography places him closer still to the Great Generation and its greatest personification, John Wayne: a Texan raised in Arizona, in different times he could have been a cowboy. There is even an unpublished picture from the "Yankee Papa" roll that shows him pitching horseshoes. The photographs at the beginning of the article in *Life*, of Farley enjoying himself in Da Nang, in civilian clothes, do not sit all that well with the rest of the narrative, and seem to be a remnant of the original idea for an everyday, human interest photoessay. As it turned out, in shooting the story, Burrows struck gold. Out of about 120 rolls of film used to shoot the story, seventeen images in the article (out of a total of twenty five) were taken from eight rolls only, as one day's mission became the story (Moeller 1989, 393).

That story, and the events of that one mission on that one day, are recounted at the beginning of the introduction: the good cheer in the morning, the preparation, the action turning hot, another chopper taking fire and crashing, Farley jumping out to rescue the shot pilot and failing to do so, the dramatic attempt to save the wounded, the death, finally Farley giving in, covering his face, crying. The story told in these photographs is melodramatic, action-packed and adrenaline-fueled, progressing smoothly if ruthlessly toward that final shot. The heroism was real. The wounded pilot, First Lieutenant Dale Eddy, would, in fact,

[5] Burrows, who died in a helicopter crash in Laos in 1971, is of course not the author of the brief introductions to his photoessays published in this 2002 volume, which for bibliographical purposes is listed here under his name. The book does not make clear who the author of these texts is; the introduction is written by David Halberstam (included here as a separate bibliographical entry), while the acknowledgements are by Burrows's son, Russell (Burrows 2002, 244).

be soon rescued by another unit and years later tell the journalist Paul Hendrickson (1997):

> You know, I once went to the picture archives at Time-Life in New York. I wanted to look at the glossy photographs. I saw some of the pictures that weren't published. I can tell you this. As Farley is climbing up the side of the ship, there are no holes in the outer skin of the plane, not that I can see. And when he's up there trying to save me, there are all kinds of holes. In that minute or two, with that back to the fire, he risked everything. (158)

The subject matter of the story is, therefore, the very stuff of war, as expected at the time when the Second World War poetics still loomed large: firstly, a boy christened under fire, propelled toward manhood by the force of combat and death, and, secondly, battlefield heroism, plain to the eye and uncontestable, Farley's—running to the other craft and hoisting himself up to retrieve a comrade under a shower of bullets—as much as "our boys'" in general. In style, the images are undoubtedly influenced by Korea's photographic legacy, as they are candid, raw, and emotional. Thematically, "Yankee Papa 13" may perhaps tentatively be classified alongside other—albeit literary—American representations of war which in scholarship are usually defined as realist or naturalist, and which in the Vietnam War canon are represented by James Webb's *Fields of Fire* (1978) and John M. Del Vecchio's *The 13th Valley* (1982). Lucas Carpenter (2003), for example, writes that

> some writers […] tried to accommodate Vietnam within the realistic-naturalistic, "war is hell" model of the American war novel, a tradition extending from Stephen Crane through Ernest Hemingway and John Dos Passos to Norman Mailer and James Jones. For these, the essence of the human experience of war is always and everywhere the same, generally entailing a profound progression from innocence to experience involving some combination of fear, courage, brotherhood, sacrifice, and, at its most existential, an ultimate realization that one is a meaningless pawn in the larger […] game of history. (31)

As such, the story of "Yankee Papa 13" becomes a canonic tale of corruption of innocence. The manifest trauma and the implied disillusionment that Farley experiences are his own as much as Lieutenant Hayworth's in David Douglas Duncan's "The Hill," as Paul Baumer's in *All Quiet on the Western Front*, as Yossarian's in *Catch-22*, and so many others'. (There is, in fact, some inadvertent but uncanny correspondence of Burrows's story to *Catch-22*, where the pivotal event of the narrative, Snowden's death, also occurs in the air, and is also witnessed by the protagonist as he attempts to help.) Tobey Herzog (2005) wrote about the Vietnam War literature that

> in spite of obvious differences […] the best stories from [the Vietnam War and other modern conflicts] suggest a fundamental universality among wars: emotions, combat experiences, battlefield rituals, and changes soldiers undergo. […] Because of [the] similarities among soldiers' experiences, literary war stories, across time, wars, continents, and cultures, have common elements: narrative patterns, images, characters, themes, inner conflicts, and an overall ironic perspective. (3–4)

"Yankee Papa 13" belongs to these, too, as it translates the same basic premises into visual images.

The idea of "ironic perspective" is borrowed from Paul Fussell's (1975/2013) work on the narratives of the First World War, where it is remarked that "every war is ironic because every war is worse than expected" (7). It is, naturally, the rookie soldier who becomes the object of this irony, and it is his idealism and innocence that are crushed by the war experience. Herzog (2005) follows Fussell in distinguishing a basic three-part structure of a war narrative: the absurd and sinister preparation, the battle, and finally the change of setting and the moment of consideration, mediation and reconstruction; the finest stories contain all three (13–16; see also Fussell, 1975/2013, 3–35). Beyond the strictly literary realm, the best photography seems capable of capturing the same narrative transition, even in a single image: Horst Faas's mesmerizing portrait of a paratrooper (Photo 22), for example, is suggestive of the initial purity, even naivety of expectations, in the soldier's gentle features, peaceful expression, and the hint of a smile; the

impression is nevertheless disturbed immediately by the graffito, "war is hell" (a sentence that is itself a discourse of war storytelling), while the juxtaposition of the two brings some uneasiness, questions of what the man had seen or done to conclude his experience with these words. In a photographic narrative the three stages may be all the more visible, and so they are in "Yankee Papa 13." The first two, the preparation and the battle, are self-evident, while the third one is entailed in the last image, where there is a change of scenery (Farley moves to a room). Above all, however, the contemplation of the meaning of the event, which necessitates certain removal from it, is provided by the mediation of the camera and the photographer, and by the ordering done in the editing room at *Life*.

