Activity: History and Journalism: Examining the Events of World War II Through a Journalistic Lens

Guiding question:
How can we reconcile the larger events of World War II in Northern Europe with the more personal stories and experiences of those who reported on it firsthand?

DEVELOPED BY MAILE E. CHOW

<table>
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<th>Grade Level(s):</th>
<th>9-12</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject(s):</td>
<td>English/Language Arts, Journalism, Social Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cemetery Connection:</td>
<td>Normandy American Cemetery, Lorraine American Cemetery, Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery, Ardennes American Cemetery</td>
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<td>Fallen Hero Connection:</td>
<td>No specific connection</td>
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Overview

In this lesson students will use ABMC and other available resources to research and gather information regarding World War II news correspondents who made significant contributions to the field of journalism during the war. Students will read and listen to historical news items (articles, cartoons, photographs, radio broadcasts, etc.) from the time period and analyze and interpret them. Following this research, students will write a multi-genre research paper, based on the historical facts of their correspondent’s experience. Follow up will include a written editorial, wherein students will take a position on a current war, and write commentary for publication in the school newspaper’s op/ed page regarding the risks undertaken by journalists who cover war.

Historical Context

War correspondents have existed as long as journalism. However, as World War II began, new technology made it possible for news of the war to be communicated in increasingly modern ways, for the time. War correspondents of World War II were courageous, often controversial men and women who communicated the chaos and brutality of the battlefield to their fellow citizens on the homefront. Their experiences offer a fresh and compelling perspective on World War II, and raise questions about the rights and responsibilities of a free press in times of war. This lesson will delve into the history of those who served their country in a journalistic capacity during the war. There are 11 civilian war correspondents buried in American Battle Monuments Commission cemeteries abroad, including Brittany American Cemetery, Cambridge American Cemetery, Epinal American Cemetery, Florence American Cemetery, Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery, Manila American Cemetery, Normandy American Cemetery, and Rome-Sicily American Cemetery.

Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to

• Understand, interpret, and synthesize information about the role of journalism in World War II;
• Write in a variety of genres on the topic; and
• Make conscious decisions about what information should be presented to the reader.
Standards Connections

Connections to Common Core

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2.A Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2.B Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2.C Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2.D Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

Connections to C3 Framework

D2.His.1.6-8 Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.

D2.His.6.6-8 Analyze how people’s perspectives influenced what information is available in the historical sources they created.

D2.His.6.9-12 Analyze the ways in which the perspectives of those writing history shaped the history that they produced.

D2.His.4.9-12 Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

D2.His.11.9-12 Critique the usefulness of historical sources for a specific historical inquiry based on their maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.
Documents Used ★ indicates an ABMC source

Primary Sources

Art and editorial cartoons by Ugo Giannini and Bill Mauldin
PBS
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amERICANexperience/features/photo-gallery/warletters-cartoons/

Assorted World War II Radio Broadcasts
Old Radio World
http://www.oldradioworld.com/shows/World_War_II_News_Broadcasts.php

Bill Mauldin: Beyond Willie and Joe
Library of Congress
http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/swann/mauldin/mauldin-atwar.html

“I Can Hear it Now” with Edward R. Murrow
YouTube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7ge1S1syNY

Radio Broadcasts by Edward R. Murrow
Internet Archive

Richard C. Hottelet on D-Day Radio Broadcast
YouTube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8xkQ05VT_k

Robert Trout and others on D-Day Radio Broadcast
YouTube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PcZ1qO8DsE

World War II Cartoons
http://ww2cartoons.org

Secondary Sources

About America: Edward R. Murrow
U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Information Programs
http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/media/pdf/books/murrow.pdf

*Letters* Film ⭐
American Battle Monuments Commission
https://www.abmc.gov/multimedia/videos/letters


National World War II Museum, New Orleans, Louisiana
http://nationalww2museum.org

*Normandy American Cemetery Visitors Brochure* ⭐
American Battle Monuments Commission
http://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Normandy_Booklet_4-8-2014_508.pdf

*The Normandy Campaign Interactive* ⭐
American Battle Monuments Commission

*OK, Let’s Go* Film ⭐
American Battle Monuments Commission
https://www.abmc.gov/multimedia/videos/ok-lets-go


Search ABMC Burials and Memorializations ⭐
American Battle Monuments Commission
https://www.abmc.gov/search-abmc-burials-and-memorializations

*World War II Interactive Timeline* ⭐
American Battle Monuments Commission
Materials

- Murrow’s Boys Handout
- Multi-Genre Research Paper Handout
- Multi-Genre Research Paper Rubric
- Paper, pens, colored pencils, etc., to create art projects in the multi-genre form
- Internet access for student research

Lesson Preparation

- Copy the list of reporters in the “Murrow’s Boys” group. Share information with class as an introduction to this lesson.
- Collect audio recording of World War II radio broadcast to play for class.
- Print one copy of the Multi-Genre Explanation Handout and Rubric for each student.

