

The Importance and Consequences of War Photography

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Abstract

War photographs speak of war through stories. Stories of people they depict, usually during the most painful situations of their lives. Thanks to these photographs, we are able to learn about the suffering of others. However, few people know those standing behind the lens, risking their lives and health, so they could tell us these stories. This article focuses on the influence of war photography on photographers' mental health. It wants to point out the relevance of war photography, which is important even today (especially in relation to the war in Ukraine, i.e., affecting us deeply), and learn about the inner world of photojournalists and their perception of their work. The article addresses the issue of the psychological effect of war photography on its authors. The objective is to demonstrate the psychological impacts of war photography and map its consequences. The article points out the development of war photography in the world and in Slovakia; it also refers to the pioneers of this field. The issue of psychological impacts of war photography, its origins and contribution, the ethical code of media pictures, as well as current perception of war photography are all analysed. The study further addresses the topical conflict in Ukraine and the work of photojournalists that have spent several days there risking their lives to bring us a visual testimony directly from the battlefield. It is also worth mentioning that at the time of writing this paper, i.e., at the beginning of April 2022, 12 journalists have been confirmed dead.

Keywords: *post-traumatic stress disorder, psychological impact, war photography, war photojournalism*

Introduction

War is as old as mankind itself. From prehistoric times till today, people wage wars against each other, whether over land or for political or religious reasons. In the past, war represented an inevitable part of every emperor's rule. Nowadays, however, war is not only an internal issue of soldiers and people at its centre. Thanks to photography, which brings testimony of every atrocity, war has become known to people all around the world. The effect and contribution of war photography and its authors are undeniable.

Despite this, it seems that its images have made us somewhat numb. Through photography, each event naturally becomes more realistic; however, the shock from the first look at the photograph fades with each consequent look. Familiarity with atrocity brought by photography makes

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the horrible seem more ordinary (Sontag, 2002a: 22). For this reason, the demarche addresses the characteristics of war photography, clarifies its basic terms and shows its influence on the psychological health of the journalists. Mention of the historical origins of war photography and its main representatives, who have remained relevant in the field until today, will also be made.

War photography and its psychological impact on journalists

War photographs reflect the reality that we do not want to see (Sontag, 2002b: 12). They are very important, and their primary role is to inform the world about atrocities inflicted on people. Associated Press, Magnum Photo or VU are among the agencies that closely cooperate with war journalists. These are sometimes referred to as documentarists or reporters, or simply just photographers.

Accuracy, truthfulness, and objectivity. Those are three main conditions that war photography must meet according to the journalism code of ethics (Lábová & Láb, 2009: 135).

Psychological impact of war photography

Mental health is just as important as physical health. For years, it had been pushed into the background and disorders, anxiety or depression had not been talked about. People felt shame or tried to pretend that nothing is happening. Being a war photographer, just as being a soldier, also brings consequences in the form of mental illness. Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, was the first to describe the “post-traumatic stress disorder”. This term refers to various pathological manifestations that emerge after undergoing serious phases in life. One of these could also be the so-called syndrome of war veterans (Zdeněk et al., 2019: 53). Photojournalists or Doctors Without Borders are exposed to the same syndrome. The Vietnam War brought an understanding of the concept of post-traumatic stress disorder and some initial ways of its treatment. Similarly, it has enabled the identification of certain pathological manifestations of this disorder (Kume, 2006: 65). A good example of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and its consequences is the story of photographer Kevin Carter. As a result of public pressure and the consequences of what he had seen, he made the radical decision to commit suicide.

