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Connecting

April 16, 2021

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A U.S. Marine walks to pick up food supplies after they were dropped off by small parachutes from a plane outside Forward Operating Base Edi in the Helmand Province of southern Afghanistan on June 9, 2011. The smoke in the background comes from burning parachutes the Marines destroy after they reached the ground. (AP Photo/Anja Niedringhaus)

Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this the 16th day of April 2021,

President Joe Biden has announced a plan to pull out all the American forces – now numbering 2,500 – from Afghanistan by September.

The withdrawal would come about 20 years after the start of a war provoked by the deadliest terror assault on the United States – and we lead with an AP Images blog in today's Connecting that includes some of AP's coverage of the Afghan War over the past two decades.

The photo above – part of the Images gallery - was taken by AP photographer **Anja Niedringhaus**, (right) who was killed April 4, 2014, while covering the Afghanistan presidential election, after an Afghan policeman opened fire at the car she was waiting in at a checkpoint, part of an election convoy.

Severely injured in that shooting was our colleague **Kathy Gannon** ([Email](#)), now AP's news director for Afghanistan and Pakistan, who is still recovering from her wounds. Regarding the photo, Gannon told Connecting that "Anja would be so pleased that you used that picture. We talked

10 times a day during that embed. it was a difficult one, seeing all the wounded, the helicopter rides to collect them, the wounded beside her."



In 1993, AP Islamabad bureau chief **Sharon Herbaugh** (left) was killed in a helicopter crash in the central mountains of Afghanistan, 100 miles north of Kabul. She was 39 and the first AP newswoman and bureau chief to die on assignment. Herbaugh had spent three years covering the Afghan civil war and its aftermath. Her daughter **Tracee Herbaugh** ([Email](#)), a freelance journalist, is a Connecting colleague.

Over the course of the war, scores of AP journalists are and were involved in its coverage and we salute them - as well as all journalists who took part. If you are one of them and have a memory to share or an opinion about the plans for complete withdrawal, please send to Connecting.

Have a great weekend – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

Sacrifice, sorrow: 20 years of war in Afghanistan



U.S. Marine Cpl. Russell pays his respects to Lance Cpl. Joshua Bernard during a memorial service at a forward operating base with Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Regiment, 2nd MEB, 3rd MEF, Thursday, Aug. 27, 2009, in Now Zad in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan. Bernard was killed during a Taliban ambush on Aug. 14. (AP Photo/Julie Jacobson)



Spc. Paul Pickett, 22, of Minden La., right, of the U.S. Army's Apache Company, 2nd Battalion 87th Infantry Regiment, part of the 3rd Combat Brigade 10th Mountain Division based out of Fort Drum, N.Y., covers an injured U.S. soldier as a helicopter lands to evacuate the wounded after their armored vehicle hit an improvised explosive device in the Tangi Valley of Afghanistan's Wardak Province on Aug. 19, 2009. (AP Photo/David Goldman)

By Alyssa Goodman

President Joe Biden has announced a withdrawal of all remaining U.S. troops from Afghanistan by September, about 20 years after the start of a war provoked by the deadliest terror assault on the United States.

Biden's plan, announced Wednesday, is to pull out all the American forces — now numbering 2,500 — by Sept. 11, the anniversary of the attacks on the twin towers in New York and the Pentagon that were coordinated from Afghanistan by the late al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden.

There were 2,500 to 3,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan when Biden took office, the smallest number since early in the war. The number peaked at 100,000 during President Barack Obama's first term.

Associated Press photographers have recorded the two-decade conflict from every angle. So many of their images have conveyed the drama and grim reality of battle: U.S. Marines nearly swallowed in clouds of swirling sand as they returned fire on Taliban shooters; a Marine with shrapnel wounds to his face and body peering out from behind bloodied bandages; an Air Force paramedic draping an American flag over the remains of two U.S. soldiers killed by an improvised explosive device; Marines rushing a comrade who had been shot in the chest to a waiting medevac helicopter.

Read more [here](#).

Study finds people want more than watchdogs for journalists

By DAVID BAUDER
AP Media Writer

NEW YORK -- A study of the public's attitude toward the press reveals that distrust goes deeper than partisanship and down to how journalists define their very mission.

In short: Americans want more than a watchdog.