Procedure

Activity One: Introduce the concept of embedded journalism (45-60 minutes)

- Embedded journalism is the practice of placing journalists within and under the control of one side’s military during an armed conflict. Embedded reporters and photographers are attached to a specific military unit and permitted to accompany troops into combat zones.
- Discuss the “Murrow’s Boys” with students
  - Play recordings of radio broadcasts created by the “Murrow’s Boys”
  - Richard C. Hottelet on D-Day
  - Robert Trout and others on D-Day

Activity Two: Multi-Genre Project Introduction (45-60 minutes)

- A multi-genre research paper is a collection of pieces written in a variety of genres, informed by a student’s research on a particular subject that presents one or more perspectives on a research question. A primary goal of such a paper is to “experiment” with genres to represent key learnings and understandings.
- In the multi-genre research project, the student completes research as if completing a traditional research paper: collecting information and recording it, synthesizing the information and then presenting it through writing. Instead of the single, extended prose piece of the traditional research paper, however, the multi-genre paper consists of a number of creative
pieces—poetry, journal entries, news articles, lists, artwork, graphics, one-act plays, comic books, and etc. It is imaginative writing based on fact.

• Unlike the research conducted for a traditional paper, research for a multi-genre paper often does not begin with a working thesis. Rather, the multi-genre researcher begins with an interest and discovers a unifying element along the way. This emergent theme often suggests a thread with which the writer may create cohesion among the separate pieces of writing.

• Students will complete a multi-genre project with information regarding one of the journalists in the “Murrow’s Boys” group.

Assessment Materials

• Following completion of the multi-genre project (which can be completed inside or outside of class at teacher’s discretion), students will write an editorial piece for publication in the school newspaper. This written piece will encourage students to take a stand on a current or historical conflict, commenting on a correspondent’s responsibility to report from the field, actions of valor, and risks undertaken.

• Students can assess themselves and teachers can evaluate the project using this rubric.

• Teachers can check multi-genre projects and observe and note student participation and accomplishment in group discussion.

Methods for Extension

• Older or advanced students may choose to include more genres, or more in-depth information about the conflicts discussed.

• Students can pair a print journalist with a radio journalist and compare how the two covered the same event.

• The American Battle Monuments Commission maintains U.S. military cemeteries overseas. These cemeteries are permanent memorials to the fallen, but it is important that students know the stories of those who rest here. To learn more about the stories of some of the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice, visit www.abmceducation.org/understandingsacrifice/abmc-sites.

Adaptations

• Teachers can simplify the requirements of this project to make it more accessible to younger learners. Younger students can be assigned genres (such as one poem, one news article and one graphic element), rather than being allowed to choose their own genres.
“Murrow’s Boys”

- **Edward R. Murrow** - covered the Blitz in London and the European Theater during World War II for CBS News; hired a team of foreign correspondents for CBS News who became known as “Murrow’s Boys”
- **William L. Shirer** - hired in August 1937, working from Berlin, Vienna, and Geneva
- **Thomas Grandin** - hired spring 1939 to cover Paris
- **Larry LeSueur** - hired late in the summer of 1939 to cover Rheims, France
- **Eric Sevareid** - hired in the summer of 1939 to cover Paris
- **Mary Marvin Breckinridge** - hired in fall 1939 covering Northern Europe
- **Cecil Brown** - hired February 1940 to cover Italy
- **Winston Burdette** - hired by Betty Wason in spring 1940 to replace Wason and to cover Scandinavia
- **Howard K. Smith** - hired in spring of 1941
- **Charles Collingwood** - hired in the winter 1941 to replace Eric Sevareid in Paris
- **William Downs** - hired in September 1942 to cover Moscow
- **Richard C. Hottelet** - the last of the Murrow Boys, hired in 1944 to cover the invasion of Normandy
The Reporters of World War II: A Multi-Genre Research Paper

A multi-genre research paper is a collection of pieces written in a variety of genres that is based on research and presents one or more perspectives on a research question. A primary goal of such a paper is to “experiment” with genres to represent key learnings and understandings.