Based on the probing of this issue, it is apparent that only a few experts study the psychological state that war photographers face, while many of them balance on the edge between life and death or mental health in order to bring us images directly from the centre of war conflicts. Anthony

Feinstein, author of the book *Shooting War: 18 Profiles of Conflict Photographers*, a documentarist and professor, who in the 1980s worked in the largest independent non-profit organization, Doctors Without Borders, in northern Namibia and southern Angola, observed men's reactions to war. He participated in making a documentary film that maps the work of war photographers and their experiences from the front lines. This documentary contains statements from war photojournalists who have encountered burnout syndrome or feelings of purposelessness. They even asked themselves why they still were and whether they were still important (Feinstein, 2018). He starts his book with an image of Tim Page, a photographer who mapped the Vietnam War. He describes his external injuries, struggles with drug addiction, and endless depression. Feinstein very aptly illustrates the psychological wounds that men and women repeatedly face during war (Crawford, 2019). In this connection, it is relevant to mention that a long-term absence of positive emotions and repeated exposure to stressful and depressing situations might weaken a human being and provide space for the emergence of various mental disorders, which can then also lead to an emergence of physical diseases (Zdeněk et al., 2019: 118). In the interview, Feinstein further appeals to the news agencies or magazines which are, in his opinion, morally responsible to look after their photographers, not just physically but also emotionally. He stresses that this profession is becoming more and more dangerous because photographers now are targeted by insurgents just as often as soldiers (Feinstein, 2018).

Consequences of war photography

In this subsection, the consequences of war photography are viewed from two angles. The first one would be its effect on the lives of photojournalists and the second one is the results it brings when seen by the masses.

In her book, Susan Sontag (2002a: 22) mentions that sometimes photographs are not enough to influence the public opinion on war. Despite this, many photographers risk their mental health and even their lives to change this. As stated above, photographers in war zones go through situations that often affect them for life (if they don't lose their life on the battlefield). Ashley Gilbertson, who photographed refugees in Indonesia or Kurdish population in northern Iraq under Saddam Hussein's rule, has admitted that it is impossible to photograph the most traumatic situations there and remain unchanged (McCauley, 2012).

Having commented on post-traumatic stress disorder that occurs among war veterans, journalists or many others affected by war, a further

attempt is made to contemplate whether it is possible for these people to reintegrate into society.

Most war veterans suffering from PTSD show similar schemes of behaviour. They are more prone to addiction, either to alcohol or hard drugs. They avoid sleep to eliminate nightmares. They are also victims of self-blame, which results in further deterioration of their mental state (Meyer, 2018: 3). War photographers are faced with the same consequences.

War photography pioneers

War photography basically emerged from journalist photography. *Roger Fenton*, the British photographer who photographed the Crimean war (1853 – 1856), is considered one of the first war photojournalists (Mulligan & Wooters, 2012: 513-514). His dispatch to the front was purely a political-strategic matter of the British Crown. The Crimean war was becoming increasingly unpopular, so the Brits sent their well-liked photographer Roger Fenton (allegedly at the instigation of Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's husband) to give a different, more positive impression of this undoubtedly controversial war (Sontag, 2002b: 46). As this concerned the British reputation, it is more than clear that Fenton had not photographed dying children, suffering women, or field hospitals full of incapacitated soldiers. It can, therefore, be stated that his photography served as governmental propaganda (Mulligan & Wooters, 2012: 513-514). His photographs had not been found interesting or beneficial, so he quit photographing and his name had been forgotten.

Other pioneers were *Mathew Brady* and his associates mentioned by Sontag in her book. They were the first photographers who tried to show the atrocities of war, yet they did not succeed at weakening the enthusiasm of young boys to enlist in the army (Sontag, 2002a: 24). The Civil War in the USA, also known as the war between the North and the South or war between the Union and the Confederacy, became known worldwide also thanks to him and his work, "Soldiers on the Battlefield".

Another very well-known photographer was *John McCosh*, who was engaged in the Anglo-Sikh War from 1848-49. He had made a photographic series, and had actually been photographing before Roger Fenton.

