

# reporting war

by Sharon Schmickle



While scores of journalists were confronting trauma and danger to cover the Iraq War, a group of seasoned veterans of such assignments took a brief break to gather at Bretton Woods, N.H., and talk about the emotional challenges raised by their duties in the field.

For two days, they engaged one another in frank, freewheeling and often personally cathartic discussions about human vulnerability as it relates to the craft of combat journalism.

In the end, these intense competitors agreed to share what they had learned with others who cover conflict. They concurred that journalists who are equipped to care for themselves emotionally can stay in the field longer, deliver more compelling reports and return home with fewer problems.

Their recommendations in October 2005 launched a project which culminated in publication of this handbook. The retreat and the handbook are projects of the Dart Society, a group of journalists who support sensitive coverage of trauma and care of those covering it.

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A Dart Society Project

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Cover photo: Baghdad, 2003. Scott Wallace

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# Introduction

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Newsroom clip files are packed with stories about the trauma that can follow conflict and danger: the depression of the U.S. Marine who hanged himself after a tour of duty in Iraq, the flashbacks of the Liberian refugee who hid among dead bodies to avoid being shot, the insomnia of the UN peacekeeper who witnessed the murders of Timorese babies.

What about the journalists who risked their lives to cover the stories behind the trauma? What is being done to

ease our normal, human responses to dangerous assignments?

Military leaders are beginning to understand that they can boost troops' strength and endurance by responding to combat stress.

It's time for news organizations to do the same.

Security training and protective gear are essential preparations for a dangerous assignment, combat reporters agree. Packing lists and other tip sheets are immensely helpful. But news organizations are not doing enough to shield reporters and photographers until they also address trauma.

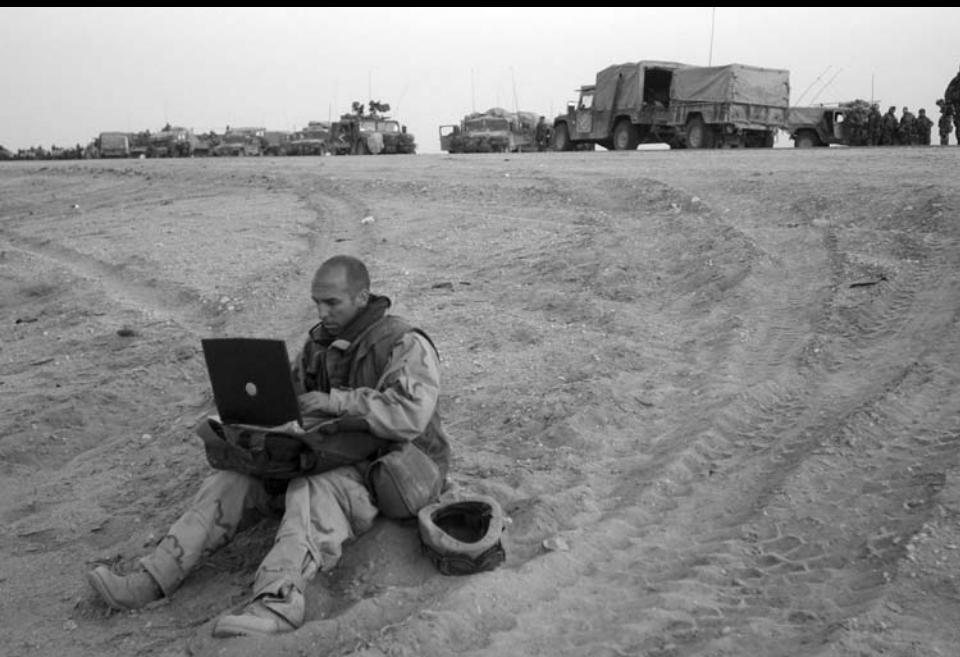


photo by Hayne Palmour

Reporter Darrin Mortenson works as Marines stage outside of Nasiriyah in March, 2003.