Moreover, further adapting Fussell's work, Herzog also identifies a separate universal theme of war stories, which he dubs "soldiers seeking control," and which, in his analysis, is inextricably linked to the overall irony. Importantly, "in these war stories, one recurring incident leading to a battlefield epiphany is a death recognition scene. Here, innocent soldiers suddenly perceive their inability to control their fate as revealed in their own mortality, the fragility of life in general" (Herzog 2005, 34–35; cf. Fussell 1975/2013, 36–38). As mentioned, "Yankee Papa 13," too, is structured around a death scene—the dead man is the other chopper's co-pilot, First Lieutenant James Magel—but it is also at this point that, as a narrative and as a photographic sequence, it becomes most interesting. The story is, admittedly, simple and unequivocal, even blatant in what it communicates: the two portraits of Farley, perhaps unpublished by *Life* precisely for this reason (Photo 5), appear almost a little too perfect to be true, a little too theatrical, almost staged. The story is satisfying exactly because it follows familiar patterns that may be unproblematically decoded and fit within the universal framework of war storytelling now so overexploited and predictable so as to seem trite and obvious. Even the once shocking *All Quiet on the Western Front*, nearing the hundredth anniversary of its publication, might read today as a book of clichés. Especially against some of the photography of the latter part of the war—losing in melodrama and panache what it gained in grit, earthy trauma, and also ambiguity—and the postwar literary and cinematic narratives, especially moral darknesses and anguishes of

the many artistic incarnations of the "Vietnam trip," "Yankee Papa 13" may seem to come out a lesser tale. Moreover, Fredric Jameson (1991) has famously suggested that the American war in Vietnam was a "postmodern war" (44), and in the context of postmodern(ist) shattering of perspectives, of postmodernist complexities, nuances, and ambiguities, Burrows's essay may indeed seem overtly modernist as a unified, consistent, "war-is-hell-but-rationally-so" narrative.

Nevertheless, the rejection of "Yankee Papa 13" as a valuable story for the reasons suggested above is symptomatic of a certain brand of cynicism that is all too easily embarrassed by all signs of sentimentality. In war photography, let alone strictly the images of combat, there is little room for clichés. If Burrows's editors made the story by selecting and sequencing individual pictures, it remains unquestionable that the events and experiences photographed are essentially true in that they did take place. The work of the editors, in that precise moment of history, certainly had the aim of limiting the scope of the "multiplicity of meanings" in photographs. Burrows's original idea, too, was to produce a photostory calculated toward defined goals. But perhaps "Yankee Papa 13"'s strength comes specifically from the fact that the photographer's plan fell through. It was a fortunate (so to speak) interlocking of coincidences that Burrows was shadowing Farley, as a model American kid trooper in a war that had not yet turned ugly, interested not so much in the action as in the man's day-to-day business, and that the man just happened to be involved in, to put it bluntly, a "death recognition scene." Such concurrence generated a series of photographs that are spectacularly truthful precisely because they were unexpected: spectacular because Burrows's engagement with Farley from the outset provided a narrative framework for the drama, truthful because the drama was unanticipated and so un-preconceived. As the photographer's son, Russell, said, his "father's pictures were seductive. People look at the pictures and say 'How beautiful,' and because they are beautiful they look at them longer. And it is only after a while that they understand the horror" (quoted in Moeller 1989, 404). Seen in this light, the simplicity of the storyline becomes a secondary issue, and the attention moves to the images' extraordinary candidness, which is their most profound merit.

That candidness is in large measure due to the photographer's spot-on choice of Farley, who turned out to be a gracious subject, giving all to Burrows's camera and establishing with it a very photogenic intimacy. His easy bearing in the early photographs is endearing, not out of the ordinary, and evoking an instant liking. It is in the later part of the essay, however, that Farley's full emotional charge as a subject comes through, as the viewer virtually *witnesses* his transformation in the course of "an emotional journey […] from grinning newcomer to devastated veteran" (Robertson 2006, 187). The transition that occurs as the images progress, again interpretable effortlessly as a young man's transformation, acquires depth simply through observation of Farley's face and the way it changes. Once more, the answer to the story's spell seems not to lie in what it tells, as from this point of view the narrative would turn out to be superficial, but rather in how it does it, in Burrows's skill to photograph Farley at moments that seem bare and essential.

The contrast—bringing into sharp focus the entirety of the transformation that occurs, the sudden maturity and manhood borne out under the worst circumstances—is nowhere as visible as between a pair of photos: on the one hand, the picture of Farley preparing for take-off, his face puppy-fat and his eyes big and shiny, and on the other, his expression, as captured on the cover image, caught mid-turn and mid-word,[6] of fear, shock, and urgency, all rolled into a look as expressive of the emotions experienced during combat as any. Of the two photographs of Farley immediately after one of the wounded soldiers dies, which *Life* chose not to carry, the close-up is almost shocking, perhaps the strongest image of the entire series (Photo 28). Its poignancy is its raw, almost vulgar, depiction of pain, the second-hand embarrassment that seeing it brings to the viewer: one senses that the portrait crosses the line between the representation of war and its effect on people, and the penetration into the recesses of the soul. In its absolute immersion in the moment of Farley's suffering, it becomes "a picture that shouldn't

[6] In *Life*, it was reported that what Farley was shouting at this point was, "My gun is jammed! Cover your side—I'll help with these guys!"; as Farley later clarified, what he was actually saying was, "Get me the first aid kit!" (Hendrickson 1997, 158).

be shown of an event that shouldn't have happened"[7]: people are rarely, if ever, photographed in this way, and this is why it is incredible that this image was taken. That it was speaks for its veracity, not conceit.

It is difficult to speculate why *Life* did not print it. One possibility is that "Yankee Papa 13" was still, after all, to be an essay promoting support for the war, and this image, as well as the one accompanying it, would do little to advance it. On the other hand, *Life* was not queasy about publishing photographs of weeping marines—it did so during the Korean War (Photo 13), it ran with the picture of Farley in the warehouse—even though such portrayal could be seen as very "unleatherneck." Farley, for one, some thirty years after the essay had appeared, admitted to still being somewhat embarrassed by it precisely for this reason (Hendrickson 1997, 132). It is also feasible, therefore, that the close-up's profound intimacy was deemed to be too much. Instead, the article's show-stealing piece in the magazine became the warehouse photo, and considering that the whole story plays out in Farley's face, it seems significant that here, in the finale, he hides it. Upon conclusion, the story may again be contemplated as a simple war narrative, a coming of age tale that is displayed in twenty-odd photographs, over a few pages. A detail, once recognized, reveals in how short a span of time the transformation occurred: in one of the first photographs, Farley is seen wearing a watch on mid-forearm, tanline visible on his exposed wrist, and a pencil tucked in a sleeve pocket. In the warehouse room, slumped over a stack of boxes, the watch, the tanline, the pencil are still all there, in those exact same positions.