The 20th century started with the confirmation of objectivity as a golden rule of journalism. It was a blend of artistic passion for facts and aesthetic presentation also known as literary journalism. This age provided space for many journalists and photographers, also because the 20th century was a century of wars. This era gave an opportunity to many, even to women who became pioneers of this profession. During this period, a photographer

became an important adjunct for every journalist, and together they would cover war events. Photojournalism, supported by the Hearst and Pulitzer newspaper chains, had finally come of age (Rudner, 1981: 137).

One of the first wars of the golden age of photojournalism was the Spanish Civil War. It is said that it was a rehearsal for World War II. Post-war Spain was left destroyed, people were impoverished and tired. However, it is fascinating mainly because of its popularity among the world-renowned artists of the time. People from around the world travelled to Spain, either as military assistants or journalists who wanted to record the atrocities of fascism. Spain represented a start for many journalists, one of whom was also *David Chim Seymour* who became famous for photographing this particular war.

Another famous war photographer, who collaborated with war journalist Martha Gellhorn and with Ernest Hemingway, is *Robert Capa*, a photographer of Hungarian nationality, which he often mentioned as a reason for his work being successful. Demand for photographs from Spain was very high, and so the magazines had to also turn to freelance photographers, as the journalists were covering radicalizing Europe. Robert Capa had learned his trade by watching the massacre in Spain. In 1947, he himself said: "I have become a photographer during the Spanish Civil War" (Rudner, 1981: 138). Surprisingly, Capa had been unemployed for almost a year afterwards, but his determination brought him to another war. After the outbreak of World War II, he started to work as a photojournalist for *Life* and *Collier's* magazine in Europe and northern Africa. He was one of the few witnesses of landings in Normandy and brought very authentic pictures from there. He knew that documenting human suffering would be his life. His employers and friends admitted his ability to foresee and capture an event at just the right moment. For Capa, the camera was his best friend, whether in the war in Spain, World War II, the Arab-Israeli War or Indochina War. With his friends Henri Cartier-Bresson, George Roger, and David Seymour, he co-founded the photographic agency *Magnum Photos* in 1947. His colleague, John Steinbeck said something very important if we want to better understand his state of mind: "He proved to us that a man can live by this medium and still be true to himself. His pictures are not accidents. The emotion in them did not come by chance" (Rudner, 1981: 137). His work, however, also brought about the end of his life. He died while documenting the war of liberation of French Indochina. *Death of a Loyalist Militiaman* is one of the most famous Robert Capa's photographs. Despite this, it has not avoided controversy about its authenticity. The photograph depicts a Spanish soldier being shot and falling to the ground with a rifle in his hand.

The opinion that this scene had been staged appeared in 1975. Historian Phillip Knightley offered a hypothesis that the profession of a war photojournalist has been presenting a distortion of the truth since its origins (Lábová & Láb, 2009: 40).

Similarly, *Alexander Gardner*, who photographed the American Civil War, used the body of the same soldier in two different photographs. After the effort to show the true face of war in the Spanish Civil War or World War II came three conflicts that once again became tests of its strength: the Vietnam, the Falklands, and the Gulf wars (Brothers, 1997: 202). The Vietnam War was a much-discussed conflict very harsh for both sides. There were many casualties among the civilians, as well as among the American soldiers. Vietnam War was the most unpopular war in American history.

One of many photographers who tried to show the horrors of the Vietnam War was *Larry Burrows*. His photos had been published in *Life* magazine. The profession of a war photographer had cost him and his colleagues their lives (Brothers, 1997: 208).

We must not forget many female war photojournalists across history. To name just a few, mention will be made of *Gerda Taro*, whose work cost her life, or *Françoise Demulder*. She was on the front line in Vietnam, Lebanon, Iraq, Cambodia, and Ethiopia. In 1976, she was the first woman to win the World Press Photo award (Shemesh, 2008). By the way, women – war photographers are those, to whom the exhibition FEMMES PHOTOGRAPHES DE GUERRE (WOMEN WAR PHOTOGRAPHERS) in Paris, taking place from March 8 to December 31, 2022, is dedicated. It includes these women: Lee Miller, Gerda Taro, Catherine Leroy, Christine Spengler, Françoise Demulder, Susan Meiselas, Carolyn Cole, Anja Niedringhaus.