Multi-genre writing promotes active learning on the part of the student for several reasons:

- Students make conscious decisions about the genres they choose;
- Students explain why they chose a particular genre; and
- Students incorporate research findings and information in a creative way.

In the multi-genre research project, you will complete the research as if completing a traditional research paper: collecting information and recording it, synthesizing the information and then presenting it through writing. Instead of the single, extended prose piece of the traditional research paper, however, the multi-genre paper consists of a number of creative pieces—poetry, journal entries, news articles, lists, artwork, graphics, one-act plays, comic books, etc. It is imaginative writing based on fact.

Unlike the research conducted for a traditional paper, research for a multi-genre paper often does not begin with a working thesis. Rather, the multi-genre researcher begins with an interest and discovers a unifying element along the way. This emergent theme often suggests a thread with which the writer may create cohesion among the separate pieces of writing.

Project Specifics

You will complete a multi-genre project with information regarding one of the journalists in the “Murrow’s Boys” group or a journalist who covered the events of the Normandy Invasion. This project will contain the following:

- a title page with the war correspondent’s name, date of birth/death, dates of his/her life, and photograph of the correspondent.
- a table of contents
- a map delineating war zone and general location where the correspondent was assigned
- a collage page of five headlines (with dates and sources identified) from this specific time period
• a two-page factual summary of war correspondent’s contributions to the field of journalism, describing the particular risks undertaken in this specific assignment, the dedication and accuracy the correspondent showed, and the outcome of his/her efforts (if the information was accurately relayed; where or in what publication the dispatches were published, edited, withheld or censored).

• three examples of multi-genre writing of the student’s choice. This could include creative journaling, poetry, reports from the field, interviews with soldiers, editorial cartoons, etc.

• a brief one-page biography or timeline indicating major events in the war correspondent’s journalistic career.

• a one-page self-assessment that addresses the following:
  ° What surprised you during the process of writing your Multi-Genre paper?
  ° What aspect of this paper would you like advice on?
  ° What did you learn about writing in different genres as a way of inquiring into your topic and communicating what you know?
  ° Describe the strongest and weakest parts of your paper and explain why you categorize those parts as strongest/ weakest.
  ° What grade do you feel you deserve on this paper and why?

**Wrap-Up**

Following completion of the multi-genre project, you will each write an editorial piece, for publication in the school newspaper. This written piece will encourage you to take a stand on a current or historical conflict, commenting on a correspondent’s responsibility to report from the field, actions of valor and risks undertaken.
## Multi-Genre Research Paper Rubric

### Holistic impact of the paper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advanced</strong></td>
<td>Knocks me off my feet, bowls me over, so informative and emotionally moving is the paper. There is evidence of original thinking, depth, specificity of detail, delights of language or insight. This multi-genre paper has excellent writing that includes attention to a pleasing visage of the page, action verbs, varied sentence length, effective word choice, skilled placement of information, strong leads and endings, visual and other sensory imagery. Research is interesting, surprising, and cleverly and creatively incorporated into the paper with properly formatted in-text citations (multiple sources are used for the informational pieces). Paper is at least 2000 words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highly proficient</strong></td>
<td>A good paper. I am upbeat because of some of the solid moves the writer pays attention to that are mentioned above. I learn things about the topic. While the paper didn't blow me away, I am happy with its competent execution. Research is good; there may be some problems with in-text citations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proficient</strong></td>
<td>This paper is complete but the writing did not make use of those qualities that make writing sing. There is a feeling of middle of the road about it. There are likely problems with in-text citations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic</strong></td>
<td>This is a below average paper. The writing shows almost few of the skills mentioned above. Some pieces seem careless, as if written hastily and never revised. Content shows little depth or insight. More telling than showing. In-text citations are incorrect or not present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emerging</strong></td>
<td>Project seems careless. Some or all pieces contain plagiarized information. No resources are cited in the paper. An insult to turn in, an insult to the teacher, to the disciplined, creative act of writing, and to your own mind.</td>
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</table>