"Yankee Papa 13" is, therefore, important not so much as a story—in this sense it is banal—but as a photographic story, because of the quality and profundity of the central images, their unique engagement with the essay's hero, the sheer fact that such a tale, heard and read so many times, is here captured so vividly and candidly. Even the best photograph certainly cannot say everything, but, as William Manchester (1989) wrote in discussing Magnum photojournalism,

[7] The quote here is borrowed from a comment on "Accidental Napalm Attack" in Hariman and Lucaites (2003, 41).

> the distinction between a picnic snapshot and a great photograph is not subtle. You can glance at the first and remain passive. Art, however, is never mere spectacle. It engages you. You are forced, by your own best instincts, to participate. [W]e are enriched by [photographers'] vision, by the strength of the bonds binding our Weltanschauung to the world which they stalked, searching for decisive moments. (46)

Already in 1954, during the First Indochina War, Robert Capa, freshly in Vietnam, recognized the photographic opportunities there, admitting that the war "had everything: great drama, great access, and above all, it placed great faces on the fighting" (quoted in Halberstam 2002, 9). His words ring true of "Yankee Papa 13," in which the meeting of a number of factors—Burrows's method and skill (the potential of which was enabled, it should not be forgotten, by Maximum Candor), the chemistry between Farley and the camera, the tragic unexpected event—resulted in a photoessay that, upon publication, elicited an emotional reaction and created some ripple. At the end of his tour, Farley returned home as a minor but somewhat recognizable hero (Hendrickson 1997, 137, 167–168). Before that, on May 7, 1965, *Life* printed a reader's letter: "Larry Burrows' photos are by far the most revealing and powerful that have come from Vietnam. He and *Life* have performed for American citizens a service fully as significant as the service of the men he photographed."

Another letter published in the same issue, however, was far less favorable. A disgruntled reader complained:

> I feel that your photographic coverage went beyond those limits laid down by the requirement to inform the public and transgressed laws of common decency. I am left with great pity for the dead copilot's parents who must now witness such blatant advertisement of their dead son.

The controversy of publishing photographs, not of a dead, but a dying man, was not lost on Burrows or his editors. Burrows wrote about Magel's death that he "tried to find a way in which to hide the pilot's face when the boys were working on him, feeling that should a photograph be used, it would be hard on the family" (quoted in Moeller 1989, 394). Later, he said that he

> was trying to take a shot of this guy who was dying in a helicopter. I never took [a close-up of] his face. I don't like making it too real. I've wondered about that point quite a lot. I think if the pictures are too terrible, people quickly turn over the page to avoid looking. So I try to shoot them so that people will look and feel, not revulsion, but an understanding of war. I was torn between being a photographer and the normal human feelings. It is not easy to photograph a pilot dying in a friend's arms and later to photograph the breakdown of the friend. I didn't know what to do. Was I simply capitalizing on someone else's grief? (quoted in Knightley 2003, chap. 17)

It was eventually decided at *Life* that the photographs would be printed with the face of the dead man covered (see comments to Photo 4). In its frank depiction of death, as well as in some other respects, and despite the references to the legacies of the previous wars as well as to the canon of combat storytelling, "Yankee Papa 13" did, in fact, turn out to presage certain later developments in the Vietnam press coverage. Firstly, on the purely formal level, the series has a technological setting, and Burrows's choice of a helicopter squadron to photograph foreshadows later fascinations with the chopper and other high-tech equipment (or, as in the case of Jones Griffiths, revulsion to it). Indeed, Burrows's next project would be "Air War" (see Photo 27).

Secondly, the tradition of focusing almost exclusively on the American soldiers had been in place for long, and would remain there for the rest of the war in Vietnam, but in "Yankee Papa 13" the absence of the Vietnamese is the more surprising as it renders the events in the photographs quite purposeless: Farley's unit was detailed to ferry ARVN troops to a landing zone outside of Da Nang, but the only photographs in *Life* indicating their presence show them jumping out of the chopper, with their heads back to the camera or at angles that make their faces easy to miss. This lack is remedied in the album version of the narrative, where a picture of a line of the South Vietnamese soldiers boarding the Yankee Papa 13 is inserted, but even there a reader can only learn from the caption that they are, in fact, Vietnamese. In this significant absence, "Yankee Papa 13" anticipates something of the victimhood discourses of the 1980s, which would forever solidify the

American veteran as the most important, almost exclusive, victim of the Vietnam war (Musiał 2020).

Finally, Michael Sherer (1989) conducted an interesting analysis of the photography of Vietnam (in *Time*, *Life* and *Newsweek*), in which 286 images were tagged according to a number of factors and then pooled to reveal certain correspondences to the shifts in public opinion. "Yankee Papa 13" came out in the period identified by Sherer as that of high public support of the war (January 1965–July 1967), and Burrows's photographs are in line with some of the findings. For example, the majority of pictures run within this timeframe placed the emphasis on the U.S. forces (as opposed to the period after the Tet Offensive, when most of the photos were of the allies, the South Vietnamese). Images shot from a closer perspective were also more common during this time. More interesting, however, are the points in which "Yankee Papa 13" does not fit with the trends. At this "supportive" stage, photographs that implied relative safety were more prevalent, as were pictures of non-combat conditions; few showed life threatening situations or combat fatigue (Sherer 1989, 392–394). The tendency to publish the latter kind of images steadily picked up and continued, but Burrows and Farley are right there at the beginning, and with a bang.

