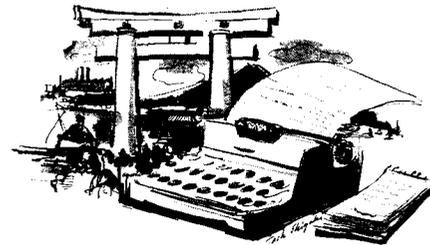


Press Freedom Vs. Army Regulations



ALLEN RAYMOND

A NEW SET of regulations governing the accreditation of war correspondents to our military commands overseas and their operations in the field was drafted not long ago by the Defense Department. According to Senator Pat McCarran (D., Nevada), this new code, which is to go into effect this year, "so impinged upon human liberties and human rights" that it should have been referred for possible revision to the Senate Judiciary Committee, of which he is chairman.

"I hope that members of the press will read these regulations carefully, so they will get some idea what they may be up against if their duties take them afield with the Armed Forces," the Senator said in an interview with the United Press. "If . . . a correspondent should be arrested . . . under [this code] he cannot be admitted to bond or brought before a grand jury for indictment, nor does he have any unrestricted right of appeal on conviction by the court of military appeals." The Senator is gravely concerned because correspondents have been made subject to military law when serving with our troops overseas.

I read the Senator's grave warning at first with some bewilderment and then with a series of chuckles. I happen to have been a war correspondent, serving with several branches of U.S. and other armed forces in combat areas for several years. I had always supposed myself to be subject to martial law, since no other American law rules in a combat area where American troops are fighting.

Several times during those years I

heard that one or another of my fellow correspondents had been threatened with court-martial. I never heard of anyone actually being tried, however, by any military court, even though it seems to me now that possibly a few of my colleagues should have been.

But as an ex-war correspondent I have followed Senator McCarran's advice. I have read this new code a half dozen times, and have checked on its contents with some top-flight newspapermen who as Reserve officers helped to frame it, and with other correspondents and with officers in the Pentagon.

Classification vs. Curiosity

Probably the new code is as fair a compromise as can be reached at this moment between military and civilian minds. But it still seems to me to hold

several provisos that are completely unrealistic in the light of my wartime experience—some fantastic and funny, and others absolutely contrary to the public interest.

Take this one, for instance: Correspondents "are expected . . . to refrain . . . from discussing or soliciting information known to be classified." In my view, any correspondent once accredited to our armed forces after receiving the approval, as he must, of five security agencies would be derelict in his duty to his employers if he did not find out all he could about what was going on all around him that might conceivably be in the public interest. Just because some Army officer has momentarily classified some fact as SECRET certainly should not halt the normal operation of a reporter's curiosity. If Army officers really expect reporters to refrain from asking all questions that seem to them pertinent, they are going to be grievously disappointed—under this new code or any other under which nonmilitary reporters work in the field.

Some officers of the armed services, in dealing with a great many matters having nothing whatever to do with national security, have taken the attitude that these are none of the public's business. They have tried on occasion, for instance, to keep from newspaper readers the price they pay for military supplies, which is certainly the public's business.

Correspondents who have long dealt with military officers could fill volumes with instances of the abuse of the secrecy power. Recently I heard of one



such incident from friends of mine who had been reporters at Allied headquarters in Tokyo.

Secret Secretaries

On January 29, 1952, Irving R. Levine, a correspondent for the National Broadcasting Company, dug up a story about how the Far East Air Force headquarters was circumventing restrictions issued by Washington in the interest of economy to prevent the hiring of superfluous civilian white-collar workers in the overseas military establishment. The brass of the FEAFF felt that they needed more secretaries and stenographers. The orders from Washington apparently referred only to stenographers who were hired in the United States and transported overseas, for on studying these orders the FEAFF officers found no prohibition whatever on the hiring of local personnel, provided the money was available to pay for them.

"Well," reasoned the FEAFF command, "this is the Far East Air Force, isn't it? And Australia is part of the Far East, isn't it? And Australian girls make good secretaries, don't they?"

So the command proceeded with plans to hire 250 Australian girls at \$3,000 each, taking the precaution, however, of classifying the whole project SECRET. When Levine submitted his broadcast to Tokyo censorship, the censor killed the story after consultation with a FEAFF information officer.

At about that time the United Press got wind of the story. Bob Vermillion, a veteran war correspondent, was sent around to FEAFF headquarters to check on it. Vermillion was warned by a FEAFF officer to lay off the story if he didn't want to get thrown out of the theater. By that time, however, the situation had gotten out of control, so FEAFF reluctantly released the story.

Clogged Channels

I am told that relations generally between General Ridgway's Tokyo headquarters and the press were far better than they were between the press and General MacArthur's headquarters. During the MacArthur régime there was an attempt to maintain an almost complete blackout on occupation activities and policies except as they became matters of official "release" or unless questions were directed in writing "through channels."