*Rubric adapted from Tom Romano’s work*
## Required Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Not present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The paper contains an original, illustrative title and Table of Contents</strong></td>
<td>Original, surprising, piques a reader’s interest, imaginative, maybe a subtitle</td>
<td>Functional, some imagination</td>
<td>Title simply names the subject</td>
<td>Title dull, something like “WWII Multi-Genre Paper”</td>
<td>Title missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paper contains map delineating war zone and general location correspondent was assigned</strong></td>
<td>Map is clear and definitive, outlines areas well</td>
<td>Functional map</td>
<td>Map simply shows general area</td>
<td>Map unclear</td>
<td>Map missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collage of headlines from time period</strong></td>
<td>Headlines are thoughtful and thought-provoking, clear research invested in finding them</td>
<td>Functional, some imagination</td>
<td>Headlines are unrelated to time period, seem cobbled together</td>
<td>Headlines dull or completely unrelated to project</td>
<td>Headlines missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Two-page factual summary of war correspondent’s contributions to the field of journalism</strong></td>
<td>Reader wants to read on, so compelling and interesting is the relevant information and voice. Sets the reader up well for what is ahead.</td>
<td>Discusses the importance of your topic, how it was chosen, and includes a thesis statement that gives the paper direction</td>
<td>Provides useful information, not too brief or too long. May be missing some of the elements</td>
<td>Provides little useful information, is too long or too brief</td>
<td>Absent or so brief that it may as well be absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Copy Editing</strong></td>
<td>Contains few errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling</td>
<td>Contains more than a few errors but meaning is not seriously affected</td>
<td>Contains enough errors to make reader wonder if the writer proofread carefully.</td>
<td>Contains errors to the point of confusion</td>
<td>Contains many errors to the point of distraction</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fact-based genre #1 (at least 400 words)</strong></td>
<td>Vivid, interesting information. Adds insight and depth to the overall paper, is well written with active verbs, specificity, and few wasted words. Several resources are cited throughout the text so the information flows naturally</td>
<td>Interesting, though not particularly vivid writing. More research needed</td>
<td>Little interesting information. Writing could be tightened and sharpened</td>
<td>Rambling, unfocused, fuzzy focus, ho-hum writing</td>
<td>Absent or plagiarized (some or all of the piece obviously plagiarized from one or more sources)</td>
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<td><strong>Fact-based genre #2</strong></td>
<td>Vivid, interesting information. Adds insight and depth to the overall paper, is well written with active verbs, specificity, and few wasted words. Several resources are cited throughout the text so the information flows naturally</td>
<td>Interesting, though not particularly vivid writing. More research needed</td>
<td>Little interesting information. Writing could be tightened and sharpened</td>
<td>Rambling, unfocused, fuzzy focus, ho-hum writing</td>
<td>Absent or plagiarized (some or all of the piece obviously plagiarized from one or more sources)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fact-based genre #3</strong></td>
<td>Vivid, interesting information. Adds insight and depth to the overall paper, is well written with active verbs, specificity, and few wasted words. Several resources are cited throughout the text so the information flows naturally</td>
<td>Interesting, though not particularly vivid writing. More research needed</td>
<td>Little interesting information. Writing could be tightened and sharpened</td>
<td>Rambling, unfocused, fuzzy focus, ho-hum writing</td>
<td>Absent or plagiarized (some or all of the piece obviously plagiarized from one or more sources)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Works Cited</strong></td>
<td>Complete with at least eight properly formatted sources, listed in alphabetical order</td>
<td>May contain seven sources. Possibly one or two minor errors with formatting</td>
<td>May contain five or six sources. Brief, incomplete, bibliographic style inconsistent</td>
<td>May contain three or four sources. Brief, incomplete, bibliographic style inconsistent</td>
<td>not submitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-assessment</strong></td>
<td>Thorough, detailed answers to all of the questions</td>
<td>Thorough, detailed answers to all of the questions</td>
<td>Self-assessment needs to be more detailed</td>
<td>Self-assessment rambles or is off-task</td>
<td>not submitted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About America: Edward R. Murrow

Edward R. Murrow: A Life
Freedom's Watchdog: The Press in the U.S.
Edward R. Murrow: Founder of American Broadcast Journalism
Hannemarie "New York" Media for Quality Reporting
"See It Now": Murrow in McCarthy
Murrow's Legacy
Biography

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On a cool September evening somewhere in America in 1940, a family gathers around a vacuum-tube radio. As someone adjusts the tuning knob, a distinct and serious voice cuts through the static:

"This is Edward R. Murrow, reporting live from London..."

