

## Annex 4: Methodology

This review of the National Guard experience uses a methodology developed by the Feinstein International Center's Humanitarianism and War Project in a series of country and thematic studies conducted since 1991<sup>1</sup> and in a 2005 report, "Mapping the Security Environment: Understanding the Perceptions of Local Communities, Peace Support Operations, and Assistance Agencies." The Center's approach, unlike that of many other research groups, relies heavily on input from participants themselves—local populations, humanitarian aid workers, and/or international military personnel. Our experience suggests that the perceptions of ordinary people, whether local or international, are often quite different from those of village, aid, or military officialdom and are often ignored by officials at their own peril.

The Center's approach is also inductive, casting the net as widely as possible to capture a broad cross-section of views and to identify recurring issues. The Center's research is independent in nature, with funding drawn from a mix of foundation, NGO, and government sources. Although funders may assist in establishing the terms of reference, the studies undertaken and the findings and conclusions reached are not subject to their approval. This arrangement preserves the independence of the research while giving funding agencies a buy-in and helping to ensure the relevance of the findings to their needs.

This report is part of a larger study by the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University, "Humanitarian Agenda 2015: Principles, Power, and Perceptions." Phase 1 of that study resulted in a preliminary report in 2006 that examined, through case studies conducted in Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, Liberia, northern Uganda, and the Sudan, four principal challenges to current and future humanitarian work. These challenges were (1) the perception that humanitarian activities, despite their purported universality, are in reality shaped by the political and security agendas of northern governments and thus at variance with local cultural norms; (2) that "the Global War on Terror" is an imprecise and opportunistic construct that complicates the conduct of professional humanitarian and human rights work; (3) that association with U.S. and United Nations political frameworks undermines the independence and effectiveness of humanitarian work; and (4) that the insecurity

of humanitarian operations compromises the functioning of aid activities. Phase 2 of the Center's study, which includes, along with this report on the National Guard experience, country studies of Iraq, Nepal, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the occupied Palestinian territories, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, is scheduled for release in late 2007.<sup>2</sup>

The present study is different from earlier reviews in which humanitarian organizations have been the major stakeholders and focus. This study was initiated by the Center rather than solicited by the National Guard. The New Hampshire National Guard facilitated the research, helping to arrange interviews with headquarters officials in Concord, with personnel who had served in the field, and with others familiar with the Guard's experience. The Vermont National Guard was aware that interviews were being conducted but chose not to make senior officials available for interviews. Nothing prohibits individual Vermont soldiers from discussing their views with you, we were told, but they are not allowed to speak globally or to represent the views of the Vermont National Guard. The Defense Department's National Guard Bureau provided information but declined several requests to meet with the researcher. It is hoped that the present study will prove of interest and utility to the National Guard, policy makers, and the American public.

As social scientists, the Tufts researchers are committed to provide an analytical framework for the available data. That framework benefits from earlier case studies that have identified key issues and challenges for international interveners in the internal armed conflicts of the post-Cold War period. As in the earlier Tufts studies, the perceptions of those interviewed are presented in their own terms. Those perceptions may—or may not—correspond to external reality. Thus the view of U.S. soldiers that their efforts to win the hearts and minds of local populations were very important to the longer term futures of Afghanistan and Iraq is presented as such, whether or not the research team subscribes to the assessment.

Afghanistan and Iraq have figured prominently in the earlier work of the Feinstein International Center. Afghanistan was the subject of reviews of humanitarian action in 1996,<sup>3</sup> 2004,<sup>4</sup> and 2006.<sup>5</sup> A country study published

in 1992 on the Gulf crisis<sup>6</sup> was followed by a series of reports monitoring the humanitarian crisis in Iraq during the years 2004–07.<sup>7</sup> The Guard study also converges with recurrent themes of earlier work, including the importance of understanding the political and cultural context, the ingredients of professionalism on the part of outside interveners, the roles played by international military actors in the humanitarian sector, and the impact of the media. Such studies are referenced throughout the body of the present report. A bibliography of the Center's work is available at fic.tufts.edu.

The data on which the present study is based are of four kinds. The first is comprised of material from the Veterans History Project of the Library of Congress. Since the passage of legislation in 2000 creating the project, interviews with some 14,000 veterans from World Wars I and II, the Korean and Vietnam wars, and the Global War on Terror have been archived and are now available to researchers and the general public. These materials, which form a part of the 50,000 collections that make up the world's largest oral history project, were reviewed on visits to the Library's American Folklife Center reading room by Larry Minear.