The study, released Wednesday by the Media Insight Project, a collaboration between the American Press Institute and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, suggests ways that news organizations can reach people they may be turning off now.

"In some ways, this study suggests that our job is broader and bigger than we've defined it," said Tom Rosenstiel, executive director of the American Press Institute.

The study defines five core principles or beliefs that drive most journalists: keep watch on public officials and the powerful; amplify voices that often go unheard; society works better with information out in the open; the more facts people have the closer they will get to the truth; and it's necessary to spotlight a community's problems to solve them.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Scott Charton.

Connecting mailbox

Nick Ut: 'Incredible' hardly seems adequate

Mark Mittelstadt ([Email](#)) - Nearing the end of Hal Buell's new book, *From Hell to Hollywood: The Incredible Journey of AP Photographer Nick Ut*.

"Incredible" hardly seems adequate to describe the perilous road Nick has traveled, from his early life with fighting and war all around him in Vietnam; losing his brother in the war; persevering to become an AP photographer; his later life as a heralded shooter for a worldwide news organization, capturing images major stories and top celebrities of the day. The book is a fascinating read, effectively illustrated. I have learned much, much more about not only an accomplished journalist who most of the world mostly knows as the photographer who captured the iconic "napalm girl" image, but also of a conflict half a world away that never quite made sense.

Congratulations to Hal and to everyone who supported the effort to write and compile a compelling book. Congratulations, as well, to Huyhn Cong Ut, for the difficult, meandering path he successfully navigated and for making the world a better place.

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News facts and opinions

Ed McCullough ([Email](#)) - Why is it necessarily a negative outcome, as so described in Wednesday's *Connecting*, that 63% of Americans surveyed prefer news facts and only some analysis; that opinion separate from the news and clearly identified as the reporter's or news organization's point of view? Isn't that what AP and other news media routinely used to provide? That the other categories in the Media Insight Project referring to news media's supposed "mission" to give voice to the powerless (as defined by news media), monitor the powerful (honestly, does that really happen?), put information out in the open (like, what actually is in a \$1.9 Trillion dollar congressional spending bill?), or spotlight what's not right (again, as defined subjectively by news media) are not generally supported by Americans (as indicated by the survey) shouldn't surprise. An appropriate takeaway would be that news media take heed from the findings vs. wonder how their "mission" can be so misunderstood

or not supported, or how the survey results might change in their favor while they keep doing the same thing.

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There's danger in shooting sports



George Bridges on the left rolling back as an NBA player goes for the ball. (Photo courtesy B. Levy)

George Bridges ([Email](#)) - Everyone thinks the sports photojournalist has it made. Front row seats to all the big events, getting to stand shoulder-shoulder with the players during warm ups, getting the media meal. All good things.

The facts are the meals aren't good, you can't enjoy the game because you have the stress of having to get "the shot" and, worst of all, you're in the line of fire.

I've been hit by ball or player in just about every sport I've covered over a long period of time. NFL punt off the chest? Yep. Overthrow at first in baseball? Yep. Knocked on

my ass by J.J. Watt in pregame? Yep. (The video of it is my son's most favorite thing in the world. I refuse to share it.)

While baseball probably holds the risk for most serious injury – a foul ball traveling 100+ mph while you're looking through your lens at the shortstop is not a good thing. I know some photographers who wear batting helmets in the photo pits.

While in most sports you have a chance to move, basketball is another story. I've been creamed in basketball. You are sitting cross-legged on the baseline, the knees of front-row fans in your back, the referee moving back and forth, you're stuck, immobile – a sitting duck.

There is nothing like a 7-foot, 280-pound NBA player getting knocked to the floor in your direction or a player diving to save a ball. All you can do is try to lean out of the way and protect your gear. Generally the collisions are not so bad, though in one of the last college games I covered, a player did hit my camera driving the sharp edge of the flash mount into my cheek. It's not a good thing when the photog next to you says "Dude, you're bleeding." I spent the rest of the half with the arena medical staff bandaging me up and I returned for more action.

(George Bridges was a freelance photographer for AP in Austin, Washington DC and Houston and a Photo Editor and Managing Editor for KRT Photo Service.)

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On the role spouses play in AP work



The snowy hillside with the boys on their dish-sleds with Monica was just behind and above the Moscow bureau. At the top of that small hill was one of the more notorious of Stalin's 1930 purge prisons, torn down in the early 1950s -- probably torn down by the same German prisoners of war whom the Soviets kept for a long time to rebuild war damage. They built the large apartment house, one of whose staircases was occupied by us and various foreign diplomats, where the bureau and my apartment were.