Journalists who accept dangerous assignments take on more than a few risky weeks or months. They face dramatic and often permanent changes in the way they see themselves and their work.

“I’m looking back at the things I have done with a certain amount of horror,” says Dave Wood, who has covered conflict in Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Kenya, Russia, China, East Germany, Nicaragua, the Philippines, Bosnia, Panama and Haiti.

“I never particularly prepared,” says Wood, now a reporter for the *Baltimore Sun*. “I learned things by making stupid mistakes along the way. If I am any example, this kind of thing is badly

needed. I could have used it a long time ago.”

Bill Gentile defines his life today in large part through the prism of his photo coverage of conflict in Latin America during the 1970s and ‘80s.

“That will never go away, and I don’t want it to go away,” says Gentile, who was a photographer for UPI and *Newsweek* at the time and later worked as an independent documentary filmmaker while also teaching at American University in Washington D.C.

Hayne Palmour IV saw himself and journalism in a whole new light after he photographed U.S. Marines through three tours in Iraq and a mission in Somalia. He worked for *North County Times* in San Diego County, Calif.

“Our war reporting experience has become our identity ... It changed us



forever,” Palmour says of himself and the other correspondents.

Gentile and Palmour struggled with grief over fallen colleagues and horror over the sheer carnage they saw. But they also grew in wisdom about human nature, world affairs and their own reservoirs of strength.

The critical question is whether the positive can outweigh the negative and better equip a correspondent to grow in new directions.

“Our war reporting experience has become our identity ... It changed us forever.”

– Hayne Palmour

The time to start mental preparation is well ahead of the day you board the plane. Unless you're abruptly dispatched on a breaking story, you should:

**1) Weigh the pros and cons before you accept the assignment. Be honest with yourself. Is the appeal a love of danger and the unknown? Is it ambition to impress your editors? Most journalists who dare to risk their lives share at least a shred of each. But you will be separated from what normally matters in life. Ask yourself whether those motives alone can sustain you through the terrible grind of sporadic fear coupled with the logistical difficulties of working in remote locations.**

Altruistic motives – a sense of journalistic duty and a commitment to

covering the cause at issue – can help fortify endurance.

Gentile worries that today's journalists are heading into harm's way without the clear sense of mission that drove many of the correspondents who covered the plight of Central Americans caught in a nightmare of bloody politics.

"The people we should be most loyal to are not the people who send us our checks every two weeks," Gentile says. "They are the people who provide us the raw material, who allow us into their homes and their hearts so that we can practice this craft, which is a real privilege."

That focus on ideals kept Gentile and his contemporaries going even after some in their ranks were killed.

Make sure you understand your own focus and know whether you truly

want the assignment. A clear focus on your goals also can provide reassurance on the job and a sense of accomplishment afterwards.

**2)** Study and understand the nature of the risks you are taking. Your fear isn't going to go away. Indeed, it shouldn't because it spurs a healthy drive to stay safe. But you can make a certain peace with it so that it doesn't paralyze and traumatize you.

**3)** Tap the wisdom of experienced colleagues. Journalists are more effective on dangerous assignments when they learn to lean on each other.

"I've done a fair bit of this line of work, if you will, going off to dangerous places over the years, and I must say I've learned a lot from other people's experience, things that hadn't occurred to me," says Santiago Lyon, director of photography for the Associated Press.

The seasoned professionals you contact often will keep in touch, effectively

serving on your personal support team during an assignment.

**4)** Try to email or phone other journalists already in the danger zone. They are in the best position to help with logistical arrangements that can relieve your stress on arrival. Ask them to recommend fixers, drivers, reasonably safe places to stay and local experts who might befriend you.

If journalists aren't available, contact relief workers or UN staff operating in the region. Such an on-the-ground network is particularly important for freelancers. Don't be shy. Colleagues in larger news organizations often are willing to "adopt" freelancers.