The interviews consulted were conducted by a variety of people, including the soldiers themselves, their families, members of veterans' organizations, state and local historical societies, and students from secondary school through graduate level. The Veterans History Project provides interviewers with a field kit containing sample questions to guide their conversations. To date, the project has assembled some 600 collections of veterans who served in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The interview with Colonel Warnecke, in the Voices of Veterans section, transcribed from VHS by Larry Minear, is an example of this kind of data. The names of the 48 soldiers whose VHP collections were reviewed for this report are contained in Annex 2.

A second source of materials is comprised of narratives and films by soldiers themselves. The study draws extensively on *The War Tapes*, a documentary filmed by three members of the New Hampshire National Guard during their deployment in Iraq in 2004–2005.<sup>8</sup> *Combat Diary* is a documentary drawing on filming by several Marines in a unit from Lima, Ohio.<sup>9</sup> *Operation Homecoming* is a collection of materials written by soldiers from Afghanistan and Iraq, selected and published in cooperation with the

THE SERIES "WAR STORIES," PRODUCED IN THE CONCORD (NEW HAMPSHIRE) MONITOR BY REPORTER JOELLE FARRELL

# CONCORD MONITOR

## 'Risking my life for kitty litter'

Halliburton raises the ire of some soldiers

By JOELLE FARRELL  
Monitor staff



## BRINGING IT HOME

THE RETURN TO REAL LIFE CAN BE THE HARDEST PART OF WAR

# WAR STORIES

In a five-day series of articles, photographs and graphics, the 'Monitor' will tell the story of New Hampshire at war: the day-to-day lives of soldiers in combat – and what they must live with when they return home.

## THROUGH A SOLDIER'S LENS

Scenes from the war in Iraq by Shaun Mulholland, Allentown police chief and master sergeant, Rhode Island Army National Guard



## LESSONS OF WAR

IN IRAQ, THE 744TH CAME TO EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

Montage by Michael Craig

National Endowment for the Arts.<sup>10</sup> *In Conflict: Iraq War Veterans Speak Out on Duty, Loss, and the Fight to Stay Alive* is another such collection,<sup>11</sup> as is *Warrior Writers*, a collection of writings by members of Iraq Veterans Against the War.<sup>13</sup> *The Blog of War: Front-line Dispatches from Soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan* has also provided a rich compendium of material.<sup>12</sup> As in the case of the Veterans History Project collections, some of the materials were authored by soldiers in the National Guard, others by members of the active-duty armed forces. The opening narrative by Colonel Perry provide an example of this genre of data.

A third source of data is comprised of news features and documentary films detailing the viewpoints of veterans. Print, radio, and television media have provided considerable coverage devoted to the issues under study, coverage that increased significantly during the period of the study. The views expressed by soldiers in a five-day series of newspaper articles that appeared in the *Concord Monitor* (NH) have proved particularly useful.<sup>14</sup> Other newspaper series, such as one in the *Boston Globe*,<sup>15</sup> and individual articles have provided data for this report. A PBS series that aired in April 2007, “America at a Crossroads,” contained three segments relevant to this study. “Warriors: What it is really like to be a soldier in Iraq” highlighted the experience of five men and a woman. “Operation Homecoming: Writing the Wartime Experience” interviewed several of the soldiers who had contributed to the *Operation Homecoming* volume. “Kansas to Kandahar: Citizen Soldiers at War” featured the experience of that state’s National Guard. The experiences of Vermont soldiers mentioned in the study draw from the documentary, *Vermont’s Fallen*,<sup>16</sup> produced by students at Vermont’s Norwich University.

Illustrating this third type of data are the comments of Abbie Pickett, transcribed by Larry Minear from a documentary by Jay Craven, *After the Fog: Interviews with Combat Veterans* and used with permission. (Produced in Vermont, the Craven documentary toured the state widely in 2006 and is also being used by the Veterans Administration as a training tool.) Other news features and documentary sources are referenced in the end notes as they appear in the text.

A final source of data is interviews conducted specifically for this study. Minear conducted interviews with more than sixty veterans and family members, community leaders, members of state National Guard units, chap-

lains, officials of the Veterans Administration, congressional staff, and members of the media. These conversations, principally in Vermont and New Hampshire, were held during the period September 2006 to May 2007. Several interviews were held in Washington, DC in January 2007 at the time of a national demonstration against the Iraq war. The study also draws on about three dozen interviews conducted during March and September 2005 by the New Hampshire National Guard as part of its Global War on Terror History Project. The opening comments of Sergeant Ben Flanders are an illustration of this type of data.