Henry Bradsher (Email) - On the recent suggestion of our hard-working Connecting editor that we recall the role of spouses in AP work, mine played a major role.

When Monica came out to India as a Fulbright scholar and I married her in 1963, she moved into my well-staffed Delhi bachelor household that did not require any work by her. Instead, having given up Fulbright plans for working toward a Ph.D. in Indian studies, she began learning Hindi and exploring Indian culture. But soon AP transferred me to Moscow, in early 1964. There, as Monica began to learn Russian, she was needed to take on many AP-related duties while, soon, raising first one and then a second baby.

The Soviet system of censorship at source – little or no access to news makers – made vitally important social contacts with foreign diplomats, those few Soviet citizens permitted to meet with foreigners, and the few East European correspondents with privileged access to Soviet briefings who were willing to talk with me. To supplement TASS news agency dispatches and Soviet newspapers, one had to look wherever possible for what news or background information others could pick up (and sort it out from proliferating rumors).

Social contacts required reciprocating diplomatic dinner invitations with entertaining in the bureau chief's small apartment, across the hall from the AP bureau apartment. We frequently had to give dinner parties. Monica and our Russian maid would conjure up meals from the limited available food sources. I was needed to help with a lot of the preparations.

And there were frequent luncheons for visiting journalists from AP newspapers, who came to the bureau for background briefings, for various other Americans with AP New York introductions, and for occasional foreign officials whom I knew from South Asia or who came with second-hand introductions. (As they grew old enough, our sons would sometimes toddle in to lunches for cameo appearances.) Monica coped with these, too.

When Monica took our babies out for air in a baby carriage – a hand-me-down in the foreign community – she attracted attention on the street from babushkas (kerchiefed Russian grandmothers). These busybodies could easily identify her as a foreigner and wanted to inspect the babies to be sure they were being properly cared for, warmly covered, etc. By now speaking Russian fairly well, Monica understood lots of tut-tutting, lots of volunteered advice.

So Monica decided to write a feature on babushka encounters. The tear sheets from New York showed that it got very good play in AP newspapers. But my bureau correspondents were quietly unhappy about her earning the minor amount paid for outside feature contributors (I forget how much, but it wasn't a significant amount), while they were expected to write features on their basic salary – as time permitted, which was not often. So Monica quit contributing.

But she continued to play an important role in helping AP Moscow.

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GLORY ROAD: performing oldies but goodies



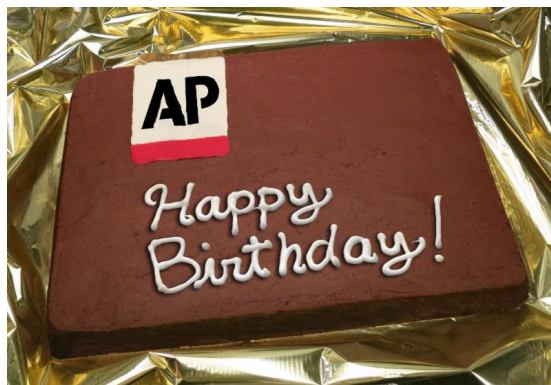
L to R: Bill Kole, Dana White, Tom Lombardo, Ron Fedele, Paul Tisdale

Bill Kole ([Email](#)) - A few years ago, I was in a band sans garage: GLORY ROAD, an a cappella group that performed oldies from The Temptations, Curtis Mayfield and The Impressions, and other Motown and gospel artists from the '50s and '60s. I was the group's vocal percussionist, a.k.a. beatboxer.

Our biggest gig was at Foxwoods, the huge mega-casino in Connecticut. We also played to 10,000 at the massive Thanksgiving Parade in Plymouth, Mass., home to the original Pilgrims.

All of the members of GLORY ROAD, except for me, were professional musicians. The music ended abruptly and tragically when our leader, Tom Lombardo, suffered a massive heart attack in 2018. I miss it – the music was a nice antidote to the daily grind of journalism.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



Ted Anthony - tanthony@ap.org

On Saturday to...

Joyce Rosenberg - psyjourn313@gmail.com

On Sunday to...