Answers to such questions were very often made too late to be of any news value—a very neat device for censorship at the source.

There were only two major instances of friction between General Ridgway's command in Tokyo and correspondents in Korea. The first was the revelation by correspondents, in spite of censorship, that there had been a *de facto* cease-fire order at the Korean battle line last December. The second was the rebuke administered in February by General Ridgway to correspondents who were fraternizing with correspondents of the Red Armies.

The General maintained that correspondents were jeopardizing national security by talking to the Reds. He tossed into his communiqué the allegation that some U.N. correspondents had actually shared their whiskey with the Red correspondents. From my personal experience I believe that was probably true.

I am informed, however, that the American correspondents were obtaining from the Red pressmen news they later found to be absolutely correct concerning the negotiations. The information they thus obtained was not being given them by the United Nations briefing officers.

Every trained newspaper reporter would certainly consider this questioning of enemy correspondents the obvious and proper procedure for a representative of the free commercial press who wanted to learn anything whatever of a news event besides what was told him in a government handout. American reporters in Panmunjom

who obtained stories and pictures from American prisoners of war in North Korea, including General Dean, through co-operation with Red newspapermen were certainly showing the initiative and news judgment that their editors had every right to expect of them.

"Panmunjom is an excellent example of how news is withheld at the source from the American press for the purpose of government propaganda," I have been informed by one of the distinguished American correspondents who recently left the area. "Time and again correspondents caught United Nations spokesmen in half-truths or important omissions of fact in statements about what was going on inside the closed truce-conference sessions.

"As a result of this, the correspondents began consulting the Red correspondents, who can tell the truth when it suits their purpose.

"For example, the Communist correspondents kept telling us that United Nations representatives were demanding 12,000 square kilometers of North Korean territory behind Communist lines as compensation for calling off our Air Force and Navy. Although this was true, as we later discovered, General Nuckols, the U.N. spokesman at the time, would never admit it. In other words, we were never taken into the confidence of United Nations negotiators. At one point it was fairly common to see the Associated Press representative rush up to the Communists—not to the United Nations delegates—to find out such routine facts as when the next meeting was going to be held."



Since General Mark Clark has taken over in Tokyo, there has been only one instance of friction with the press. This was occasioned by the Army's temporary blackout on interviews after the release of Brigadier General (now Colonel) Francis T. Dodd after his kidnaping by Koje Island prisoners.

MacArthur's Censorship

Friction between the press and the nation's topmost military leaders was far worse during General Douglas MacArthur's command, when information of patent concern to the American people was classified as **SECRET** to an extent that this writer never has seen equaled.

According to a report to the Freedom of the Press Committee of the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1948, correspondents had been informed by General MacArthur's public-relations officer, Brigadier General Frayne Baker, back in 1946 that "any material that any occupation officer chooses to classify will be protected by the rules of military secrecy, and a correspondent can be court-martialed for publishing such material under the Articles of War."

Correspondents tried for two years, before their protest, to make some inroads on this censorship at the source. Meanwhile General MacArthur was denying that any censorship existed.

The shroud of secrecy was thrown over such legitimate post-surrender news as the Japanese crime rate, rationing statistics, dollar expenditures by the armed forces, the so-called purges of Japanese war criminals, economic de-

centralization, reparations, industrial-rehabilitation plans, and negotiations for wool and cotton imports.

Beginning in July, 1946, all records of discussion of any project in the MacArthur headquarters were classified as secret until the project was completed. Correspondents who learned of what was going on within the General's headquarters and published scraps of it were often threatened with court-martial or withdrawal of credentials, although not one was prosecuted:

The effect of all this was to prevent any public knowledge of what MacArthur intended to do, or was in the process of doing, until the time came for him to make one of his announcements of some new "success." An additional effect, of course, was to prevent any public discussion in the United States of what was going on while it was going on, and at all times to confront the American people with accomplished facts.

General Baker, as P.R.O., explained to the helpless correspondents quite early in the game: "From now on you get your news of the occupation from press releases."

In their final protest to the American Society of Newspaper Editors concerning the news blackout, sixty-three members of the Tokyo Correspondents' Club pointed out that several Acts of Congress, during the previous year, indicated that no actual state of war with Japan existed, and that after the surrender and disarming of the foe, any state of war was purely theoretical.

Despite that fact, they said, "the wartime concept of military security continues to prevail, and has been extended to embrace political, administrative, economic and cultural subjects totally unrelated to military security."

The correspondents' protest brought no results. The truth of the matter appears to be that no professional society of journalists exists in the United States today with requisite machinery to cope with the abuse of power by military men who want to keep their operations in political, cultural, and business fields beyond public scrutiny.