Murrow's reputation as one of America's most celebrated journalists endures long after his life was ended by lung cancer at the age of 57. Known as "the voice of war," Murrow would spearhead the use of radio-based reporting and almost single-handedly create the concept of "broadcast journalism."

Edward R. Murrow's reputation as one of America's most celebrated journalists endures long after his life was ended by lung cancer at the age of 57. Known as "the voice of war," Murrow would spearhead the use of radio-based reporting and almost single-handedly create the concept of "broadcast journalism."

By MARK BETKA

"It has always seemed to me the real art in this business is not so much moving information or guidance or policy five or 10,000 miles. That is an electronic problem. The real art is to move it the last three feet in face to face conversation."

— Edward R. Murrow, ABC TV's "Issues and Answers," August 4, 1963

Edward R. Murrow broadcasts election results for CBS-TV on election night, November 7, 1956. Murrow, born in a family of poor farmers, rose to become one of the United States' most famous journalists.

"It has always seemed to me the real art in this business is not so much moving information or guidance or policy five or 10,000 miles. That is an electronic problem. The real art is to move it the last three feet in face to face conversation."

— Edward R. Murrow, ABC TV's "Issues and Answers," August 4, 1963
Years later, in a talk published by Nieman Reports, Murrow’s friend and producer at CBS Fred W. Friendly, recalled the 24-minute account from the liberated Nazi camp: “Murrow … follows the Third Army into Buchenwald, sees what you know was seen there, was profoundly moved, depressed, angered. His anger was his greatest weapon, but he knew how to control it … No adjectives, I don’t think I ever heard him use an adjective. People piled up like cords of wood, 10 deep, and the smell. Without saying that he vomited, you know that he had … There was a quality in Murrow and intensity of purpose, a consciousness: he was an American conscience.”

After CBS, weary of controversy, Murrow grew increasingly disillusioned with the medium. He continued at CBS until 1961, when President John F. Kennedy appointed him head of the U.S. Information Agency (USIA). Since 1953, USIA, the U.S. government agency waging the “war of ideas” against the Soviet Union, had been charged with “telling America’s story to the world” through educational exchanges, books and publications, radio broadcasts through the Voice of America, and libraries and information centers run by U.S. Embassies around the world. Murrow’s goal was to make the agency more results-oriented, and he worked hard trying to reinvigorate USIA, secure adequate funding from Congress, and transform its officers into “persuaders” as well as disseminators of information. Murrow’s tenure at the helm of USIA coincided with important events of the early 1960s: Soviet resumption of nuclear testing, the Cuban missile crisis, and the U.S. decision to desegregate the military. Not long after Kennedy’s death, Murrow, ill following cancer surgery, left USIA. He died in New York, on April 27, 1965.

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The broadcast Murrow made when he rode along with U.S. flyers on several bombing missions over Europe, risking his life to give American listeners a better sense of what the war was really like and how the U.S. soldiers were fighting it. But it was from the Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany where he printed his darkest picture, of the indestructible horror of murder on an industrial scale. There were two rows of bodies stuck up like cordwood. They were thin and very white. Some of the bodies were stripped to the waist, though there seemed to be little flesh to bruise. Some had been shot through the head, but they bled but little, all except two were nailed. I tried to count them as a best as I could and arrived at the conclusion that all had been killed of more than 500 men and boys lay there in two rows of bodies stuck up like cordwood. They were thin and very white. Some of the bodies were stripped to the waist, though there seemed to be little flesh to bruise. Some had been shot through the head, but they bled but little, all except two were nailed. I tried to count them as a best as I could and arrived at the conclusion that all had been killed of more than 500 men and boys lay there in two rows of bodies stuck up like cordwood. They were thin and very white. Some of the bodies were stripped to the waist, though there seemed to be little flesh to bruise. Some had been shot through the head, but they bled but little, all except two were nailed. I tried to count them as a best as I could and arrived at the conclusion that all had been killed.
The First Amendment itself was the result of a lengthy political debate conducted through newspapers, and its authors knew exactly what kind of freedom they were letting loose. The press of their day was highly opinionated, partisan, and filled with vicious personal attacks.

