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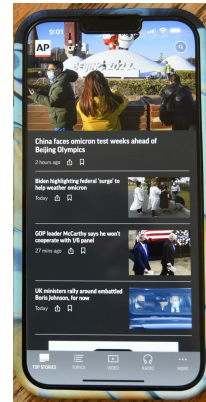
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# Connecting

March 3, 2022

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning on this March 3, 2022,

It was an extraordinary moment when Defense Department press secretary **John Kirby** held a news conference Wednesday afternoon in the midst of the biggest story in the world – the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The retired Navy admiral offered an emotional salute to **Robert Burns**, longtime Pentagon and national security reporter for The Associated Press, who announced the day before that he would retire from the AP on May 1.

Burns was not in the briefing room, instead listening in by phone – his wife came down with the flu overnight and he stayed home attending to her.



View and read what Kirby had to say in our lead story for today's Connecting.

Burns told Connecting: "I have known John Kirby for 15 years, since he was assigned as spokesman for the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 2007, and have traveled the world with him over that span in his many Pentagon roles, including to Iraq and Afghanistan."

The respect that Kirby has for our colleague of 45 AP years is obvious. So how about you - ever encountered such a moment in your career? Share your story.

Our colleague **Robert Reid** wrote Connecting with a suggestion that retirees would appreciate a story on whom AP has in Ukraine covering the war and how they are faring. We posted this to AP media relations director [Lauren Easton](#) and here is her response:

*AP has around two dozen people currently in various places across Ukraine, with some of the team providing live reporting to broadcasters around the world.*

*AP has a full-time bureau in Kyiv, with staffers, local freelancers and a team of outside staff who are in the country to help with coverage.*

*You will see that journalists around the region, in Washington and beyond are contributing to AP's stellar coverage. Here's a [link](#) to the hub on AP News.*

We continue to pray for the safety of all involved in the conflict, including the journalists who are covering it.

Have a good day – be safe, stay healthy.

Paul

## Bob Burns: 'A great, dogged reporter but a gentleman'



Pentagon press secretary John Kirby in emotional moments as he honors AP's Bob Burns at a Wednesday press briefing on news of Burns' plans to retire.

**Dennis Conrad** – This is an unofficial transcript prepared from the part of Pentagon briefing Wednesday afternoon where Defense Department spokesman John Kirby, a retired Navy admiral, discussed the announced retirement of The Associated Press’ longtime Pentagon reporter, Robert Burns. Click [here](#) for a Defense Department video of the briefing: The reference to Burns begins at the 3:30 mark.



At the beginning, Kirby spoke about some news matters and then focused on Burns:

And, lastly, he’s not sitting here but I want to just take a moment to wish the Department’s best wishes to Mr. Bob Burns. He has, as I think you know, announced that after 45 years of reporting that he’s going to retire, uh, he’s going to retire, and really, finally get a chance to spend more time with his family.

As you know, he’s been a staple here for decades - the dean of the press corps and without question a gentleman in every sense of the word. A great, dogged reporter but a gentleman.

And I'd like just to take a minute to read a little something from a book. It was written by one of my predecessors. It's called "Confirm Or Deny." It's written by Phil Goulding. He wrote this book after he left after the McNamara administration (Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara, 1961-1968). But he says something here about the Pentagon press corps that I think suits not just all of you but certainly Bob Burns to a tee. So, if you just indulge me for a few minutes:

"And the responsible members of the underrated press corps of the Pentagon sit in their grubby room on the second floor of the big building and pour over the statements of top Defense officials, checking them against the outstanding files many keep, their dogeared copies of the huge budget book, the posture statements and dozens of volumes of congressional testimony are underlined and indexed by their own work and the margins are annotated. While they do understand the hardware of weapons systems, the good ones are also experts on the NATO alliance or the Mideast tinderbox, and several of them know more about nuclear strategy than some of the academicians who write on the subject."

I think that is a perfect way of describing Mr. Bob Burns, particularly that stuff about the nuclear strategy. He spent an awful lot of time reporting on our nuclear capabilities and our nuclear posture, our nuclear training, our nuclear readiness.

So, with everything going on today, the stuff that we just, I just opened with, and the tensions in Ukraine, the meeting with the Crown Prince of Bahrain in the Middle East, the tender box, as Mr. Goulding wrote about, all that happening today, and then to be able to talk about a guy of Bob Burns' caliber fixing to retire after 45 years, I think, just really, really appropriate.

And, personally, I'm going to miss him. I'm actually really, really going to miss Bob Burns.

With that, let's take questions. Bob, I think I got you on the phone.