**5)** Plan ahead for the needs of your family and other loved ones. A common emotion among journalists under fire is intense guilt for the stress back home. You can't erase your family's worries for you or yours for them. But you can lighten the burden.

Beyond wills and personal insurance, negotiate a precise agreement on what costs your employer will cover if you are disabled or killed. Will mental health care be covered? How about the cost of transporting a body home? What's the exit strategy in case your life depends on getting out, and what will your newsroom pay? Make sure your family knows the details.

**6)** Set up contact plans with editors and loved ones. At least two editors should be designated to be available around the clock. They should agree in advance on steps to be taken if you fail to check in as scheduled. The Committee to Protect Journalists spells out a detailed contact plan on its web site: [www.cpj.org](http://www.cpj.org).

For your family, try to arrange a meeting with an editor who can serve as the point of contact. In any event, make sure the editors know whom to contact – your current partner, say, rather than your ex-spouse. Determine in as much detail as possible how you

are going to be in touch and who will pay.

Judith Matloff, a Columbia University professor who has covered war and violence across the globe, learned only after tense weeks of covering conflict in Angola that her newsroom's policy was to pay for phone calls to spouses but no one else. Matloff was single. Had she known about the policy in advance, she would have argued that she also needed the comfort and reassurance of voices from home.

**7)** Take time for a brief mental-health primer. Journalism is stressful work under normal circumstances, and many correspondents trust the resilience that has carried them through day-to-day assignments. But experiencing trauma can lead to burnout, chemical dependency and other problems. Someone who was coping reasonably well at home can fall over the edge in just days or weeks on a dangerous assignment.



photo by Hayne Palmour

A young Iraqi boy and woman talk to Iraqi forces after they and others were found hiding in an apartment in Fallujah in April, 2004.

Many correspondents find, surprisingly, that anxiety abates once they arrive on the scene of an assignment and get to work. Don't be fooled by the relief. It likely is temporary.

Your sense of what is important will be challenged, and that will take a toll on your judgment over time, says Alissa Rubin, who was a co-bureau chief in Baghdad for the *Los Angeles Times* before joining the *New York Times* Iraq team.

"People are professionals," Rubin says. "People can write a daily story and things will be fine. I think what you lose is the ability to step back and think more analytically."

The time to care for yourself emotionally is before trauma gradually erodes

your ability to think clearly and deliver your best work. You'll be tempted to tough it out emotionally because that's been an expectation in journalism.

"I honestly thought that to do this job was part and parcel with trauma, and that there was no healthy way ... that if you want to do this you were going to become an unhappy, lonely, traumatized person," says Hannah Allam, who was Knight Ridder's Baghdad Bureau Chief in 2005 and later covered the Middle East for McClatchy News.

"That seemed to be the experience of so many of my colleagues in Baghdad. And so I thought 'I want to get off this train. I'm going to go cover features or something.'"

But there are healthy alternatives to getting off the train, Allam realized later, smart steps correspondents can take to care for themselves.

## **Here are key steps toward more healthy outcomes:**

- 1)** Execute the mental-health plan you set up in advance. Refresh your focus on the reasons you decided to take the risk. Establish contact with your newsroom, home and network of other journalists. Stay in touch regularly.
- 2)** If you are replacing correspondents in the field or joining others, take advantage of any overlap time to seek their advice. No question is too mundane. Knowing how to handle small day-to-day challenges can boost your confidence in strange surroundings and stressful times.
- 3)** Cultivate buddies. Colleagues you grow to trust can help you let off steam, find reasons to laugh in the face of grim reality and monitor your decisions for any erosion in judgment. You can watch out for each other's safety and decide together when it's time to pull out.

There's no formula for deciding when to leave a hotspot. It's pure instinct, and

it is common to feel guilty afterwards, second-guessing your decision and worrying that you could have stayed longer and accomplished more. Taking a gut-check with someone you trust can save you tremendous anxiety later on.