Marc Wilson - marcus@townnews.com

Stories of interest

Would you pay \$34.99 a month to get news from Reuters.com? That's their hope (Nieman Labs)

By LAURA HAZARD OWEN

Seven years after scrapping its plans to launch an ambitious consumer-facing product, Reuters Next, Reuters is trying again to expand beyond its wire service roots and make itself more of a news destination for “business professionals.”

The price for full access to the previously \$0 Reuters.com will be \$34.99 per month, after the currently free preview period, for a deeper level of coverage and data on industry verticals that include legal, sustainable business, healthcare and autos.” The homepage was switched over to a new, modular design as of Thursday morning (I noticed the changeover in the course of writing this article, when I headed to Reuters.com for the first time ever). An editor’s note says that a livestream, newsletters, and “the ability to follow our journalists and the stories they’re covering” (will they finally get bylines?) are on the way. “The Wire,” a feature that sorted Reuters’ most recent global headlines by time and was previously on the homepage, appears not to have come along for the redesign.

Who deems Reuters.com so essential that they’ll pay more than two Netflixes a month for it? In 2011, Ken Doctor wrote for us about the competition the news company faced as it tried to become better known in the consumer world:

Read more [here](#).

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CBS Names Two Executives to Lead News, Local Stations (AP)

By DAVID BAUDER, AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — CBS says it is combining its network news division and troubled group of 28 owned stations across the country into one unit, hiring two outside executives to run the expanded operation.

Neeraj Khemlani, a former journalist who has worked at Hearst Newspapers for 12 years, and Wendy McMahon, who was head of ABC-owned stations, will be co-presidents, the network said on Thursday.

“This is an opportunity to create a news and information structure that positions CBS for the future,” said George Cheeks, president and CEO of the CBS Entertainment Group.

The move comes a day after CBS News President Susan Zirinsky told staff members that she was stepping down after two years on the job.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Adolphe Bernotas.

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Opinion: The media knows much less than it thinks (Washington Post)

Opinion by Jennifer Rubin, Columnist

The Dunning-Kruger effect is a form of cognitive bias in which we humans tend to believe we know far more than we think. The least-informed people are often the most certain because, as Cornell University psychologists David Dunning and Justin Kruger put it, “those with limited knowledge in a domain suffer a dual burden: Not only do they reach mistaken conclusions and make regrettable errors, but their incompetence robs them of the ability to realize it.” Put differently: You do not know what you do not know.

The current media environment aggravates this dangerous tendency because media figures are supposed to have emphatic takes on everything immediately. Disastrous! Brilliant! Those are the responses that get clicks and eyeballs. It is a whole lot less sexy to say “We actually don’t have enough information to tell,” or even “It’s a close call.”

Read more [here](#). Shared by Michael Rubin.

The Final Word

50 ways the news industry has changed in the last 50 years (msn.com)



A half-century ago, newsrooms were loud. Alarm bells rang out over the steady clinkety-clack of typewriters when breaking news came in over the wire machine. Children on bicycles delivered newspapers to front porches across the country and the information most people received was limited to what news anchors like Walter Cronkite told them during regularly scheduled broadcasts. Today, the news is delivered in real-time through a dizzying variety of sources, and thanks to smartphones and social media, every person is a journalist whose impromptu videos can go viral with the push of a button.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Larry Blasko.

Today in History - April 16, 2021



By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, April 16, the 106th day of 2021. There are 259 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 16, 2007, in one of America's worst school attacks, a college senior killed 32 people on the campus of Virginia Tech before taking his own life.

On this date:

In 1789, President-elect George Washington left Mount Vernon, Virginia, for his inauguration in New York.

In 1862, during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln signed a bill ending slavery in the District of Columbia.

In 1867, aviation pioneer Wilbur Wright was born in Millville, Indiana (his brother Orville was born five years later in Dayton, Ohio).

In 1912, American aviator Harriet Quimby became the first woman to fly across the English Channel, leaving Dover, England, and arriving near Calais, France, in 59 minutes.

In 1945, a Soviet submarine in the Baltic Sea torpedoed and sank the MV Goya, which Germany was using to transport civilian refugees and wounded soldiers; it's estimated that up to 7,000 people died.