ROBERT BURNS: Thank you, John. Thanks for those very kind words. I appreciate that - kind words not just about me but about the whole Pentagon press corps. Thank you very much. I do have a couple of questions for you about the situation in Ukraine....

(Transcript discontinued as briefing turns to the regular news of the day).

## Connecting mailbox

### *More on AP and funding from philanthropies*

**Bill Kaczor** - I had an experience very similar to that of Dave Tomlin a decade earlier. I was juggling college with a job as sports editor of the Mattoon Journal Gazette, a small daily in Central Illinois, in the fall of 1966. When things were slow in midweek, I occasionally ran a column from the Newspaper Enterprise Association called "Wheeling It." Most of the time it dealt with auto racing, new car profiles and auto

industry happenings. One of the columns, though, was headlined "How To Buy A New Car." It included such information as "all domestic cars carry 21 to 25 percent markup" and advised buyers to try to get a price "somewhere between \$100 and \$150 over dealer cost." It also encouraged buyers to check with banks because they usually would give you a better deal on a loan than the car dealer.

You can imagine the blow-back from local dealers. Some pulled their ads for a few days and I was called on the carpet. The editor decreed that henceforth I was to have him review all sports page copy before sending it back to the printers.

Although AP doesn't have advertisers, it must get financing from somewhere. Until recently it has been mostly member newspapers and broadcasters, who relied on advertising revenue to help pay their AP dues. I don't recall anything as egregious as the response that "Wheeling It" column got from Mattoon's car dealers, but members sometimes can be demanding.

I do see a credibility problem, though, with AP accepting financial contributions tied to specific coverage areas. It reminds me of universities accepting corporation funding for research on topics of special interest to the donors. It always raises questions about the validity of that research no matter how good it is. And, I think I'm safe in saying most of us have written about politicians accepting contributions from donors who got something in return even if it was nothing more than "access." There may be nothing wrong, but it may look suspicious.

One solution might be accepting contributions for general purposes rather than for covering any specific topic. That's the way newspaper advertising usually works. Advertiser money goes for everything, not just columns on how to buy a new car.

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**Bruce Handler** - You can't state it any more succinctly than Dave Tomlin did in "No High Horses, Please" (Connecting, March 2.)

There may be lots of things to complain about during a long career with the AP, but let us be thankful that sponsor pressure isn't one of them.

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***In a parade at Mardi Gras***