Contemporary war photography

As mentioned before, war is as old as humankind itself. However, people have not learned from their mistakes and still look for something that divides them rather than something they might have in common. Even now, when we think we are civilized and advanced, unimaginable atrocities are happening in various parts of the world (ultimately, not even that far – right now it is happening in the midst of Europe, in Ukraine). And even today there are people who give up their lives for the profession of war photojournalist, in order to inform the outside world about things we turn a blind eye to.

September 11, 2001 not only brought the attack on the American Twin Towers, but also a new dimension of combat in the form of terrorist attacks. The subsequent war in Iraq was long and exhausting. It did not bring

about the establishment of democracy that the Americans spoke of, but only further conflict between the Shiite and Sunni Muslims. The Shiite majority has reinforced its influence in many countries of the Middle East and translated its hatred into further wars (Žák, 2018).

Today, wars take place in many areas. The most known conflicts of recent history are, e.g., the war in Syria, the Upper Karabakh conflict, the war in Ukraine or in several African countries. Brutal methods of warfare still remain, but, today, they occur under different circumstances. The age of information warfare has begun. In the last two decades, we have been witnessing a significant change in armed conflicts. It seems that the 21st century is an era of nuclear weapons development and enormous armaments (Tumber & Webster, 2006: 14).

Ethics of photography in the media

Information technology has opened many doors and its progress has undoubtedly also influenced the media. The technology of photo editing has caused the fact that the altered image is indistinguishable from the original. Based on this fact, the media have started to adopt new ethical codes regulating the usage of visual materials (Lábová & Láb, 2009: 135). The following subchapter addresses the question of media digitalization in contemporary war photography, mentioning two examples of how the digitalization of photographs caused one author problems and distrust in their professionalism and another one fame for his idea of placing war images into famous metropolises around the world.

The ethical codes themselves started to be adopted in the 1920s. "They could be in a form of non-binding recommendations or be, for instance, a part of a journalist's employment contract" (135). Digitalization has brought a gradual change in the code of a journalist themselves. Before, it addressed mainly the journalist's behaviour, the importance of objectivity, or the whole process of taking a photograph. New codes are primarily aimed at what happens with the photograph after it has been taken. As mentioned before, it serves to lay down the rules, so that a photograph is not altered and presented as original.

Based on many resources, the majority of news agencies have been found to have their own ethical codes. "Photographs are trusted by our readers to be an accurate recording of an event," states the first paragraph of The Washington Post's ethical code (138). One can, however, question the scope of influence of a journalist's ideology on the requirement of objectivity.

Another factor that plays a significant role in objectivity is political propaganda. The most notable example of political propaganda would

definitely be World War II and the German minister of propaganda, Joseph Goebbels. Propagandistic photography is usually taken and published with the purpose to celebrate or strengthen the established regime, or destroy it. Working-class photographers are a good example. They started publishing their photographs after the Great Depression, supporting the advancing Bolshevik revolution. This movement of working-class photographers was spreading across Europe mainly in the 1930s (Mrázková, 1985: 118).

Contemporary international and local war photography

Contemporary war photography is definitely associated with the name *James Natchwey*, who has spent more than four decades documenting military conflicts. He was inspired by war photographs from Vietnam, as well as the civil rights movement in the USA. As a photographer, he went from war to war, and this fact has also affected his mental state. In his memorial interview, he says he manages his experiences with difficulty. He does not discuss his memories with people who have not been in similar situations.

