

Foreword

Prior to cell phones, digital cameras, social media, and instant messaging, the public relied on the reporting of correspondents. During the World War II era, combat correspondent reporting was often the only reliable information the public received about world events that affected people everywhere. The dangers of a war-torn area and disruption of communications left coverage of the political, social, and military actions to courageous individuals willing to risk their lives to tell the story.

Stars and Stripes was at the forefront of the coverage of U.S. participation in the war and its immediate aftermath. I had the honor, as the publisher of *Stars and Stripes*, to spend significant time with Colonel Bill McNamara learning about his experiences with *Stars and Stripes* during World War II. Bill was a young captain in 1942 when General George Marshall and General Dwight Eisenhower directed the reestablishment of the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper. Bill was directed to lead the *Stars and Stripes* team in delivering the newspaper to the soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen of the Army Air Corps. Bill told me about the harrowing events of the *Stars and Stripes* distribution team arriving on the Normandy beaches shortly after the invasion began to produce the *Beachhead Bulletin*, of following the invasion forces through France and Germany to continue to provide GIs news from home, and of the actions on other fronts of the war. Bill told about the difficulties of establishing printing and distribution capacity in the midst of war-torn cities and at times being overrun by counterattacks and escaping with the last Allied troops.

The essential morale newspaper would not have been produced without the bravery to face terrifying risks taken by the combat correspondents of *Stars and Stripes* and other media organizations. Correspondents such as Ernie Pyle, Bill Mauldin, Andy Rooney, Bud Hutton, Dave Berger, Charles Kiley, and many, many more. The combat correspondents rode in the bombers flying over Germany, which suffered a horrific casualty rate. The correspondents told the world about the invasion of Africa and Sicily from

the perspective of the person holding a gun. The correspondents were there to share the desperate conditions and bravery of the U.S. forces surrounded in Bastogne and their amazing relief by the United States Third Army in the dead of winter. These same journalists were present at Nuremberg to explain the administration of justice by the victors to the losers for their misdeeds. The correspondents brought the experience of war to life—the comical, the dangerous, the tedious, the nightmares. Some of these correspondents gave the ultimate sacrifice to tell the story. During my time as a soldier in combat, in the Gulf War of 1990 to 1991, the *Stars and Stripes* was an essential lifeline to the rest of the world and what was happening on my left and right flanks.

Surprisingly, there has been little coverage of what the combat correspondents of World War II accomplished and the impact of their reporting on the lives of others during that time and the impact their reporting still has today. The anthology *Reporting World War II*, produced by the editors G. Kurt Piehler and Ingo Trauschweizer, exposes many aspects not given serious consideration before. Kurt and Ingo assembled a team of scholars to open the conversation to understudied aspects of combat journalism. What role did the media have in maintaining U.S. neutrality and then later in providing the forum to amplify the call to mobilize? The anthology reveals the role that African American and women journalists played—it was not all white males. The anthology also addresses the techniques by civilian and military leaders to control *Stars and Stripes* and other media from reporting unfavorable news, efforts to shape the story journalists were permitted to tell, and the difficult relationship with the military public relations community.

The anthology is an essential primer to spur additional scholarly research and conversation about the unique role of frontline journalism. The balance between reporting the horrific nature of war with supporting the nationalistic goals of nations. The need to balance the right of the public to understand the conduct of the military at war with the need to not place military personnel or noncombatants at greater risk. Kurt and Ingo's team forces a reevaluation of how and why frontline journalism was conducted in the past to foster a debate today about how frontline journalism should be conducted in this time. The current management of the battlefield by combatants makes combat reporting as dangerous as it has ever been. It is necessary to have a transparent debate about access to reduce the reliance on official communiqués and press conferences. As technology has changed and the demand for information has increased,

what is or is not proper to report and by whom is an essential topic to be addressed.

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Reporting World War II