Journalists who embed with the military, in particular, have found immense value in a buddy system. The embedded reporter or photographer can be the odd-person out, targeted as an enemy by the other side but also separated by professional distance from the troops. "You have to write on every page of your notebook, 'I'm not one of them,'" Dave Wood says.

In some tense situations, journalists have felt threatened by the forces they embedded with. Some journalists who stood their ground ultimately earned respect from the troops. But it is crucial in such a situation to have a workable exit plan and to spell out in detail – to buddies in the field and to editors back home – what's happening.

**4)** With or without a buddy, try to follow these simple and effective tips for self care:

- Acknowledge what you are going through.
- Sleep and eat as well as possible and take exercise.
- If you cannot talk with someone you trust, write down what you are feeling.
- Take time to reflect.
- Find reasons to laugh.
- Take care with alcohol and other drugs.
- Ask others for support along the way.

**5)** Allow yourself some normal human response. Sure you are a brave correspondent, but you also are a human being with deep-seated emotions that may startle the journalist in you.

“You are seeing the biggest of the big issues, you are seeing places destroyed, people dead ... enormous emotion,” Rubin says.

The hardest thing, she says, will be to go back and forth between your

response as a person and as a journalist. A personal revulsion at the sight of mangled bodies, for example, will collide with the journalistic need to capture precisely the event you are covering.

In the end, effective journalists need the emotional and intellectual fortitude to do both. They need to feel their own heartbreak or anger in order to convey the full measure of what’s happening before their eyes. But they also need a professional perspective.

“You have to get really close and immersed and feel it and have this visceral sense,” Rubin says. “And then (you need to) be able to step back and say, ‘OK, what does it really mean?’”

**6)** Back off when you sense serious trauma taking hold. It is normal to feel somewhat sad, jumpy and irritable in a dangerous setting. You might cope very well with the occasional sleepless night or upsetting memory. The time for concern is when such feelings take



over your day-to-day emotions and you can't shake them.

It might happen after one traumatic event – say, a bombing scene. It might happen as a “final straw,” where a fire-fight you could have managed the day before suddenly breaks you down.

Here are signs of acute stress:

- Upsetting thoughts or memories that you can't shake
- Upsetting dreams about an event
- Acting or feeling that the event is happening again
- Feeling upset by reminders of the event
- Physical reactions such as fast heartbeat, stomach churning, sweatiness or dizziness
- Sleep difficulties
- Irritability or outbursts of anger
- Difficulty concentrating
- Heightened awareness of danger
- Being jumpy or easily startled at something unexpected

There's no formula for deciding when to leave a hotspot. It's pure instinct, and it is common to feel guilty afterwards, second-guessing your decision.

You're on the plane heading toward safety, feeling immensely relieved to be physically whole and dreaming about that first embrace with loved ones.

Surprisingly, this could be your most vulnerable time. One military chaplain described the vulnerability as “existential void,” a sudden feeling of aimlessness and loss.

You have changed. But life back home probably has not. Feelings that may surprise and overwhelm you include:

**Disappointment** with attachments that seem cold compared with the terrible intimacy of watching people, even strangers, bleed and die.

**Frustration** with friends who seem more interested in trivial cultural events than in global matters of war and peace.

**Discomfort** with material abundance that stands in stark contrast to the desperate need in other parts of the world.

**Alienation** from a family that had to make do without you. Your spouse may not need your day-to-day help. Sex may be difficult for a while. Children will have changed and grown into different people with different expectations of adults.

After three tours in Iraq for the *North County Times*, Darrin Mortenson says he felt like a “professional outsider” at home in California. He longed for the sense of purpose he felt covering a war, and only when he began preparing for his next deployment did he feel life

coming together in a solid, coherent sense of purpose.

Gradually, Mortenson learned the healing value of talking through the aftermath with editors and with other journalists who had survived dangerous assignments.

One common aftereffect the correspondents shared is a profound sense of professional letdown.