This brings the discussion back to the issue of the death shown in "Yankee Papa 13." Moeller (1989) observed that

> much of the power of the […] article came from the inexorable progress of the illustrations. The previous wars' photographs of combat death had pictured men who had died well before the camera had snapped their image; in other pictures, in other essays, the deaths were *faits accomplis* […]. [N]o published photographs from the world wars or Korea brought their readers into the life of the troops and made their viewers watch the day-long, step-by-step events leading to a man's death. (395)

Moeller also noted that the determined emphasis on Farley had the effect of urging identification with him, the horrified witness, rather than the dead man. Moreover, she continued, the sharp, contrasting light of the black-and-white cover photograph, and the focus entirely on Farley's face, made the recognition of the source of his distress—the

soldier expiring on the chopper floor—more difficult and delayed. An interesting consequence of this shift of personal emphasis is a doubling of the act of witnessing, even as the reader's reaction to the death is channeled through Farley's, and this sudden, unprepared-for change of perspective (unprepared-for because the mission was to be an easy one, and no one expected casualties), in turn complicates Burrows's pro-war plans for the story. In a culture with military traditions and perceptions thereof shaped by the Second World War, after all, an American death in combat could still possibly be taken as a patriotic sacrifice, but in "Yankee Papa 13" the negotiation of the event through Farley's experience results in equal horrification, not a sense of glorification.

Moeller (1989) called this a "barely audible voice of protest" (395), a complaint that would grow louder as the war continued with no apparent end in sight. A somewhat similar argument was put forward in a recent appraisal of "Yankee Papa 13" by Martin Heusser (2019), who saw the photoessay's greatest strength in the supposed chasm that it opened between the government's official version of the war, and the reality of it as lived by actual American soldiers:

> What is of particular interest for a discussion of the YP13 article is that the agents in this military drama are located precisely in the overlapping zone between official and vernacular expression. […] It would be tempting to read Burrows' piece solely as a counter-memory—as an alternative way of memorialising the war, a powerful deviating and deviant version of American twentieth-century history which successfully competes with and thus relativises official government accounts of the course of events in Vietnam. (203)

Heusser points out several ways in which "Yankee Papa 13" subverted the narrative of the war spun in 1965 by the White House and the Pentagon: it drew attention to an American defeat and death at a time when any shortcomings and failures of U.S. policy and strategy in Vietnam were being held back; and it did away with two major misconceptions resulting from that narrative: one about the supposed ineffectiveness of the communist forces, and the other about the supposed superiority of the American air war waged from helicopters. What Burrows revealed in his essay was just how vulnerable the craft were on both

touchdown and takeoff. These are important points, and in any case it is difficult to speculate about the kind of reception "Yankee Papa 13" received among the readers of *Life*, and what its true significance as a commentary on the unfolding conflict was. Certainly the photoessay came so early into the "shooting" stage of the American war—a mere month or so after the first regular U.S. troops had even put their feet on the Vietnamese soil—that claiming that it was radical in its sabotage of the government line is perhaps going too far. The "real" American war was only just beginning, after all, and however optimistic the misinformed American public could have been about its future outcomes, certainly an expectation of casualties in an armed conflict had had to be there. It is entirely possible that some read the photostory of Lieutenant Magel's death, and of James Farley's pain, much as the Buna Beach pictures had been received back in the Second World War: as evidence not of a "senselessness" of the loss of American lives, but rather of the tragedy being in the final balance justified by what was perceived at the time as a righteous intervention or even rightful fulfilment of America's mission.[8]

Heusser's interpretation of "Yankee Papa 13" is also contradicted by Kennedy (2016), who instead emphasized the "limitations of [Burrows's] 'compassionate vision'" (33), and argued that the photographer never wholly broke away with a certain hawkishness, at least not in his work. Comparing Burrows's body of work with that of Jones Griffiths, Kennedy found that whereas the latter was interested in underscoring the systemic nature of the American destruction wrought in Vietnam, his work inherently politicized, Burrows's intention, at least in his early stories, was rarely to offer a significant critique of the U.S. policy or

[8] See Hellmann (1986) about the role the frontier mythology and its attendant concepts of American mission worldwide played in the waging of the war. Hellmann's study is a classic in literary and cultural Vietnam War scholarship, though its failure is a certain myopia that does not translate the analysis of the formulations of mythology and rhetoric into a critique that would take into account ideology, geopolitics, and economy. Partial polemics with Hellmann's non-materialist stance can be found in Musiał (2020, 50–52) and Neilson (1998, 100–110). A more political, and decidedly more critical, take on the transmutations of the frontier mythology in the Vietnam War can be found in Drinnon (1997) and, of course, Slotkin (1998).

draw a direct line between the actions of the United States and their consequences for the lives of people in Indochina. Burrows's goal, Kennedy concludes, was always to create "compassionate" narratives about individual suffering, the moralities at their cores perhaps more complex, but for that reason also more ambiguous, their concerns and morals more universal—but because of that, their criticisms less acute. This is a persuasive stance, as there is nothing inherently anti-Vietnam-War in "Yankee Papa 13," except the possibility—but not the insistence or requirement—to read the story as a denunciation of the horrors of war in general.

The tiny voice of complaint is, nonetheless, present in "Yankee Papa 13," along the still unproblematized heroism (that would become problematized most apparently only after the war, in the books and films), along the heavy implication of psychological toll and trauma indebted to the Korean War photographers, along the storyline of loss of innocence and of coming of age. Even if the story's value is in its drama and documentary nature, and in the skill with which it was shot, and not in a meaningful commentary about the U.S. presence in Indochina that it largely fails to offer, it still stands out as one of the first meaningful American narratives about the war in Vietnam, indebted to modernist sentiments about warfare though it may be. There is some gloomy portentousness in the essay's final picture, as Farley's tears and grief—as explained in the article—are not only for Magel, but also for the wounded pilot whom Farley thought he had failed to save; in that room, he does not yet know that man was soon rescued and survived, and as he cries he is at once the boy of a few pictures before, an American kid from Arizona (where John Wayne the cowboy could once have roamed), an American soldier in Vietnam (and a marine helicopter machine gunner no less) who has just witnessed his first death, a hero who failed (or so he thinks), and already a Vietnam veteran.

This overlapping of motifs and influences, at a time when America's bad war was just beginning to unravel and may have not yet seemed so bad, makes Burrows's photoessay an interesting document, both historically and artistically. It is a story about those who live through the deaths of others. By being placed somewhere in the "boonies" outside of Da Nang, not in a battle but in the least significant of skirmishes—this,

after all, is not Iwo Jima or Normandy, it is not even an Ia Drang—and by being presented as part of a routine experience of the soldiers newly deployed to Indochina, the death in "Yankee Papa 13" might seem as "meaningless" as the unwon war itself would turn out to be, and so is Farley's anguish. Magel's fate could be that of any of the 242 soldiers commemorated in *Life*'s "One Week Toll," the collective elegy still chills blood, as page after page filled with photographs of dead boys and men is being turned. Burrows's story already contains the kernel of complaint that explodes, four years later, in "One Week's Toll": James Farley is already mourning, already shielding his face away.