Political Polarization, From Washington to Lincoln

"He is not for us in support of our administration policies, including "socialists" such as Thomas Jefferson. The opposition printed lively newspapers of its own, writing that President Washington was "ruling in an inhumane manner to the corruption of the presidency." When Jefferson was elected in 1800, Passaro during World

The Sedition Act of 1918 prohibited "false, scandalous, and malicious writing" against the U.S. government or Congress. The act was repealed in 1921. An accompanying law, the Espionage Act of 1917, remains in force and makes it illegal to interfere with the armed forces or to aid or support an enemy of the United States. During World War I, the U.S. postmaster general interpreted the provision broadly to prohibit anti-war newspapers from being delivered through the mail. In 1917, during the Vietnam War, the U.S. government obtained an injunction in federal court to halt the New York Times from continuing publication of the Pentagon Papers. These documents, prepared by the Department of Defense, analyzed the history of U.S. involvement in Vietnam and had been classified as top secret. When the Washington Post then began publishing the same material, the judge in that case interpreted the act broadly to prohibit another newspaper from being delivered through the mail.

Today, while government officials sometimes seek to prevent sensitive information from being discovered by the press, there are no legal restrictions on newsworthy materials on national security grounds. Foreign visitors often are surprised to discover that more than 100 accredited journalists freely roam the corridors of the Pentagon in search of news, unescorted even in time of war.

According to University of Chicago First Amendment law professor Geoffrey R. Stone, whose 2004 book Perilous Times details the history of American free speech in time of war. Thomas Jefferson strongly supported press freedom, but he also had few kind words for the newspapers themselves and repeatedly called for press reforms and balanced reporting. "Wee it be to us to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or a government without newspaper," Jefferson once wrote. "I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter." Yet, he also said, "I deplore the piloting into which our newspapers have fallen and the malignity, the vulgarity, and malicious spirit of those who write for them."

Decades later, political polarization during the Civil War resulted in a barrage of press criticism against President Abraham Lincoln. In 1863, the editor of the Chicago Tribune Union soldiers went "in disgust at the implacability that has devoted them to近乎 for purposes with which they have no sympathy" was an angry Union general who closed down the newspaper. Lincoln ordered it reopened.

The Government and the Press

U.S. law twice has sought formally to limit freedom of the press. The Sedition Act of 1918 was passed during the presidency of John Adams, when the nation was on the brink of war with France. It was aimed at opposition newspapers but had a built-in expiration date that expired when Jefferson was elected in 1800. Passaro during World War I, the Sedition Act of 1918 prohibited "false, scandalous, and malicious writing" against the U.S. government or Congress. The act was repealed in 1921. An accompanying law, the Espionage Act of 1917, remains in force and makes it illegal to interfere with the armed forces or to aid or support an enemy of the United States. During World War I, the U.S. postmaster general interpreted the provision broadly to prohibit anti-war newspapers from being delivered through the mail. In 1917, during the Vietnam War, the U.S. government obtained an injunction in federal court to halt the New York Times from continuing publication of the Pentagon Papers. These documents, prepared by the Department of Defense, analyzed the history of U.S. involvement in Vietnam and had been classified as top secret. When the Washington Post then began publishing the same material, the judge in that case interpreted the act broadly to prohibit another newspaper from being delivered through the mail.

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Modern broadcast journalism began in the 1920s and 1930s and came of age in the 1940s, when television began to take over from printed papers as the primary source of news for many Americans. Government broadcast licenses at that time required fair and balanced reporting through the so-called Fairness Doctrine. Murrow's March 9, 1954, report on McCarthy's tactics, for example, demonstrated the network's commitment to fair and balanced reporting. The networks also displayed the new power of television. Many newspapers had been reporting and questioning McCarthy's tactics, but it was Murrow's March 9 broadcast that brought McCarthy's actions into America's living rooms.

"It is well to remember that freedom through the press is the thing that comes first," Murrow told the New York Herald Tribune in 1958, stressing his own belief in a great democratic institution. "Most of us probably feel we could not be free without newspapers, and that is the real reason we want the newspapers to be free."