One of the most accurate descriptions of the activity of newspaper editors in protecting the public's right to information in the field of civil government was made by Gerald H. Salisbury, managing editor of the Albany *Knickerbocker News*, at a recent meeting of

the New York State Society of Newspaper Editors. "All we do is to comment," he said. "All we do is talk. There has been the greatest reluctance to do anything in this direction."

Concepts of 'News'

Under present conditions, the occasional friction between war correspondents and the military seems likely to continue for a long time to come, and the new code of the Defense Department doesn't help much. Military and civilian minds are pretty far apart on what is proper news reporting.

A typical incident from the China-Burma-India Theater in the Second World War was told me by Robert P. ("Pepper") Martin, who had served as a correspondent for the *New York Post* there.

"When General Chennault's Flying Tigers broke up in the spring of 1942," he said, "most of the American Volunteer Group members chose to go home instead of joining our Air Force. I remember that one night a couple of these pilots and some ground-crew men, all of them civilians on their way home, wanted one last crack at the Japs, rolled out an old C-47, loaded it with hundred-pound bombs, and took off for Hanoi in Indo-China, where there was a large Jap garrison. They dropped all their bombs right on their target from the side door of their plane, and then flew home in glee.

"It was a pretty weird exploit, when



you come to look at it, but the mission left a big circle of fire raging on the target they had selected. I thought it was a pretty good yarn, so I wrote it and the military censor passed it. When it was relayed back from home to the headquarters of General Clayton Bissell it aroused his wrath. He told his associates the whole affair was very unmilitary and bad for morale and warranted a thorough investigation.

"He sent for me and asked me where I got the story. I refused to tell him, as I had to protect my informants. He threatened me with court-martial, so I decided to bluff. I told him I thought the courts back home had decided correspondents had a right to protect informants. He said he didn't believe it, but he would certainly find out. I was told later that he sent a wire to Washington asking for information, but I can't be sure. Meanwhile I got on the phone to some friends at General Stillwell's headquarters. The General sent word back to Bissell's aides that he thought it would be better if Bissell laid off the war correspondents."

The clash between General Bissell and Correspondent Martin shows that neither was sure of his ground. The new war correspondents' code certainly does not spell out the offenses for which correspondents may be tried. At one point it says correspondents are "expected to refrain . . . from conversing with personnel at work or on guard . . ." Correspondents in a fighting zone could not even move around unless they disappointed the expectations implied by this paragraph.

Rear-Echelon 'Chicken'

But war correspondents have little or no trouble of this kind in fighting zones. Most of the trouble is back at headquarters. According to this code there is an implied ban on talking to people who are at work there, but personally I doubt if such a ban will ever be enforced except in the command post of some Nervous Nellie or martinet, suspicious of the press or hostile to it, who is trying to suppress all news except that which he wants disseminated.

Accredited correspondents with our forces overseas in occupied areas such as Austria, Italy, Germany, and sometimes in Japan have been permitted by many a commanding officer to circulate with reasonable freedom through military offices. Granted that freedom,

they have sat, with no damage to this Republic that I can discern, beside the desks of officers and enlisted personnel, often distracting them from their work, and talking to them about military affairs during lulls in it. That is the way they have been accustomed to get much of their news. I doubt that this practice will be discontinued, even under the new code, for all its implied prohibition.



There is one paragraph in the new code that seems to me downright funny. That is the one in which the military passion for meticulous uniformity down to the finest detail has been spelled out in ruling on the correspondents' uniforms.

Exact shades of color for jacket, shirt, necktie, trench coat, and garrison cap are all prescribed. The jacket, it seems, is to be "shade 33," while the necktie will be "shade 51." The trench coat is to be "shade 79," and I certainly hope Abercrombie & Fitch will bear this in mind. The garrison cap (wool) is to be "shade 33."

If rigorously enforced, this regulation is going to break the hearts of quite a few correspondents in the next war, unless the essentially civilian nature of newspaper reporters has changed a great deal by that time. These rules bar

completely some of the finest color effects in uniform achieved by correspondents in the Second World War, several of whom prided themselves on really exquisite taste in pseudo-military garb, with various touches of individuality thrown in—particularly when they were back from the firing lines, if they ever had been there, and were lolling romantically about places like the officers' clubs in Naples or Rome, or the Savoy in London.

To those of us who remember some of the popinjay effects also achieved by colonels and even by brigadier generals, all this standardization of correspondents' clothes seems a grievous discrimination. Are not all the correspondents to have the assimilated rank of major, no less? They are indeed, under this new code.

It was "assimilated second lieutenant" in the war reporter's trade when I first went to work at it. Do you suppose that the "majors" of the press in the next war will have a uniform inspection on some cold, gray, rainy morning, drawn up in front of their billets in a military manner before some inquisitive colonel of the regular armed services?