“There may never be another story in your life that grabs you as intensively as this one will,” says Dana Hull who covered the Iraq war for the *San Jose Mercury News*. “What are you going to do after that for an encore? Be prepared to be disappointed with the stories that come afterward.”

Many correspondents recommend stopping for a day or two on the way home, giving yourself time to reflect on what you’ve been through and to decompress. But a solo stopover isn’t for everyone. Some feel a need to plunge right away in familiar,

structured activity. Some who are overloaded with stress may need to be around others.

This is a time to monitor yourself for risk factors:

- Feeling that you are out of control
- Feeling your life is threatened
- Blaming others
- Shame over your behavior
- Problems coping with day-to-day life
- Excess use of alcohol or drugs

Above all, this is a time to tap that support network once again. Make time to talk to loved ones who know how to listen, the pros who have gone before you and mental health experts who can help you sort things out.

Robert Nickelsberg, a contract photographer for *Time Magazine*, spent 20 years covering conflict around the world. It wasn’t until he came home and talked with colleagues, he says, that he had the perspective to sort out what he had been through.

“While you may look to be as independent as possible, it still is necessary to be attached to a larger group,” Nickelsberg says.

Photographers, in particular, have been emotionally confined by their “silent way” of explaining violence.

“It’s important for us as photographers to verbalize things a little bit more than just turning in the film and walking away from it,” Nickelsberg says.

But many reporters also struggle when they try to “walk away” emotionally.

The key for every correspondent is to respect the serious emotional challenge that comes with a dangerous assignment and to meet the challenge by taking personal responsibility for your own mental health. By making a priority of good choices, you will increase your probability of staying safe and delivering superior coverage.

Make time to talk to loved ones who know how to listen, the pros who have gone before you and mental health experts who can help you sort things out.



photo by Scott Wallace

Photographer Bill Gentile on operation with the Sandinista Popular Army, Nicaragua, 1985.

In the safety of a newsroom thousands of miles from a conflict scene, editors make judgment calls that could ease anxiety or else push a correspondent over the edge.

Sit down with any group of veteran correspondents and you'll hear some variation on these stories:

- The editor often ignored time-zone differences and awakened stressed-out reporters in Baghdad to demand copy changes.
- The correspondents risked their lives to get into position in Fallujah and then were ordered to cover something entirely different somewhere else.
- The lonely, stressed-out reporter called the newsroom from

Afghanistan, only to be told that the editors were too busy to talk.

Talk to some editors, though, and you hear an emerging sensitivity about their responsibilities for the emotional health of teams they have dispatched to dangerous places.

Santiago Lyon, the AP photography director, has taken part in both sides of the conversation. A decade ago, when he was traveling on assignment, awareness of mental-health needs was woefully limited in newsrooms. Now the media culture is changing, he says. The Dart Center and concerned veteran war correspondents have raised the consciousness of the journalistic community, Lyon said, and “that’s a tremendously useful thing.” What’s needed next, he said, is for media leaders to parlay the heightened awareness into lasting change in newsrooms.

Change is taking hold in Europe, says Mark Brayne, a BBC and Reuters correspondent before he became director of the Dart Centre in the UK.

“This agenda is very new,” Brayne says. “Ten years ago it just wasn’t on the consciousness. When I was a correspondent, nobody ever thought of this, and nobody is to blame for that. There just wasn’t any awareness. We simply didn’t know what we didn’t know. But there really is a rapid shift now. ... The lights are going on.”

One reason is that first responders in other lines of work – police, fire and ambulance crews – increasingly are trained in handling their own trauma. Recent lawsuits filed in the UK have claimed that news organizations failed to keep pace and take reasonable steps to protect their workers.

The upshot is that a former sense of “macho journalism” is giving way to a smarter approach that is grounded in scientific wisdom about trauma and its

costs to people and job performance. The value of trauma sensitivity is catching hold, Brayne says, “for bottom-line reasons, for quality reasons, for good management reasons, for ethical reasons, for moral reasons.”