These omens become evident only in hindsight, of course, and only to those who look for them. Perhaps the most poignant conclusion to be drawn from Burrows's essay is precisely that a story like this one is ultimately framed by memory: only from our vantage point here in the future can we see the "meaninglessness" of the deaths in Vietnam. It is also symptomatic that, as far as cultural memory goes, photographs like those of Farley have been eclipsed completely by the iconicity of images of suffering, or dying, Vietnamese civilians. An important document in the tradition of war and combat photography, and certainly that of the Vietnam War, "One Ride With Yankee Papa 13" is testament today to a point in American history at which the imagery of American war begins to transform, and the G.I.s and an Old Glory on Mount Suribachi are being replaced with terrified naked children running from accidental death by napalm down a dirt road.

Conclusion

An interpretation of a photoessay like Larry Burrows's "One Ride With Yankee Papa 13" requires that it is placed in a number of contexts, the overlaying of which allows for a better understanding of the form and meaning of the story. Burrows, "both ruthless and humane in his art" (Hendrickson 1997, 137), must have been under some influence at least of the work done by photographers in Korea, such as the photoessays by David Douglas Duncan, consummate in their gloomy drama which "Yankee Papa 13" matches. It was in the signature close-up shot of the Korean War that the soldiers' emotions and pain were captured finally in full vividness and gravity, and the pictures of James Farley's face belong to this tradition. But the heritage goes back. The favored themes of the photography from Korea find some precedent in the pictures taken during the Second World War, especially in the Pacific. Burrows's narrative owes its conception and skeletal framework to the conventions of the photography of the Second World War and its frequent emphasis on the routine experiences of the American soldiers in the field. Besides, it would be impossible to ignore the impact of the century's greatest war on correspondence and photojournalism. The images of the Second World War, in their turn, drew from the more modest legacy of the Great War, but are indebted, above all, to the two fundamental items in the history of war photography, namely, Robert Capa's "Falling Soldier" and, before that, Matthew Brady's coverage of the battlefields of the American Civil War.

Furthermore, if "Yankee Papa 13" harks back quite openly to the photographies of previous wars, it is because of the timing of its publication, in the political and ideological ferment of the mid-1960s, with the support for the involvement at its strongest and, just as importantly,

with the John Wayne/Second World War ideals still intact. As such, Burrows's essay, although picking up early on the allure of the helicopter as the fetish of the war, seems to stand in contrast to the later Vietnam War photography that would more easily fit within the spectrum of responses to the conflict found in popular culture and literature, and the many heart-of-darkness trips reenacted there. The profound transformation of the image of the American soldier that occurred during the decade of the war seems to be more discernible in Burrows's later projects as well as in the work of such photographers as Philip Jones Griffiths, with his interest in the civilians and the antagonism toward the G.I. and his general, or the psychedelic, rock-and-roll Tim Page.

Instead, "Yankee Papa 13," as a narrative, remains within the well-trod boundaries of the classic war tale. In these photographs, war turns to hell and innocence is corrupted, a boy becomes man; the true value of the story, however, is visual, and rests with the skill (and courage) of the photographer, the luckiest choice of a protagonist, the tragic coincidence of a "milk run mission" turned bad, and finally with the extraordinary photographic candidness and photogenic chemistry that the mixing of the three produced. It is a good story and in some particulars, in retrospect, it appears to have symbolically prefigured the eventual meanings, and meaninglessness, of the war in Vietnam, especially in its unprecedented treatment of death in combat and in the portrayal of those who live through it.

As a narrative, the photoessay also warrants some caution in considering its construction, crafted carefully in the editing rooms at *Life* magazine. In this respect, its interpretation becomes a useful exercise in evaluating some of the arguments made by the critics of photography. The choice and sequencing of the individual photographs fashioned them into a meaningful and coherent, if simplistic, tale of a more or less defined moral tinge, thus radically reducing the multiplicity of meanings that perhaps could otherwise be extracted from the rolls of film Burrows spent when following Farley around Da Nang. The selection of readers' letters in response to "Yankee Papa 13," printed in a subsequent issue of *Life*, speaks of a range of political stances, not of a questioning of the essential meaning of the story.

But such arguments can only go as far. As with much of good war photography that turns small events and small tragedies into meaningful, even symbolic, moments, the aim of the image perhaps does not always need to be to tell histories or alter meanings. In such instances, the aim may rather be to tell stories that talk of war, even if the tale is as subjective as a written one, its perspective inevitably split. In this light, the mapping of contexts that places "Yankee Papa 13" in space and time may be removed, and the layers of intervention into the story stripped, and one is still left with black and white photographs of a dead man on a helicopter floor and a boy looking on in horror.

Appendix
Links to the Photographs

Photo 1. PFC Joe Dunford. Korea. 1950. Photograph by David Douglas Duncan. Source: http://nedforney.com/index.php/2018/10/20/general-dunford-father-korean-war-chosin/.

Photo 2. Corporal Leonard Hayworth. 1950. Korea. Photograph by David Douglas Duncan.
The photograph was published in *Life* on September 18, 1950, on p. 41: https://books.google.pl/books?id=8koEAAAAMBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.
Duncan's photographs are archived at the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin. The Center has published this image at: https://sites.utexas.edu/ransomcentermagazine/2014/01/16/war-photography/david-douglas-duncan-corporal-machine-gunner-leonard-hayworth-upon-learning-there-were-no-more-grenades-ammunition-from-his-machine-gun-reinforcements-to-take-the-place-of-the-wounded-and-d/.

Photo 3. Captain Francis "Ike" Fenton. Korea. Photograph by David Douglas Duncan.
The photograph was published in *Life* on September 18, 1950, on p. 46: https://books.google.pl/books?id=8koEAAAAMBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.
Life.com has republished the photograph at: https://www.life.com/history/david-douglas-duncan-korean-war-classic-photo/.

Photo 4. "One Ride with Yankee Papa 13." Photographs by Larry Burrows.
The photoessay was published in *Life* on April 16, 1965, on pp. cover + 24–34C: https://books.google.pl/books?id=RlMEAAAAMBAJ&pr

intsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

The photographs in the story have been republished by Life.com: https://www.life.com/history/vietnam-photo-essay-larry-burrows-one-ride-with-yankee-papa-13/.