A partial list of those interviewed and otherwise consulted is provided in Annex 2. The list is partial because some of those interviewed requested to remain anonymous and because some of the materials provided by the New Hampshire National Guard were shared on the understanding that individuals would not be cited by name. The sources of quotations are provided wherever a given individual has consented to being identified.

Given such an abundance of sources, the process of selecting materials to incorporate into a report such as this is a delicate one. The study has made an effort to draw on the experiences of soldiers of all ranks, of women as well as men, of persons from a range of professional and occupational categories within the military, from members of minority communities, and from a variety of age groups. Special attention has been paid to the perspectives of those whose service in Afghanistan and Iraq was preceded by other deployments such as Vietnam, U.S. and U.N. peacekeeping operations, and Desert Storm, as well as to the views of those whose service won special recognition, such as the Global War on Terror award. While discussions with members of the Vermont National Guard provided the starting point for this research in September 2006, the active interest in and facilitation of the research by New Hampshire National Guard officials meant that by the conclusion of the interview process in July 2007, the New Hampshire experience loomed larger in the study than did Vermont’s.

The study was conducted by Larry Minear following his retirement as director of the Humanitarianism and War Project in June 2006. His first draft was reviewed by the research team in May 2007, revised in the light of suggestions received, and then reviewed again by the team in August 2007 before publication in September 2007.

#### END NOTES, ANNEX 4

1. For an overview of the findings of the Project and a listing of publications, see [hwproject.tufts.edu](http://hwproject.tufts.edu)
2. These studies and other publications of the Feinstein International Center are available at [fic.tufts.edu](http://fic.tufts.edu).
3. Antonio Donini, *The Policies of Mercy: UN Coordination in Afghanistan, Mozambique, and Rwanda* (Providence, RI: Watson Institute, 1996).
4. Ian Smillie and Larry Minear, *The Charity of Nations: Humanitarian Action in a Calculating World* (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian, 2004). See chapter on Afghanistan.
5. Antonio Donini, *Humanitarian Agenda 2015: Afghanistan Country Report* (Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, 2006).
6. Larry Minear et al., *United Nations Coordination of the International Humanitarian Response to the Gulf Crisis 1990-1992* (Providence, RI: Watson Institute, 1992).
7. See, for example, Antonio Donini, Larry Minear, and Peter Walker, "The Crisis of Humanitarian Action," *Humanitarian Exchange* 26; also Greg Hansen, "Coming to Terms with the Humanitarian Imperative in Iraq," Briefing Paper 2007.
8. *The War Tapes*, directed by Deborah Scranton, produced by Robert May and Steve James, a SenArts Films Production.
9. *Combat Diary—The Marines of Lima Company*, A&E Indie Films, 2006.
10. Andrew Carroll, ed., *Operation Homecoming: Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Home Front, in the Words of U.S. Troops and Their Families* (New York: Random House, 2006).
11. Yvonne Latty, ed., *In Conflict: Iraq War Veterans Speak Out on Duty, Loss, and the Fight to Stay Alive* (Sausalito, CA: Poli PointPress, 2006).
12. Matthew Currier Burden, *The Blog of War* (New York, London, Toronto and Sydney: Simon and Schuster, 2006).
13. Lovella Calica, ed., *Warrior Writers: Move, Shoot and Communicate* [A collection of creative writing by members of Iraq Veterans Against the War], Burlington VT, April 2007.
14. Joelle Farrell, "War Stories," *Concord Monitor*, September and October 2006. The series was comprised of individual articles, including "War Stories" (September 30); "Through a Soldier's Lens," "Veterans Divided over Politics," "A Soldier, A Father," and "Fighting the Internal Battles" (October 1); "The Forgotten Five" (October 2); "Lessons of War" (October 3); and "Bringing it Home," "Female Soldiers Face Their Own Challenges," and "Risking My Life for Kitty Litter," (October 4).
15. Thomas Farragher, "The War after the War," *Boston Globe*, October 29–31 and November 1, 2006.
16. *Vermont's Fallen*, a documentary produced by Professor William Estill and the communication students of Norwich (Vermont) University.