Consider the example of David Clark Scott, international news editor at the *Christian Science Monitor*. He was working with freelancer Jill Carroll when she was kidnapped in Iraq in 2006, and he played a key role on the *Monitor* team that secured her safe release.

Even before the kidnapping crisis, Scott had earned respect and affection from correspondents who filed from dangerous and highly emotional settings. Working under tough deadlines, he held tenaciously to the highest professional standards while also taking a deep interest in the personal well-being of the correspondents.

“If you sound tired on the phone, he notes it,” Carroll says. “If you’ve been

away from your family too long, he insisted you get back home,” Carroll says.

Scott never failed to say “Thank you.” after Carroll filed a story, she says.

In 2007, Scott was honored as the first recipient of the Dart Society’s Mimi Award, which recognizes exceptional work by an editor.

In that spirit, here are some concrete steps editors can take:

### **Before the Assignment**

Editors and news organizations can take the lead in preparations for coverage of dangerous situations.

- Negotiate a firm deal on exactly what the company will insure and what costs will be covered. Make sure the correspondents and their families understand the terms.
- Initiate a contact plan with correspondents and also with their families. Designate an editor and backup editors to be available to listen

at all hours and to relay news to the family, even word that everyone is safe.

- Define expectations in advance. How long is the assignment likely to last? How often are the correspondents expected to file stories and photos? How often should they check in? Emphasize that flexibility is important and plans could change, but at least set a framework of expectations.
- Frankly discuss the risks, the security plan and the need for protective equipment. Understand and discuss the limitations that may be imposed by security rules or by conditions on the ground. Clearly define limits of the risks the company considers acceptable for employees.
- Train key editors and staff members in trauma awareness. Issue periodic reminders for them to be alert for symptoms of serious stress. Develop routine checks such as asking the correspondent whether it’s time to take a break or come home. Learn the



differences between normal responses to danger and true trouble signs.

- If possible, plan to send at least one editor to the danger zone during a prolonged assignment. It can be reassuring for the correspondents while also improving communication and providing a reality check for the newsroom.

### **During the Assignment**

- Say “thank you” often and mean it. Be generous with praise and appreciation from throughout the news organization.
- Make the correspondents feel connected with the newsroom.
- Ask regularly about their health, how well they are eating and sleeping and their state of mind.
- Listen. Several of the correspondents described a deeply troubling psychic disconnect with editors on the other end of phone conversations. Bombs

could be going off in the distance, bodies bleeding on the ground and the correspondent struggling to express the full measure of the stress. But the multitasking editor too often could be heard typing while saying, “Umhuh, umhuh. OK. I have to get to a meeting.”

- Try to provide context to reporters who may be isolated from the news. Tell how their reports fit into the big picture of the story. This can ease their feeling of being cut off, reduce anxiety that they aren’t doing enough and also inspire more ideas about how they can contribute.
- Be mindful of time zones. If you wake a reporter in the middle of the night asking for more copy on a grisly story, bear in mind that you probably have ended any chance for sleep that night.
- Network with the correspondents’ buddies and colleagues in the field so that a concerned friend will have

a basis for alerting you about trouble signs.

## After the Assignment

Some newsrooms are setting up homecoming routines. They send welcoming committees to the airport, stage luncheons and schedule appearances before staff groups. Whatever the routine, the key is to be generous with praise.

## Additional Steps

**1)** Formal debriefing. Discuss what went well and what did not. Watch for signals of the journalist's overall response to the assignment. This conversation is about journalism, but it also is a time when you may see subtle signs of lingering trauma. Here are some tips for structuring the conversation.

- Discuss the facts of what happened on an assignment, allowing time for correspondents to think through the what, where, when and how. Be

careful, though, about getting into why something happened. Keep questions open ended. What did they like or not like? What did they find frustrating? What could the desk have done better? What was the most difficult?