Several photographs in the story had been altered by the editors at *Life* in 1965, out of respect for Lt. Magel, the casualty on the floor of YP13; in the photographs on pp. 32–33 his face is obscured by airbrushed-in bandages, a flak jacket, and the like. Original unaltered versions of some of the photographs are available in the *Life* Images archive hosted by Google: http://images.google.com/hosted/life/e3215737fff5f7d3.html; http://images.google.com/hosted/life/a11c6603e8c9eb3c.html.

Photo 5. Lance corporal James C. Farley. Vietnam. 1965. Photograph by Larry Burrows.

The photograph, not published in the original story but now part of the *Life* Images archive hosted by Google, can be viewed at: http://images.google.com/hosted/life/5bf4163ce91b4e80.html.

Photo 6. Lance corporal James C. Farley. Vietnam. 1965. Photograph by Larry Burrows.

Life published a cropped version of the story's final photograph. The full-size image can be viewed in the *Life* Images archive hosted by Google: http://images.google.com/hosted/life/92480c75d198d89f.html.

Photo 7. British soldiers. France. 1917. Photograph by Ernest Brooks.

The photograph is published by the Imperial War Museum: https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205193431.

Photo 8. A German prisoner of war. 1917. Photograph by Ernest Brooks.

The photograph is published by the National Library of Scotland: https://digital.nls.uk/first-world-war-official-photographs/archive/74546004#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=224&xywh=-1161%2C-179%2C4820%2C3573.

Photo 9. U.S. soldiers. Philippines. 1944. Photograph by W. Eugene Smith.

The photograph was published in *Life* on January 22, 1945, on p. 24: https://books.google.pl/books?id=KVMEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA19&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false.

The photograph can also be viewed in the *Life* Images archive hosted by Google: http://images.google.com/hosted/life/c381dc748c849960.html.

Photo 10. U.S. marine. Mariana Islands. 1944. Photograph by W. Eugene Smith. The photograph can be viewed in the *Life* Images archive hosted by Google: http://images.google.com/hosted/life/90f6720f3d23714e.html.

Photo 11. Corporal Leonard Hayworth. Korea. 1950. Photograph by David Douglas Duncan.
The photograph was published in *Life* on October 9, 1950, on p. 31: https://books.google.pl/books?id=9UsEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA29&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false.

Photo 12. U.S. marine. Korea. 1950. Photograph by David Douglas Duncan.
The photograph was published in *Life* on October 9, 1950, on p. 32: https://books.google.pl/books?id=9UsEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA29&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false.

Photo 13. U.S. soldiers. Korea. 1950. Photograph by Al Chang.
The photograph is available at Wikipedia: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:KoreanWarFallenSoldier1.jpg, where its source is provided at https://www.flickr.com/photos/imcom-korea/2920380608/in/set-72157607808414225/.

Photo 14. "One Week's Dead."
The photographic tribute was published by *Life* on June 27, 1969, on pp. 20–31: https://books.google.pl/books?id=pE8EAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA20&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false.

Photo 15. U.S. marines. Vietnam. 1965. Photograph by Paul Schutzer.
The photograph was published in *Life* on November 26, 1965, on pp. 50–51: https://books.google.pl/books?id=FEwEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA50&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false.
The photograph can also be viewed in the *Life* Images archive hosted by Google: http://images.google.com/hosted/life/73eee681f86c0bf1.html.

Photo 16. "Into the Jaws of Death." France. 1944. Photograph by Robert F. Sargent.
The photograph is available at Wikipedia: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Into_the_Jaws_of_Death_23-0455M_edit.jpg.

Photo 17. U.S. marine. Vietnam. 1967. Photograph by David Douglas Duncan.
The photograph was published in *Life* on October 27, 1967, on the cover: https://books.google.pl/books?id=SEkEAAAAMBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

Photo 18. U.S. marine. Vietnam. 1968. Photograph by David Douglas Duncan. The photograph was published in *Life* on February 23, 1968, on p. 28C: https://books.google.pl/books?id=c0oEAAAAMBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

Photo 19. Vietnamese patients. Vietnam. 1967. Photograph by Philip Jones Griffiths.
The photograph is published by the Philip Jones Griffiths Foundation: http://philipjonesgriffiths.org/timeline/quaker-amputee-center-quang-ngai-south-vietnam/.

Photo 20. U.S. soldier. Vietnam. 1968. Photograph by Philip Jones Griffiths.
The photograph is published by the Philip Jones Griffiths Foundation: http://philipjonesgriffiths.org/timeline/south-vietnam-vietnam-war-the-battle-for-saigon/.

Photo 21. U.S. marine. Vietnam. 1968. Photograph by Larry Burrows.
The photograph can be viewed in the *Life* Images archive hosted by Google: http://images.google.com/hosted/life/50b6271aabff8c81.html.

Photo 22. U.S. soldier. Vietnam. 1965. Photograph by Horst Faas.
The photograph is hosted by AP Images, where a watermarked thumbnail can be viewed: http://www.apimages.com/metadata/Index/Associated-Press-International-News-Vietnam-VIE-/c2b1ed60eee6da11af9f0014c2589dfb.

Photo 23. Medic James E. Callahan. Vietnam. 1967. Photograph by Henri Huet.
The photographs are hosted by AP Images, where watermarked thumbnails can be viewed:
http://www.apimages.com/metadata/Index/Watchf-AP-I-VNM-APHS-VIETNAM-WAR/3e2ccaa01e8b4c57afe403de49bd717f/4/0.
http://www.apimages.com/metadata/Index/Associated-Press-International-News-Vietnam-MED-/b230937960e5da11af9f0014c2589dfb/5/0.
http://www.apimages.com/metadata/Index/Associated-Press-International-News-Vietnam-AID-/89e4f54061e5da11af9f0014c2589dfb/6/0.
A couple of the photographs from this series have also been published on the AP Images blog in a tribute to Henri Huet: https://apimagesblog.com/historical/2021/1/21/remembering-henri-gilles-huet-1927-1971.