In 1947, the cargo ship Grandcamp, carrying ammonium nitrate, blew up in the harbor in Texas City, Texas; a nearby ship, the High Flyer, which was carrying ammonium nitrate and sulfur, caught fire and exploded the following day; the blasts and fires killed nearly 600 people.

In 1962, New Orleans Archbishop Joseph Rummel excommunicated three local Roman Catholics for fighting racial integration of parochial schools. Bob Dylan debuted his song "Blowin' in the Wind" at Gerde's Folk City in New York.

In 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. wrote his "Letter from Birmingham Jail" in which the civil rights activist responded to a group of local clergymen who had criticized him for leading street protests; King defended his tactics, writing, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

In 1972, Apollo 16 blasted off on a voyage to the moon with astronauts John W. Young, Charles M. Duke Jr. and Ken Mattingly on board.

In 1977, Alex Haley, author of the best-seller "Roots," visited the Gambian village of Juffure, where, he believed, his ancestor Kunte Kinte was captured as a slave in 1767.

In 1996, Britain's Prince Andrew and his wife, Sarah, the Duchess of York, announced they were in the process of divorcing.

In 2010, the U.S government accused Wall Street's most powerful firm of fraud, saying Goldman Sachs & Co. had sold mortgage investments without telling buyers the securities were crafted with input from a client who was betting on them to fail. (In July 2010, Goldman agreed to pay \$550 million in a settlement with the Securities and Exchange Commission, but did not admit wrongdoing.)

Ten years ago: A Taliban sleeper agent walked into a meeting of NATO trainers and Afghan troops at Forward Operating Base Gamberi in the eastern Afghan province of Laghman and detonated a vest of explosives hidden underneath his uniform; six American troops, four Afghan soldiers and an interpreter were killed.

Five years ago: In an extraordinary gesture, Pope Francis brought 12 Syrian Muslims to Italy aboard his plane after an emotional visit to the Greek island of Lesbos, which was facing the brunt of Europe's migration crisis. A magnitude 7.8 earthquake on Ecuador's central coast near the town of Muisne (MWIHZ'-nee) killed more than 660 people.

One year ago: President Donald Trump gave governors a road map for easing coronavirus restrictions, laying out a "phased and deliberate approach" to restoring normal activity in places that had strong testing in place and were seeing a decrease in COVID-19 cases. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said the state would extend stay-at-home restrictions for at least another month. The Labor Department said the wave of layoffs that had engulfed the economy since the virus struck had caused another 5.2 million people to seek unemployment benefits, raising the total number of laid-off workers to 22 million; it was the worst run of U.S. job losses on record. The Trump administration gutted an Obama-era rule that compelled the country's coal plants to cut back emissions of mercury and other human health hazards.

Today's Birthdays: Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI is 94. Singer Bobby Vinton is 86. Denmark's Queen Margrethe II is 81. Basketball Hall of Famer Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is 74. Former Massachusetts first lady Ann Romney is 72. NFL coach Bill Belichick is 69. Rock singer and former politician Peter Garrett is 68. Actor Ellen Barkin is 67. Actor Michel Gill is 61. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is 59. Rock musician Jason Scheff (Chicago) is 59. Singer Jimmy Osmond is 58. Rock singer David Pirner (Soul Asylum) is 57. Actor-comedian Martin Lawrence is 56. Actor Jon Cryer is 56. Actor Peter Billingsley is 50. Actor Lukas Haas is 45. Actor-singer Kelli O'Hara is 45. Actor Claire Foy (TV: "The Crown") is 37. Figure skater Mirai Nagasu is 28. Actor Sadie Sink is 19.

Got a story or photos to share?

Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!

Here are some suggestions:

- **Second chapters** - You finished a great career. Now tell us about your second (and third and fourth?) chapters of life.
- **Spousal support** - How your spouse helped in supporting your work during your AP career.
- **My most unusual story** - tell us about an unusual, off the wall story that you covered.
- **"A silly mistake that you make"**- a chance to 'fess up with a memorable mistake in your journalistic career.
- **Multigenerational AP families** - profiles of families whose service spanned two or more generations.
- **Volunteering** - benefit your colleagues by sharing volunteer stories - with ideas on such work they can do themselves.
- **First job** - How did you get your first job in journalism?
- **Connecting "selfies"** - a word and photo self-profile of you and your career, and what you are doing today. Both for new members and those who have been with us a while.
- **Most unusual place a story assignment took you.**



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