Documenting Conflicts in the 21st Century

Society of American Archivists
2011 Research Forum
Chicago August 23, 2011

Heather Soyka University of Pittsburgh
Eliot Wilczek Simmons College & Tufts University
Introduction

COIN & Its Documentary Challenges

Current Documentary Efforts

Unity of Documentary Effort

Next Steps

Transferrable Lessons


How many archival repositories does it take to document the complexities of the moon shot?
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How many archival repositories does it take to document the complexities of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars?
| Introduction                                                                 |
|                                                                            |
| **Describing Grand Challenge**                                            |
|                                                                            |
| COIN & Its Documentary Challenges                                         |
|                                                                            |
| Current Documentary Efforts                                                |
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| Unity of Documentary Effort                                                |
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Ambiguity

Actors

Information
Ambiguity
standard Fog of War
element of enemy-centric kinetic warfighting
focus on population-centric operations
COIN fought here
How do we document this?
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http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/
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“When we understand that slide, we'll have won the war.”

General Stanley McCrystal, 2009
Commander, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and
Commander, U.S. Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A) 2009 – 2010
Actors
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US military personnel served Iraq or Afghanistan

~2,000,000

~2,000,000

~2,000,000
## Introduction

US military personnel served Iraq or Afghanistan: \(~2,000,000~\)

## COIN & Its Documentary Challenges

Countries sent forces to Afghanistan: \(47\)

## Current Documentary Efforts

## Unity of Documentary Effort

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### Introduction
- US military personnel served Iraq or Afghanistan: ~2,000,000

### COIN & Its Documentary Challenges
- Countries sent forces to Afghanistan: 47

### Current Documentary Efforts
- Countries sent military personnel Iraq: 41

### Unity of Documentary Effort

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**NGOs active Afghanistan**

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US military personnel served Iraq or Afghanistan ~2,000,000

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Countries sent forces to Afghanistan 47

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Countries sent military personnel Iraq 41

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NGOs active Afghanistan 1,550

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NGOs active Iraq 6,000+

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Documenting Localities

Base in Kandahar
13,000 from 17 countries
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### US Military

Knowledge Management Tools
- Battle Command Knowledge Systems
- Land Warrior System
- TiGRNET
- Centers for Lessons Learned Forums
  - CompanyCommand
  - Platoon Leader

Doctrine & Regulations
- Information Operations JP 3-13
- Knowledge Management FM 6-01.1
- Army Lessons Learned Program AR 11-33
- The Army Records Information Management System AR 25-400-2
- Military History: Responsibilities, Policies, and Procedures AR 870-5

PowerPoint Culture
### Military Personnel

**Social Media**
- Email
- Blogs
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Online Forums

**www.milblogging.com**
- 3,128 milblogs / 45 countries
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Institutional Repositories

NARA

US Army Center of Military History

Marine Corps History program

Naval History & Heritage Command Archives
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SAA Research Forum *August 23, 2011*

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**Eliot Wilczek** Simmons College & Tufts University

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| COIN & Its Documentary Challenges | US Army Center of Military History  
| | Marine Corps History program  
| Current Documentary Efforts | Naval History & Heritage Command Archives  
| Unity of Documentary Effort | Additional Repositories  
| Next Steps | National Security Archive  
| Transferrable Lessons | National Defense University  
| | *Iraq war records*  
| | Hoover Institution  
| | *Iraq Baath Party records*  
| Community & Other Archives | WikiLeaks / Iraq War Logs  
| | www.milblogging.com  

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Demands
Inter-institutional & international effort

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Context

Rich description
Scalable
Exchangeable (cross-cultural)
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Context

Rich description
Scalable
Exchangeable (cross-cultural)

Relationships

Complex Network of Actors
Relationships
Core Descriptive Element

Cooperative relationships
institutions and communities
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Context

Rich description
Scalable
Exchangeable (cross-cultural)

Relationships

Complex Network of Actors
Relationships
Core Descriptive Element

Cooperative relationships
Institutions and communities

Trustworthiness

Establish Authenticity
Trustworthy Practices
Contested Issue
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Environmental Scan

Archival Institutions

Community Archives

Users & Stakeholders

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Conference

Stakeholders

White Paper Gap Analysis
Documentary needs vs. Current Practices & Capacity
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Natural Disasters
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Political Revolution
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Everyday Practices
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Albu Said, Iraq
June 16, 2007
http://www.flickr.com/photos/soldiersmediacenter/761432580/

Adhamiyah neighborhood, Baghdad, Iraq
June 16, 2007
Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2nd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division Public Affairs, U.S. Army
http://www.flickr.com/photos/soldiersmediacenter/5616370765/

Barawala Kalet valley, Kunar province, Afghanistan,
March 29, 2011
Pfc. Cameron Boyd, U.S. Army
http://www.flickr.com/photos/soldiersmediacenter/5616370765/

Near Forward Operating Base Lane, Zabul, Afghanistan,
March 5, 2009
Staff Sgt. Adam Mancini, U.S. Army
http://www.flickr.com/photos/soldiersmediacenter/3342067638/

Daily Mail
“When we understand that slide, we’ll have won the war:” US generals given baffling PowerPoint presentation to try to explain Afghanistan mess
April 28, 2010
http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1269463/Afghanistan-PowerPoint-slide-Generals-left-baffled-PowerPoint-slide.html

Wakuya, Japan
March 17, 2011
U.S. Navy
http://www.flickr.com/photos/usnavy/5534029429/

Banyas, Syria
May 6, 2011
Syria Frames Of Freedom
http://www.flickr.com/photos/syrian-freedom-captured/5736678914/

FOB Ramrod Kandahar, Afghanistan 2008
Cpt. Michael Soyka

CSUDH [California State University, Dominguez Hills] Archive
November 30, 2007
LWY
http://www.flickr.com/photos/lwy/2076394371/