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*Mortars and Memes: Participating in Pop Culture from a War Zone*

Just as television defined Vietnam and the first Gulf war, the internet is defining what we know, see, and remember about Iraq and Afghanistan. A handful of communication scholars have begun paying attention to the way personnel represent themselves online, arguing that warrior-produced content offers an illuminating alternative to military-media control over information. Although audience- or text-based approaches tend to focus on combat videos, I examine the practice of creating internet meme videos in a war zone. The compulsion for US troops to produce meme videos is fueled not only by a desire to participate in pop culture back home but, more significantly, by a recognition that the war is typically left out of public conversation.