- Discuss the impact of the events, the correspondent's thoughts and feelings at the time. Don't say you know how they feel. Listen and allow time for the reporter or photographer to think and talk.
  - Discuss the impact now. What are you doing? How are you feeling?
  - Discuss the normal responses. Watch for signs of stress.
- 2)** Offer mental health benefits, but don't insist. Even if the answer is no, think of this as the beginning of a conversation you should have again in a few weeks.
- 3)** Try to come up with a plan for easing and enriching the transition to

a lower gear. A letdown is common after a dangerous and intense assignment. It can lead to depression, abusive behavior, lethargy on the job and other problems. But it doesn't have to. Offer time off after the debriefing, but don't insist on it. Some journalists do better when they continue to work, albeit on lighter projects.

**4)** Encourage and sponsor get-togethers with others who have worked in danger zones – allow time off for retreats and send the correspondents to conferences where they will have a chance to meet others with similar experiences.

Signs to watch for:

- Someone is no longer himself or herself
- They might shut themselves away, or take the opposite approach and talk constantly about the experience
- They might be unusually irritable and angry

- They may talk of feeling guilty or confused
- They may be more accident prone
- They might be sick a lot, or late for work or miss deadlines
- They might be obsessive about work
- Lack of interest and concentration

One of the single most effective things family members and friends can do to ease the stress on a correspondent is to care for themselves emotionally.

Worry and guilt over loved ones left behind is a constant stress for journalists who face danger far from home.

Hannah Allam says that she struggled with her isolation from family members and friends while she was in Baghdad. “I wish I had known up front more about the changes to expect in myself,” she says. “I thought, ‘Well, this would be an adventure and it’s been a life’s dream, and I’d go off and do it and then I’d come back and settle into my normal life.’ I found that was not the experience at all.”

**1)** Before the assignment begins, take an active role in helping to line up financial documents, update the will and negotiate insurance benefits with the news organization. If possible, go to the newsroom and meet the editors who will be your chief contacts. In any event, make sure you know how to reach them.

**2)** During the assignment, many of the mental-health tips for the correspondent also are smart strategies for loved ones at home.

- Exercise, healthy eating and moderation with alcohol are important.
- Line up a support network and use it often.
- Find reasons to laugh – indeed, create them. One spouse got through a mission by emailing stupid jokes to her husband; it helped them both.

Another sent photos every few days of the family dog clowning it up.

- Be mindful that loved ones who are not at a hazardous scene can absorb the trauma when they hear about it a lot. Monitor yourself for signs of trauma or stress overload.
- Take time to reflect on what you are going through, and talk it over with trusted friends or with experts.

**3)** After the initial joy of the home-coming, be prepared for a rocky adjustment period. It doesn't always happen, but many returning correspondents feel let down and frustrated once they are home. This is a vulnerable time for depression, acute anxiety and even post-traumatic stress disorder. Try to familiarize yourself with the symptoms of those conditions (see [www.dart-center.org](http://www.dart-center.org)). Talk to your family doctor or other experts if you think professional help may be needed.

Simple listening can be a constructive form of support after the assignment. Here are a few tips for good listening.

**Do:**

- Actively listen
- Focus on THEM
- Ask open-ended questions
- Paraphrase what you've heard
- Reflect back/summarize
- Take time and space
- Use supportive body language
- Keep quiet. Listen more. Speak less.

**Don't:**

- Dig around in feelings
- Invalidate the experience
- Interrogate
- Say you know how they feel
- Respond with your own experience
- Say it could have been worse
- Use inappropriate humor
- Try to fix them too early

When in doubt, do less.

## Conclusion

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In the end, everyone connected with an assignment has a stake and a role in understanding the normal effects of working in dangerous conditions.

“There will be days when you won’t know how to sift things out – your relationships at home with family, husbands, girlfriends, boyfriends,” says Alissa Rubin. “It takes you, and you have to give it everything that you have got. Be prepared for the loss that may come with that. It will take a while to recover afterwards.”