Vince Crawley is a staff writer in the Bureau of International Information Programs of the U.S. Department of State.
About America: Edward R. Murrow

MURROW: FOUNDER OF AMERICAN BROADCAST JOURNALISM

By Bob Edwards

On the day Ed Murrow died in 1965, CBS anchor Hazel Scott, who had known Murrow for decades, told the “World Journal Tribune” that Murrow’s “trenches were not in a uniform and a helmet. His battle was to be found in the field of morale and courage.”

The founder only passes by once. Murrow’s accomplishments can’t be duplicated because he was writing on a blank page.

On a single day in 1938 he was on the ground in London with a camera and a microphone. That day’s all-night radio documentary was titled, “London Calling.”

Murrow’s voice brought the havoc created by the German Blitz in London to American living rooms during the first stages of World War II. Here, children sit next to the remains of their home.

“See It Now,” in the person of Murrow, took to the trenches in 1953 to interview U.S. Marines fighting the Korean War.

“This is London.”

— Edward R. Murrow, beginning in 1940, the opening of CBS radio broadcasts from London

“Good night, and good luck.”

— Edward R. Murrow, beginning in 1940, the closing of CBS radio broadcasts from London

“This is London” circa 1940, a city under siege, and Murrow was there to chronicle its struggle against the Nazis.

Murrow reads a script during the era of the great documentaries on “See It Now” and “CBS Reports.”
If Edward Murrow were alive today, how would he harness the Internet to produce groundbreaking quality journalism? We cannot answer that question, but we can look to how Murrow revolutionized the new media of his time: first radio, and then television.

When Murrow joined CBS in 1935, network radio news did not exist aside from wire reports read by a studio announcer and occasional event highlights. The anchor of CBS Radio News was a trusted figure who could handle news stories with authority, no matter what their source: “It not only had multiple points of origin, it also had included both reporting and analysis of breaking news, and was both a journalistic and a political force.”

Murrow provided live radio coverage from England of the London Blitz. His sign-on, “This is London,” became legendary.

In the early 1950s, Murrow moved to television, then emerging as the dominant medium. Rather than concentrating on general news coverage, however, Murrow pioneered television documentaries. He was a master of the line: “I believe this country has been suffering from continuous discussion for too long. We’re going to get one of the most important programs on television that’s going to be the most vivid discussion we’ve ever seen.”

Murrow believed that television documentaries could be used to inform the public, educate them, and enlighten us. He was convinced that television would transform broadcast journalism. And it did.

Edward R. Murrow and the Birth of Broadcast Journalism

program (see page 13), the series also dealt with other tough issues of the time, such as racial segregation and the link between lung cancer and cigarettes. The premier broadcast featured the first, live simultaneous transmission from the East and West coasts of the United States.

"Person To Person" (1953-61). In this series, Murrow — in the studio — visited celebrities and newsmakers in their own homes through a remote hookup. The program featured guests as varied as movie star Marilyn Monroe, former President Harry Truman, and author John Steinbeck. This was the first time that technology was regularly used in this way and it captivated viewers.

"Small World" (1958-59). This program was truly ahead of its time: a global hookup bringing together thinkers and newsmakers from around the world in an unrehearsed discussion moderated by Murrow. It was produced through transoceanic phone conversations matched to simultaneous filming.

"CBS Reports" (1960-1971). Murrow pioneered the hard-hitting, single-subject, one-hour documentary that became a staple of early network television. One of his broadcasts about the plight of migrant farm workers — "Harvest of Shame" — is still shown today in journalism schools as a brilliant example of investigative work on TV. As these examples indicate, Murrow was an innovator, but he also knew how he was working in a commercial medium that required a large audience. He was always searching for new techniques to grab and hold the public's attention. Murrow would have regarded the narrowing of today made possible by cable, satellite, the Internet, and portable devices as an immense opportunity.

Murrow's legacy as a media innovator does not fully explain his unique status in American broadcast journalism. Most experts stress three other qualities that still matter in media, whether old or new: print, broadcast, or narrowcast — or even a blog: his willingness to take a stand as long as it was grounded in solid reporting; his unwavering belief in a free press dedicated to serious journalism; and his belief that words matter whether or not they are accompanied by pictures.

David Pitts is a journalist who has written for major U.S. newspapers, including The Washington Post and the Christian Science Monitor. He also works in radio news.
Edward R. Murrow may not have scored the first blow against Joseph McCarthy, but he landed a decisive one. For that, he always will be linked inextricably with the Wisconsin senator, and remembered by Americans as a champion of liberty.