Photo 24. Pfc. Thomas Cole. Vietnam. 1966. Photographs by Henri Huet.
Photographs of Cole were published in *Life* on February 11, 1966, on pp. cover + 24D–25: https://books.google.pl/books?id=JUwEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA35&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false.
The cover image has also been republished on the AP Images blog in a tribute to Henri Huet: https://apimagesblog.com/historical/2021/1/21/remembering-henri-gilles-huet-1927-1971.

Photo 25. "Marines Blunt the Invasion from the North." Photographs by Larry Burrows and Co Rentmeester.
The photoessay was published in *Life* on October 28, 1966, on pp. cover + 30–39: https://books.google.pl/books?id=-lIEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA30&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false.
The photograph on pp. 36–37, was cropped by *Life* upon publication. The full picture, with photojournalist Catherine Leroy visible taking pictures to the side, can be viewed in the *Life* Images archive hosted by Google: http://images.google.com/hosted/life/b434c7f7a4612e2d.html.
All photographs in the Operation Prairie series have been republished at Life.com: https://www.life.com/history/life-behind-the-picture-larry-burrows-reaching-out-vietnam-1966/.

Photo 26. Gunnery sergeant Jeremiah Purdie and other marines. Vietnam. 1966. Photograph by Larry Burrows.
The photograph was published in *Life* on Feb 26, 1971, on pp. 40–41: https://books.google.pl/books?id=kVMEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA34&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false.
The photograph can also be viewed in the *Life* Images archive hosted by Google: http://images.google.com/hosted/life/81efd1973e1b843b.html.
All photographs in the Operation Prairie series have been republished at Life.com: https://www.life.com/history/life-behind-the-picture-larry-burrows-reaching-out-vietnam-1966/.

Photo 27. U.S. crew aboard a C-47 aircraft. Vietnam. 1966. Photograph by Larry Burrows.
The photograph was published by *Life* on September 9, 1966, on pp. 52–53 (Google Books pagination): https://books.google.com/books?id=21UEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA44&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false.

The photograph can also be viewed in the *Life* Images archive hosted by Google: http://images.google.com/hosted/life/adc6d7487611af45.html.

Photo 28. Lance corporal James C. Farley. Vietnam. 1965. Photograph by Larry Burrows.

This photograph was not published in the original story in *Life*, but in the album of Burrows' photography from Vietnam (Burrows, 2020). I was unable to find the photograph on Life.com or in the *Life* Images archive; it can, however, be viewed at the top of this blog post: https://warriorgirl3.wordpress.com/2015/02/23/yankee-papa-13/, or here: https://dogatemytank.tumblr.com/post/8709139256/larry-burrows-1965-lcpl-james-c-farley-of-the.

(The *Life* watermark on the image would suggest that the photo *does* exist in the *Life* Images archive, but the website's rudimentary search options make it almost impossible to find photographs there.)

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Index

Aleksandra Musiał

"One Ride": Larry Burrows and the Contexts of the Vietnam War Photography

Summary

The purpose of this book is to analyze a photoessay from the American war in Vietnam by photojournalist Larry Burrows that appeared in *Life* magazine in April 1965. The photoessay, titled "One Ride with Yankee Papa 13," consists of photographs of American marines in Vietnam and tells the story of a tragedy that occurred when one of the American helicopters was shot down by Viet Cong fighters. In the book, I situate "Yankee Papa 13" within the historical and cultural contexts of photojournalism and American narratives of the Vietnam War in order to provide a comprehensive interpretation of the photoessay. The central thread of the considerations undertaken in the monograph is the question of the image of the American soldier and its transformation against the background of the history of American wars.

After the introduction, where among other things, the story of "One Ride with Yankee Papa 13" is told, the first chapter presents the history of war photojournalism, with particular emphasis on the conflicts in which the United States participated. For example, the chapter discusses the conventions of American-centric photography during World War II and the Korean War in order to chart trends that would affect reporters photographing the Vietnam War in the future. The second part of the chapter is devoted to a consideration of the nature of photography and its relationship to the ways in which photographs, especially documentary photographs, are interpreted and, by extension, the function of photography, including war photography, in culture. The discussion is based on texts by Susan Sontag, Roland Barthes, and John Berger, among others. One of the issues discussed in this part of the book is, for example, the iconicity of certain images, that is, their status as symbols of the conflict they depict in relation to their ideological contexts and readings.

The second chapter discusses the specifics of war correspondence from Vietnam, and, in particular, the specifics of photojournalism of that conflict. The first part of the chapter outlines the historical context and circumstances

of the work of journalists sent to Vietnam by U.S. agencies and media, and the ways in which these circumstances influenced the work of reporters and photographers. The second part of the chapter focuses on the conventions and trends of the Vietnam War photography and the place it occupies in the American narrative of the war. The work of reporters such as Philip Jones Griffiths, David Douglas Duncan, and Tim Page is discussed here, with particular attention given to photographs of American soldiers and their interpretations in the context of the overall image of this figure in American culture.

Chapter three deals with several interrelated themes. First, the transformation of the image of the American soldier as a result of the Vietnam War is discussed. To analyze this phenomenon, I use the key metaphor that the figure of John Wayne—symbol of the disillusionment and bitterness of Americans sent to fight in Vietnam—represents in the American narrative about this conflict. Thus, the essential threads of the analysis, that is, the comparison of representations and perceptions of World War II in American culture with those of the Vietnam War, come together in this section of the book. Another key discourse about the latter in U.S. culture, discussed in chapter three, is the "heart of darkness." As with Wayne, the chapter briefly presents examples of literary and other cultural texts that frame the American experience in Vietnam in such an interpretive framework, designed to reveal some of the meanings of the conflict for Americans and their culture. The chapter also deals with the theme of irony as seen by Paul Fussell, that is, his model of war narratives according to a three-part structure in which the key moment of "death recognition"—seeing the death of a comrade-in-arms by a soldier-witness—is crucial. I will also briefly touch upon the connections between Fussell's theory and certain currents of representations of the Vietnam War in American literature and cinema, namely, the trend of realism/naturalism growing out of modernist war narratives.

Having thus outlined the major strands in the American narrative of the Vietnam War in various types of cultural texts, the second part of the chapter focuses specifically on Larry Burrows, his work in Vietnam, and "Yankee Papa 13." The analysis of the photoessay in the light of the contexts outlined in the book allows us to discuss its historical, cultural, and artistic value, and its contribution not only to the broader American narrative about the Vietnam War, but also to the aforementioned transformation of the image of the American soldier.