At the beginning of his career, he worked in a small periodical in New Mexico, later he became a photographer for *Time* magazine. He has received many awards, e.g., Word Press Photo Award, Martin Luther King Award or Cannon Photo Award (Ruffo & Mancini, 2015). He says that doing this job, one has to be willing to face not only physical but also emotional risks (Hamilton, 2020). His life and contribution to the photographic world is described in a documentary filmed by director Christian Frei. It is an interesting image of a man who has dedicated his whole life to his work. At the same time, it points out the fragility of psychological state even though we are talking about a professional photographer. In the documentary, he asks himself questions that trouble him, especially the one of whether others' suffering was the key to his success and whether it is right to earn money from the suffering of others (Frei, 2001).

Kevin Carter was another famous war photographer. A man who had witnessed injustice bestowed upon the black community since childhood, Carter had been used to powerful topics, as he documented the consequences of Apartheid in South Africa. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his photograph of a starving little girl in Sudan with a vulture sitting and waiting behind her. He was a member of the so-called Bang Bang Club, whose name was supposed to evoke gunshots. The aforementioned loner James Natchwey also joined this group. On March 26, 1993, the aforesaid photograph appeared on the cover page of the New York Times. The photograph had not only brought its author fame, but also criticism and hate. The comments of people were dominated by the question of why he

did not help the girl but only took pictures of her misery. The girl from the photograph survived, but it is not known what happened to her afterwards. Carter, however, committed suicide only a few months after he had taken the photograph. He locked himself in his car and poisoned himself with exhaust fumes. Public pressure and the death of his colleague *Ken Oosterbroek* only amplified the depressive episodes he had suffered. His suicide note only proves the bad psychological state he was in. He wrote that he was haunted by memories of war, and he was hoping to join his friend Ken up above (Mironov, 2009).

Contemporary photography today does not lie solely in more criticism on social networks, but also in the question of its digitalization. On March 31, 2003, a photograph from Iraq appeared on the front page of the *Los Angeles Times*, its author being *Brian Walski*. It was a picture of an American soldier warning a group of Iraqis to take cover, and a civilian carrying his child in his arms. The photograph was a great success, but after detailed examination, it had been found that it was a composite of two different pictures. Walski apologized publicly and stated that he had not thought about ethics in this case because he wanted to show the world the best possible shot. This fact has initiated a controversial discussion about the credibility of the profession of a war photojournalist (Lábová & Láb, 2009: 55).

Digitalization, however, need not be just negative; it can also be beneficial. This is what war photographer *Patrick Chauvel* attempts to do in order to convey the war to people as much as possible. In 2006, he started to work on photomontages that were meant to bring war right to the streets of Paris. He prepared a series of photographs from Chechnya, Afghanistan, Israel, and Iraq, and placed all these images on the streets of European cities. The photographs looked very authentic. His aim was to show the general public that such conflicts could also concern us (57).

When speaking of contemporary war photography, one must not forget to mention very active Czech photojournalists *Markéta Kutilová* and *Lenka Klicperová*. In the book *In Sight of the Islamic State*, they describe their journey to the areas controlled by the Islamic State. They both struggle with the incomprehension of others regarding their decision to go to these war zones. Women are rarer in this profession and the conservative society still sees it as a man's job. Kutilová and Klicperová have made it through many expeditions together, whether in Kongo, India, Haiti, or Syrian Kurdistan (Klicperová & Kutilová, 2015: 11). Currently, they are both documenting the war in Ukraine, attacked by Russia on February 24, 2022.



Figure 1: Lenka Klicperová – Russian bombs hit civilian houses in Malyn, Ukraine
Source: https://www.all-about-photo.com/photo-articles/photo-article/1173/my-ukrainian-stories-by-lenka-klicperova?fbclid=IwAR0AWlJg2e5ja2D8eECr8BB-g4c_PStbavUJhv_dae_DrybXRgncQXlb9RM

From the Slovak war photojournalists, one must mention *Ján Husár*, who has mapped many world conflicts – in Ukraine, Iraq, or Gaza. He has been doing this job for a long time. He also contributed to National Geographic and History Channel, for which he made a feature documentary in South Africa (Jamrichová, 2021). He himself implied that some situations have a harmful impact on psychological state, but these impacts are not felt right away. He has risked his life in many military conflicts and still he encountered opinions that his profession is about manipulation (Ježová, 2019). He is currently covering the war in Ukraine.