Opposing Communism while maintaining fundamental political liberties posed serious challenges in Cold War America. There were Americans who found it difficult at times to distinguish between those who were real threats to the nation and those who were innocent.

Joseph McCarthy, the junior U.S. senator from Wisconsin, seized upon the public mood to launch a series of inquiries through public Senate committee hearings. He investigated the so-called "Red Scare" of the 1950s, which saw thousands of new recruits to the military, corporate figures, even Hollywood celebrities, and the military, the government, and the media targeted as potential enemies of the state.

McCarthy aggressively questioned the loyalty of prominent American institutions, particularly the government, the military, and the media, alleging that members of these institutions had ties to Communism. Individuals suspected of Communist ties were called before his subcommittee, aggressively questioned about their involvement in the Communist Party, and examined the archives of the former Soviet Union and U.S. intercepts of Soviet communications. Some measure of infiltration, McCarthy's often savage efforts ruined careers and damaged lives.

Always a controversial figure, McCarthy's campaign effectively discredited the anti-Communist investigations among many Americans. Eventually, though, his campaign helped to speed McCarthy's downfall.

"We must not confuse dissent with disloyalty. We must remember always that criticism of government and political candidates in a free country is not disloyalty. It is a protected constitutional right under the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States.

—Edward R. Murrow, CBS TV's "See It Now" program on Senator Joe McCarthy, March 9, 1954
Murrow was himself an anti-Communist but a McCarthy skeptic. As early as 1950, Murrow observed on the air that “the weight of the public testimony has tended to show that so far, Senator McCarthy’s charges are unproven.” Unproven or not, those charges continued, and they contributed to an atmosphere in which many feared McCarthy and his Senate investigations and subcommittees. On March 9, 1954, Murrow, then the most respected journalist in America, engaged in a tough exposé of the senator and his tactics.

Gradually, Murrow’s fear that McCarthy posed a real threat to civil liberties developed into a determination to use his TV documentary series “See It Now” against the senator. At that time, U.S. broadcasts were covered by the “Murrow Doctrine,” which required broadcast licenses to present contentious issues in an honest, equal, and balanced manner and to afford persons or groups critical of such broadcasts the opportunity to respond on the air. Murrow and his producer, Fred Friendly, prepared a half-hour program focused only on McCarthy and his tactics. They understood that the CBS network would afford the senator a half-hour of prime time in a separate broadcast — to rebut Murrow. They also realized that McCarthy likely would launch a personal attack on Murrow himself. Even so, Murrow understood that on television a skilled journalist and his technology-savvy team of editors, writers, and producers enjoyed real advantages. They could select the least flattering video clips, juxtapose McCarthy’s many contradictory statements and charges, and generally employ their skills to portray the senator in an unflattering light. Murrow feared that less scrupulous journalists might abuse these techniques, but he believed that McCarthy posed an immediate threat and that the American people, when confronted with the truth, would repudiate McCarthy.

Murrow’s own broadcast featured excerpts from the senator’s own speeches interspersed with Murrow’s comments, which pointed out contradictions and sharply turned McCarthy’s words against him. Nicholas Lemann, dean of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, described Murrow’s demeanor as “a magnificent controlled fury, handsome and composed — an attitude all the more effective because the public knew that he could be genial and easygoing on camera.” Murrow’s words reflected that controlled fury:

Edward R. Murrow’s ardent belief in American democracy, his courage and perseverance in searching for and reporting the truth, and his dedication to journalism as an essential tool in the democratic political process still are cherished and nurtured by many institutions. These values are also reflected in awards and programs that honor this great reporter throughout the United States and overseas. The following list is just a sample of Murrow’s legacy, and of the esteem that his name still has today among many.

Edward R. Murrow Program for Journalists, U.S. Department of State
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/63799.htm

Edward R. Murrow Center of Public Diplomacy, The Fletcher School, Tufts University
http://fletcher.tufts.edu/murrow/index.html

Murrow School of Communication, Washington State University
http://murrow.wsu.edu/influence.html

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Edward R. Murrow on American Masters, PBS
http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americansmasters/database/murrow_e.html

Murrow on Press and the People
http://www.wgbh.org/article/item_id=203-402

Museum of Broadcast Communications, Edward R. Murrow

Radio News: Murrow audio clips
http://www.wotr.com/murrow.html

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