Most of the photographs discussed in the monograph, authored by Larry Burrows and other photographers, were published in *Life* magazine, the full archive of which is freely available on Google Books. The book thus includes

a list of links to all the *Life* articles discussed and to individual images available in other free online archives.

The book ends with a conclusion that ties together all the threads taken up in the book, a bibliography, a list of links to the discussed photographs, and an index.

Aleksandra Musiał

"One Ride": Larry Burrows i konteksty fotografii wojennej z Wietnamu

Streszczenie

Celem książki jest analiza fotoeseju autorstwa Larry'ego Burrowsa z czasów amerykańskiej interwencji w Wietnamie, który ukazał się w magazynie *Life* w kwietniu 1965 roku. Fotoesej, noszący tytuł „One Ride with Yankee Papa 13", składa się ze zdjęć amerykańskich *marines* w Wietnamie i opowiada historię tragedii, która rozegrała się, gdy jeden z amerykańskich helikopterów został zestrzelony przez bojowników Wietkongu. W książce wpisuję „Yankee Papa 13" w konteksty historyczne i kulturowe fotoreportażu oraz w amerykańskie narracje o wojnie w Wietnamie, aby móc przeprowadzić kompleksową interpretację wybranego fotoeseju. Centralnym wątkiem rozważań podjętych w monografii jest kwestia wizerunku amerykańskiego żołnierza oraz jego przemiany na tle historii wojen, w które zaangażowały się Stany Zjednoczone.

Po wstępie, w którym między innymi opowiedziana jest historia „One Ride with Yankee Papa 13", w rozdziale pierwszym nakreślona jest historia fotoreportażu wojennego, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem konfliktów, w których brały udział Stany Zjednoczone. Rozdział ten omawia na przykład konwencje amerykanocentrycznej fotografii z czasów drugiej wojny światowej oraz wojny w Korei, zaznaczając trendy, które wpłynęły na pracę reporterów fotografujących wojnę w Wietnamie. Druga część rozdziału poświęcona jest rozważaniom o naturze fotografii oraz jej związkom ze sposobami interpretacji zdjęć, zwłaszcza dokumentalnych, a co za tym idzie – funkcji fotografii, w tym wojennej, w kulturze. Podstawę dyskusji stanowią między innymi teksty Susan Sontag, Rolanda Barthes'a i Johna Bergera. Jednym z zagadnień omawianych w tej części książki jest na przykład ikoniczność niektórych fotografii, mianowicie ich status symbolu konfliktu, który przedstawiają, wobec ich ideologicznych ukontekstowień i odczytań.

Rozdział drugi omawia specyfikę korespondencji wojennej z Wietnamu, a w szczególności specyfikę fotoreportażu obrazującego konflikt. W pierwszej części rozdziału zarysowany jest kontekst historyczny oraz uwarunkowania

pracy dziennikarzy wysłanych do Wietnamu przez amerykańskie agencje i media oraz jak okoliczności te wpływały na prace reporterów i fotografów. Druga część rozdziału poświęcona jest konwencjom i trendom fotografii z Wietnamu oraz miejscu, jakie zajmuje ona w amerykańskiej narracji o tej wojnie. Omawiane są tutaj prace takich reporterów jak Philip Jones Griffiths, David Douglas Duncan czy Tim Page, a szczególna uwaga poświęcona jest zdjęciom amerykańskich żołnierzy oraz ich interpretacjom w kontekście ogólnego wizerunku tej postaci w amerykańskiej kulturze.

Rozdział trzeci dotyczy kilku powiązanych ze sobą wątków. Po pierwsze, omówiona jest transformacja wizerunku żołnierza amerykańskiego na skutek wojny w Wietnamie. Do analizy tego zjawiska wykorzystuję kluczową metaforę, którą w amerykańskiej narracji o konflikcie wietnamskim jest postać Johna Wayne'a – symbol rozczarowania i rozgoryczenia Amerykanów wysłanych do Wietnamu. W ten sposób w tej części książki łączą się zasadnicze wątki analizy, mianowicie porównanie przedstawień i wyobrażeń o drugiej wojnie światowej w amerykańskiej kulturze z tymi o wojnie w Wietnamie. Kolejnym kluczowym dyskursem dotyczącym tej ostatniej w kulturze USA, omówionym w rozdziale trzecim, jest „jądro ciemności". Tak jak w przypadku Wayne'a, rozdział omawia pokrótce przykłady tekstów literackich i innych tekstów kultury, które wpisują amerykańskie doświadczenie w Wietnamie w takie właśnie ramy interpretacyjne, mające objawić pewne znaczenia tego konfliktu dla Amerykanów i ich kultury. W rozdziale podjęty jest również temat ironii w ujęciu Paula Fussella, tj. model narracji wojennych wedle trzyczęściowej struktury, w której kluczowy jest moment „rozpoznania śmierci" (doświadczenia śmierci towarzysza broni) przez żołnierza-świadka. Pokrótce poruszone są też związki teorii Fussella z pewnymi nurtami przedstawień wojny w Wietnamie w amerykańskiej literaturze i kinie, czyli z wyrastającym z modernistycznych narracji wojennych nurtem realizmu/naturalizmu.

Zarysowawszy tym samym najważniejsze wątki w amerykańskiej narracji o wojnie w Wietnamie w różnego typu tekstach kultury, druga część rozdziału skupia się na Larrym Burrowsie, jego pracy w Wietnamie oraz na „Yankee Papa 13". Analiza fotoeseju w świetle zarysowanych w książce kontekstów pozwala omówić jego wartość historyczną, kulturową i artystyczną oraz jego wkład nie tylko w szeroko pojętą amerykańską narrację o konflikcie w Wietnamie, lecz także we wspomnianą wcześniej transformację wizerunku amerykańskiego żołnierza.

Większość omawianych w monografii zdjęć – autorstwa Larry'ego Burrowsa i innych fotografów – została opublikowana w magazynie *Life*, którego pełne archiwum dostępne jest nieodpłatnie w serwisie Google Books. Książka za-

wiera zatem listę linków do wszystkich omawianych artykułów z *Life* oraz do pojedynczych zdjęć dostępnych w innych darmowych archiwach online.

Książka kończy się konkluzją, która łączy wszystkie podjęte w niej wątki, bibliografią, listą linków do omawianych fotografii oraz indeksem.

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