Figure 2: Ján Husár – from the series *Born under Fire*, Kyiv, Ukraine

Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2171344909689266&set=pb.100004413337457.-2207520000..&type=3>

Staying on the subject of the current conflict, famous AP (The Associated Press) photographer *Emilio Morenatti* is also in Ukraine. The Spanish photographer has received many awards for his work. He has years of experience in war zones – for the AP, he worked in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Israel, and other places. In 2009, he was injured in a bomb blast in Afghanistan and lost his left leg. His pictures are world-renowned, for example, a shot of a crying woman from February 25 taken during the Kyiv bombing made the front page of the *New York Times* and many other world media. In an article for the AP, Morenatti speaks of how he sometimes feels like he would give up all his work and awards (including the Pulitzer Prize) just to walk on his own two legs again. However, he realizes that this injury has played its role in shaping who he is today. At the same time, he wonders, if disability could give us more than it has taken. He has been looking for an answer in conversations with soldiers and now Paralympians, who have also been wounded in combat and had their limbs amputated – for example, with sprinter Luis Puertas who lost both his legs in Iraq.



Figure 3: Emilio Morenatti – Iconic photography from Kyiv, Ukraine, Friday, Feb. 25, 2022
Source: <https://twitter.com/emiliomorenatti/status/1497107708927000599>

Let us continue with the topic of war in Ukraine. The world has learnt about one of the devastated cities, which had been cut off from electricity, water, food, or gas supply and was on the verge of humanitarian catastrophe – Mariupol – thanks to authentic photographs and brave photographers. The last two who got stuck there got on the list of Russian enemies: *Mstyslav Chernov* is a videographer and photojournalist for The Associated Press (AP), *Evgeniy Maloletka* is a Ukrainian photographer, a freelancer working for the AP. They have described the dangers of their profession and direct experiences from the two weeks they had spent there for the AP news. We have learned, for example, how extremely difficult it is to document the horrors that take place in such a place, but also to get the photographs out to the world, so all could know what is happening. They describe how complicated it was to send the photographed and filmed materials in a city where radio, television, and cell phone towers have been destroyed. Mstyslav Chernov states that it results in an absence of information, which accomplishes two goals: the first one is chaos, the second one is impunity. He had realized that unless there is proof of the bombed buildings and dying people, the aggressors could do whatever they wanted. “That’s why we took such risks to be able to send the world what we saw, and that’s what made Russia angry enough to hunt us down. I have never, never felt that breaking the silence was so important,” writes Chernov (2022).



Figure 4: Evgeniy Maloletka – Russian bombing of a maternity and children’s hospital in Mariupol on 9 March, 2022

Source: <https://khp.org/en/1608810176>

He also recalls how people begged them to photograph or film them, so their close ones would know they were still alive. These are the kinds of situations that show the power and importance of the medium of photography. “I have seen so much death that I was filming without almost taking it in,” adds the AP video journalist. The journalists do not only talk about the dangers of their work but also about the fact that while they were in isolation, their work was being discredited – when the Russian Embassy in London used social networks to post a statement that the photograph of a pregnant woman had been staged. These are also the problems that photojournalists face in times of information warfare (Kubínyi & Višnovský, 2021: 332). After this accusation and a call from their editor, the AP journalists went to the hospitals to find the photographed women and prove their existence. They realized that the footage must have been powerful enough to provoke a response from the Russian government (Chernov, 2022).

Finally, one can see below photographs from the Ukrainian town of Bucha, taken by photographer *Vadim Ghirda*.