Protection of Publicity

As for the threat of court-martial that hangs over all correspondents, I would like, if possible, to calm the fears of Senator McCarran, or of any reporter who might like to report the wars from a civilian viewpoint. Reporters of the daily press have two great protections. One is the undisputed power of the press to give the fullest publicity to any jeopardy in which its employees are placed. The other is the very real and powerful influence that the civilian press will always have with the civilian agents of American government, from the President down. Any very real injustices to reporters are far more apt to be remedied than are injustices to the lowly G.I.s who fight and die in this nation's conflicts.

If the average American can stand fighting the country's wars, the reporters can certainly bear up under occasional clashes with military officers. I doubt if the reporters of this country will ever be completely militarized, and I believe that the best of them will continue to be governed mainly by the code of decency and common sense that is within themselves.

Correspondents in Korea—

Safety and Frustration

LEE JUDGE

ALONG WITH the popular fancy about the big-city reporter who solves all the murders and then tells the police, there has been circulated an image of the average American war correspondent as a grimy, bearded, neck-risking hero who hoofs it up the hill with the riflemen, scoops out his own foxhole, and then sets up shop to record the feel of front-line action.

From what I've seen in Korea, it seems to me more likely that you'd find a fair percentage of your warring journalists sacked safely back at a division command post, where the principal hardships are an occasional real or imagined shortage of liquor or a mess sergeant's unimaginative approach to his job.

In Korea the group that would venture even as far forward as a division command post represented a minority, for the bulk of their colleagues in combat letters were holed up in even greater leisure back at the correspondents' billet in Seoul, or off in Japan making a valiant but futile effort to put a recognizable dent in the seemingly self-multiplying stock of liquor at the Tokyo Correspondents' Club.

It is not my intention here to cast professional scorn on the good living provided for the men who have been covering the war in Korea, but rather to bring into the open a type of life that any reporter, or for that matter anyone who is disturbed by the thought of working for a living, might well enjoy.

The situation wasn't always so comfortable, notably during the early days of the war when every square foot of Korean terrain was explosive. At that time the lot of the war correspondent wasn't much better than the lot of the infantryman or the clerk or the cook. Everybody was fighting on four sides, and none of those sides was per-

manently at your back as a reliable gate for escape.

My observations cover the war in Korea loosely for the calendar year 1951, during which I shared the life of the war correspondents as public information officer for a famous combat division which was almost perpetually on the target. This assignment, plus numerous roving adventures with the press, placed me in perhaps more personal and more constant association with more war correspondents in Korea than any other public information officer. Being a newspaper reporter and a public-relations man by civilian trade, I enjoyed a bond with the correspondents which does not usually exist between the Army and the press.

I knew all the men and women who covered the war, and I knew most of them well. I lived with them at our division command post, and I was with them on the press train at Munsan-ni for the peace talks. I shared their billet at Seoul and the abundant comforts of their club in Tokyo. They were not only competent journalists; they were entertaining hosts and magnificent guests.

Throughout the press corps in Korea, I was known as the "good provider," Mine Host to the Fourth Estate. From out of nowhere or, even more miraculously, from out of Army Special Service allocations, I was always able to provide appreciable quantities of potables just when it seemed as though temperance forces had seized control of the peninsula.

But Don't Go Near the Water

We always had a sizable representation of the press at our division—wire services, special correspondents, TV and radio men, and so on. To accommodate the group and to handle general

publicity matters for the division there were, in addition to myself, one officer and anywhere from ten to fifteen enlisted men. Occasionally a particularly energetic correspondent would actually go up to an area somewhere near the fighting and take some pictures or scout out a story. But for the most part, a day in the life of the average war correspondent was a lot like camping out with the boys on a fishing trip when nobody has any intention of fishing or even of going near the water.

There were outstanding exceptions. Fred Waters of International News Photos got hit twice taking front-line photos; Bob Pierpoint would take his CBS recorder on infantry attacks; Mike Rougier of *Life* was almost reckless in his lack of respect for enemy bullets. Bob Vermillion of UP, Fred Sparks of the *Chicago Daily News*, Dave McConnell of the *New York Herald Tribune*, George McArthur of AP—they are all lucky to be alive today. But these boys and a few others were exceptions.

The Forgotten War

Those of us who were on the military payroll had to emerge from the sack at seven in the morning, just as though we had something urgent to do, but the press usually slept on until around ten-thirty or eleven, at which time one of the enlisted men would be dispatched to the officers' mess tent for some coffee and toast in order that the correspondents would not have to approach the day's activities on empty stomachs.

A half hour or so later, a quick inventory would be under way to see how much liquor was immediately available for pre-luncheon cocktails. In those dark early days, because of the lack of suitable accessories, the correspondents