Everyone also has a stake in a positive outcome that can preserve relationships at home while also keeping top-notch journalists serving readers, viewers and listeners through tumultuous world events.

Journalists can improve their chances of achieving those goals by taking responsibility for the health of those who practice the craft and by engaging each other in more conversations as happened during the retreat.

Reporter Darrin Mortenson sums it this way: “There will be successes and there will be failures. I will always wonder about some things. I will always feel guilty about some things ... It is really helpful to me to see that everyone here can go through that and still feel as passionate about their work and still come back to the same fundamentals, the same reasons why they still want to do this work and put themselves at risk.”

## About the Author

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Sharon Schmickle has reported from 22 countries – most recently Egypt, Afghanistan, Thailand and Iraq, where she was embedded with the U.S. Marines during the invasion in 2003. She has worked for the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* and the online publication MinnPost.com.

Her journalism awards include: Pulitzer Prize finalist in 1996, National Press Club's Washington Correspondent of the Year in 1996, Overseas Press Club of America first place award in 1994 and six first place awards from the Minnesota Associated Press. In 2007, she was the reporter for *Star Tribune* coverage of Liberians, which won an *Editor & Publisher* Eppy Award for online journalism.

*This handbook is informed most of all by journalists who have given their lives covering conflict.*

*My family has been a source of constant encouragement even through assignments that caused anxiety at home.*

*This project was organized by Dart Society President Penny Cockerell and Bruce Shapiro, Executive Director of the Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma. Dart staff and Society members were instrumental in completing the report.*



## For More Information

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A self-study course and fact sheets on the trauma and journalism are available from the Dart Center and the affiliated Dart Society. Further resources are available at the web site of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies.

**DartCenter.org**

**DartSociety.org**

**ISTSS.org**

### **Participants in the Bretton Woods War Reporting Retreat (affiliation as of October, 2005):**

**Hannah Allam**, former Knight Ridder Baghdad bureau chief; **Gina Cavallaro**, *Army Times* reporter; **Bill Gentile**, independent journalist and visual documentarian; **Dana Hull**, *San Jose Mercury News* reporter; **Santiago Lyon**, director of photography for the Associated Press; **Judith Matloff**, Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism professor; **Darrin Mortenson**, *North County Times* reporter; **Robert Nickelsberg**, contract photographer, *Time Magazine*; **Hayne Palmour**, *North County Times* photographer; **Alissa Rubin**, *Los Angeles Times* co-bureau chief in Baghdad; **Sharon Schmickle**, *Minneapolis Star Tribune* international correspondent; **Scott Wallace**, freelance correspondent, photographer, producer; **David Wood**, military writer, *Newhouse News*. From the Dart Center and Dart Society: **Mark Brayne**, **Penny Cockerell**, **Frank Ochberg**, **Bruce Shapiro**.





photo by Hayne Palmour

**Back row (l-r):** Bruce Shapiro, Dana Hull, Santiago Lyon, Mark Brayne, Darrin Mortenson, Scott Wallace, Frank Ochberg, Bill Gentile, Robert Nickelsberg, Penny Cockerell; **Center row, seated (l-r):** Gina Cavallaro, Judith Matloff, Alissa Rubin, Hannah Allam, Sharon Schmickle; **Front row, on floor (l-r):** Hayne Palmour, Dave Wood

THE  
DART SOCIETY

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for journalism & trauma

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The **Dart Society** is a cohort of journalists who have received fellowships and awards from the Dart Center. We are dedicated to promoting sensitive coverage of victims of violence and providing support for journalists who are affected by their work.

The **Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma**, based at the University of Washington, is a resource center for students, educators, journalists and news organizations interested in the intersection of journalism and trauma issues. The Dart Center recognizes and encourages excellence in reporting on victims of violence and trains journalists on issues of trauma in collaboration with the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies.



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