Figure 5: Vadim Ghirda – Bucha, Ukraine, Saturday, April 2, 2022

Source: <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-kyiv-world-news-europe-5e85aac62d46a080f35f802f5ce19443>

After the Russian army started to withdraw and Ukrainian military units returned to the cities, they found streets full of killed civilians. The published images triggered a reaction from world leaders. The spokesperson for the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Liz Throssell, stated that “[...] the photos of bodies of civilians lying in the streets of Bucha are extremely disturbing, while she pointed out that deliberate killing of civilians is a war crime” (Filo, 2022). They have not only caused outrage in almost the entire world, but they have also become a base for discussions about further, more restrictive sanctions against Russia. Yet again, this proves the great importance of photographs from war zones.

War photography does not only impact its authors, but also its recipients. Just as some photojournalists sustained physical injuries and lost their limbs or even their lives because of their job, others are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Military psychologist Ivan Sopoliga mentions this disorder in his interview for Denník N in connection to the war in Ukraine. He refers to a Canadian study that confirms that “[...] when you have strong ties to a home or any place you are from or where your close ones are, the occurrence of post-traumatic stress disorder is significantly lower. Individuals with good social background can suffer from the

disorder, but it is less common, or its course is much faster” (Horák, 2022). Although he is talking about soldiers, not journalists, based on the previous sections, we can state that it also concerns photojournalists on the frontline. When your name is on an enemy list, when you risk your life to bring authentic pictures, when a certain part of society discredits it, and you are overcome by a feeling that your work is pointless... All of this affects the emotions and behaviour of a photojournalist (and every participant in war). Andrej Bán, a contemporary Slovak photojournalist, also talks about his experiences from war zones, as well as his perception of war photography: “One of the refugees once showed me terrible photos and videos of his close ones and acquaintances. In one moment, I turned my head away, I said I’d had enough. Not as a photographer, but as a human being, I cannot look at it and it does not make me a better person in any way. James Nachtwey has a book *Inferno* that is similarly brutal. I started flipping through it and put it away after a while. I will never buy it, although I respect its author very much. It was beyond what I can take seeing, and I have seen quite a lot in my life” (Močková & Gális, 2015). He even admitted that he had had some psychological problems for some time, he had no motivation to do anything, avoided his archives, and only participated in non-conflict reporting (Močková & Gális, 2015).

Brutal images also have an indisputable impact on the percipients. There is usually a warning at the beginning of articles that contain such war photographs. On social networks, such photographs are also hidden, they can only be viewed after clicking the sentence: “Sensitive content. This photo may contain violent or graphic content. View photo.” We are thus able to choose whether we can handle seeing these images or not.

Conclusions

War photography has become an intrinsic part of the history of this world, just as the war itself. War is not only about battle strategy or weapons and their development. First of all, it is full of human stories and suffering that could often go unnoticed, if it weren’t for photographers and journalists who are trying to give these stories their voice and shape. Today, it might be different from the times when most of the artists and journalists from around the world ran to Spain during the Spanish Civil War to inform and call on the world, or when they photographed and wrote about Allied landings in Normandy, or when they informed people about the war in Yugoslavia. War itself has changed just as fast as the world has under the influence of technology. It might also be partly true that we are more immune to the images of suffering and dying because we have got used to seeing violence.

The speed of this world does not let us follow the suffering of others thoroughly. For this reason, the work of war photojournalists is even more admirable. First, they must be people of great tenacity that are not afraid to go into the unknown, in order to provide information despite the criticism that they sometimes face. Therefore, the objective of this article was to not only describe and investigate the extent of the psychological effect of war on photojournalists but also to examine how this profession has changed.

In the introduction, the origins of war photography and the psychological impact of war on photojournalists were briefly addressed. In the following sections, war photography across history, its pioneers and contemporary Slovak and international war photojournalists have been dealt with. It is said that seeing once is better than hearing a hundred times. When we look at pictures from the frontline, it touches not only us – the percipients, but it also strongly affects the people who create these contents and, in their way, also participate in war. The work of war journalists has a significant impact on their emotions and behaviour. All the horrors we see indirectly, they see right from “the front row”.

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