

## Green, Scott

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**From:** Paul and Linda Stevens <stevenspl@live.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 05, 2013 11:29 PM  
**To:** Paul H. Stevens  
**Cc:** 'Torchia, Chris'  
**Subject:** CONNECTING: Family ties - Chris and Andrew Torchia; Ernie Pyle and Richard Pyle; Nieman week in review; A front page worth sharing; Austin Tice's parents seek answers

Colleagues,

Lots of interest was expressed in by many of you in multi-generational AP families, so from time to time, I will be sharing their stories.

Leading off the series is Chris Torchia, Johannesburg bureau chief, who took on the same post that his father Andrew held in the 1980s.

Bud Weydert is compiling a listing of Communications family ties that we will offer you next week.

So here is Chris' story, with a photo accompanying (taken in 2004 when Chris was Seoul chief of bureau), followed by an account by our Richard Pyle of discovering he is NOT related to Ernie Pyle, and a few other items of interest.

Paul



**By Chris Torchia:**

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My father, Andrew, was AP's bureau chief for southern Africa in the 1980s, and I arrived in Johannesburg in February to take up the same post. South Africa was a major story three decades ago, as protests, strikes and international pressure on the apartheid system gathered momentum, often with bloody consequences. I'm covering democratic South Africa (what is still sometimes described as the "new" South Africa), where themes of race, inequity and historical legacy are still evolving. The country is not quite at peace with itself. The story of Nelson Mandela's illness in recent months is a way of looking at some of those issues.

I have the pleasure of working with or meeting some of my father's old colleagues. A photographer said to me: "I'll just call you Andy until I remember your name."

During my father's posting, he sometimes took me along on assignments, or I got a backseat ride in another journalist's car. A Winnie Mandela speech in Soweto, a royal coronation in Swaziland. As a teenager, I accompanied him and other journalists on a flight to the Angolan bush to visit the main camp of the South Africa-backed UNITA rebels. The plane flew low to avoid being detected by government radar. Such excursions formed a perfect education for an AP career.

Unlike my father, I'm not sure I would have the resolve to take my daughter, Camila, (8 years old) into a combat zone, but she has seen the wall of letters, flowers and other tributes outside the hospital in Pretoria where Mandela is being treated. She has been a couple of times to the Soweto street where Mandela used to live, and to a political opposition rally in downtown Johannesburg. Another education is beginning.

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And, while he has no family ties to the famed Ernie Pyle, our Richard Pyle contributed this:

**By Richard Pyle:**

Having no known AP predecessors, the nearest I could come was coincidentally sharing a surname with the most famous American war correspondent of the 20th century, Ernest Taylor Pyle. Of course, he worked for the opposition, sort of - Scripps-Howard, which owned United Press.

My mother was interested in genealogy, and due to the relative rarity of the name Pyle, and my pursuit of a news career, she hoped to prove that Ernie was a blood relative. However, she learned that we were of different branches of the family - mine were Quaker pioneers in Ohio, while Ernie's roots were in Indiana.

The lack of a connection did not deter the question - "Are you any relation to Ernie Pyle?" In my teens and beyond, I was asked that several times a week, so often that some friends suggested, "why don't you just say yes?" As the passing years blurred Ernie's fame, the question became less frequent. These days I'm rarely asked, and almost never by anyone under age 60.

Having read the three books compiled from his WWII dispatches, plus a couple of biographies, I developed a more than passing acquaintance with Ernie, and became acutely aware, in Vietnam, that the way he had

reported ``the story of GI Joe" - a first-person approach that included not only hometowns but sometimes even street addresses - wasn't the way it was done any more.

Over the years I met at least three people who had known Ernie Pyle. One was a sergeant in my own Army unit in Japan in the 1950s; the other two were journalists - the great AP war reporter-columnist Hal Boyle, and LA Times reporter Jack Foisie, who had been pals of Ernie in Italy and France.

As one of the dozen co-authors of the AP history, ``Breaking News," I drew on that material, and used a private trip to Indiana to do some personal research on Ernie - a visit to his home, now a museum, in the tiny farm hamlet of Dana, and a day at Indiana University where the J-school is located in Ernie Pyle Hall.

In 2008, Jim Phillips, a former Michigan AP colleague who also happens to live in Indiana, told me of a friend who had a ``never-published" photograph of Ernie Pyle lying in a ditch, dead from a Japanese sniper's bullet, on Ie Shima Island, just off Okinawa.

Pyle's death there on April 18, 1945, barely a month after he arrived in the Pacific theater and just days after FDR's, had been major news at the time. It turned out that the picture, by a military photographer, had been published years before in at least two places, but because the negative had been destroyed by high-level Navy order, it was so obscure that two Pyle scholars I consulted had never heard of it.

Chasing down the history of that photo was a fascinating journalistic exercise, and as one of the last stories I wrote before retiring from AP, I have to think of it as a somehow fitting conclusion to my own 49-year career.

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**Nieman [Week in Review: Greenwald and the journalists' club, and a j-school's big political win](http://www.niemanlab.org/2013/07/this-week-in-review-greenwald-and-the-journalists-club-and-a-j-schools-big-political-win/)**

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**A front page worth sharing** (Shared by Bob Daugherty)

[http://webmedia.newseum.org/newseum-multimedia/dfp/pdf4/VA\\_VP.pdf](http://webmedia.newseum.org/newseum-multimedia/dfp/pdf4/VA_VP.pdf)

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**Austin Tice's parents seek answers about their missing son**

<http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/mediawire/217420/austin-tices-family-struggles-to-find-answers-about-their-missing-son/>