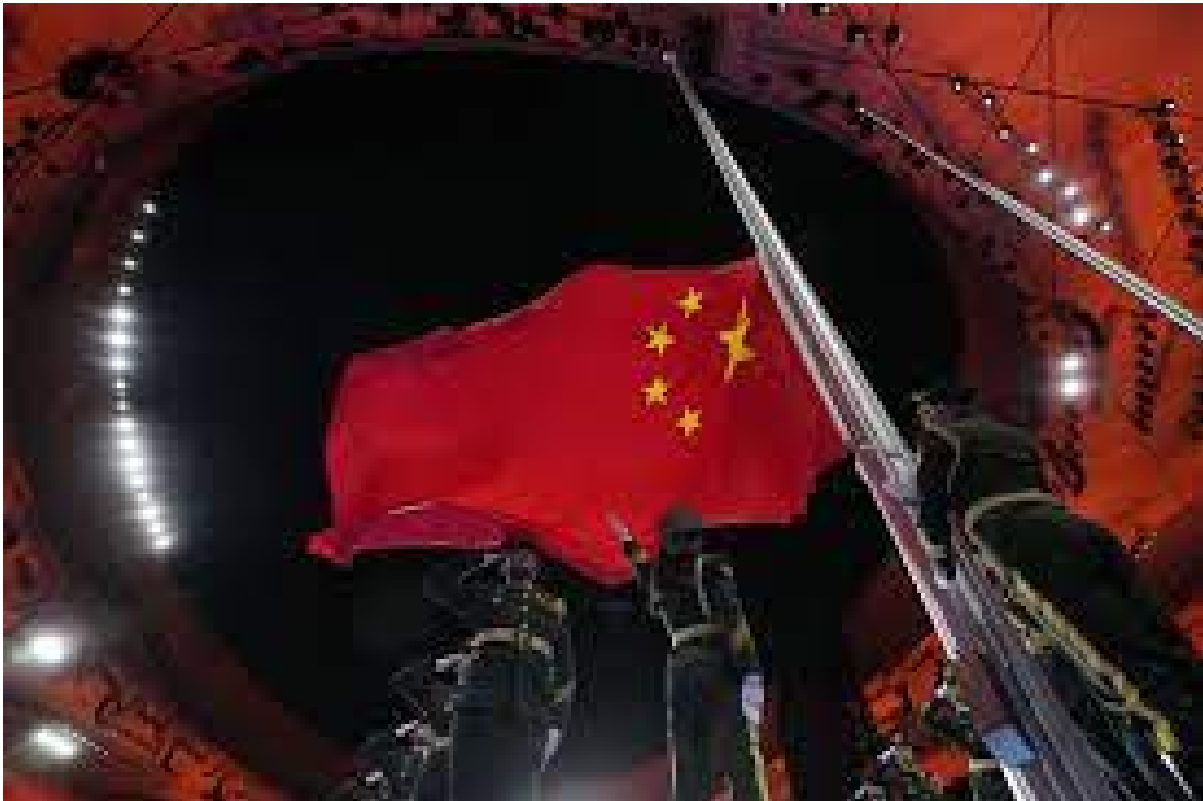


**Colleen Newvine** - This was our third Mardi Gras, our first riding in a parade. We rolled with Tucks in the king's Funky Uncle float with a live funk band, and our premium throw was a vinyl album of New Orleans musicians.

Tucks throws all manner of toilet jokes including toilet paper and plungers. So this is us with TP.

Felt magical to be here with all this joy after two years of pandemic.

## 10 Top Moments From the 2022 Olympics by AP Photographers



The Chinese national flag is raised during the opening ceremony of the 2022 Winter Olympics, Friday, Feb. 4, 2022, in Beijing. (AP Photo/Natacha Pisarenko)

JARON SCHNEIDER  
PetaPixel

The 2022 Olympics in Beijing have concluded, and the Associated Press (AP) photographers look back at the monumental task of creatively capturing the athletes in sub-zero temperatures while in a COVID bubble.

As part of The Shot, a monthly series showcasing the photojournalism of AP staff photographers, the news agency has shared multiple photos captured by a large number of photojournalists who were tasked with capturing the Olympics this year. Below are 10 of these photos and thoughts by their photographers. More can be found on the AP's blog.

"Before going to the Olympics, I tried not to get too excited. I needed to test negative for COVID twice, in a country where almost everyone was getting the virus," Natacha Pisarenko says. "This picture represents the fact that I made it. After all the stress, tests, and paperwork, there I was, covering the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics Opening Ceremony."

Read more [here](#). Shared by Doug Pizac.

## The Writing 69th flies to Wilhelmshaven



(L to R) Gladwin Hill, William Wade, Bob Post, Walter Cronkite, Homer Bigart and Paul Manning (American Air Museum in Britain)

### Marc Lancaster World War II on Deadline

To hear Andy Rooney tell it, the lone mission flown by the correspondent collective known as the "Writing 69th" was a function of guilt as much as anything.

"I don't know whose idea it was but someone decided the reporters covering the Eighth Air Force ought to go on a mission themselves," Rooney wrote in his 1995 memoir, *My War*. "It probably grew out of the uneasy feeling we all had that we were watching too many young men our age die while we were writing stories about them and then going back to London for dinner."

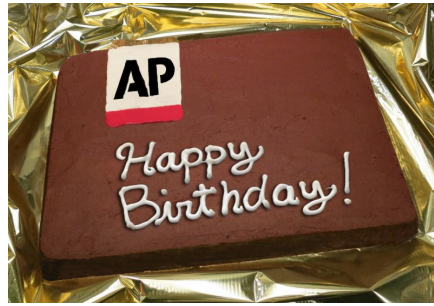
Reporters assigned to cover the air war from England did indeed live a far different life than those with the infantry in North Africa. Most had flats in London, often shared with other correspondents, and simply drove out to the dozens of airbases around the capital to get what they needed for their stories before returning home each night.

That routine would change for eight of those men early in 1943 when they were selected to complete an intensive training course at Bovingdon, England, that compressed three weeks of work into one as preparation to accompany a bombing mission. Among the coursework: first aid, aircraft identification, and learning to fire a .50-caliber machine gun (even though correspondents were forbidden from using weapons).

Read more [here](#).



# Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



Tom Goodman

## Stories of interest

*In wartime battle over imagery, so far it hasn't been close* (AP)



Members of civil defense prepare Molotov cocktails in a yard in Kyiv, Ukraine, Sunday, Feb. 27, 2022. A Ukrainian official says street fighting has broken out in Ukraine's second-largest city of Kharkiv. Russian troops also put increasing pressure on strategic ports in the country's south following a wave of attacks on airfields and fuel facilities elsewhere that appeared to mark a new phase of Russia's invasion. (AP Photo/Efrem Lukatsky)

By **DAVID BAUDER**

NEW YORK (AP) — For people outside Ukraine, the conflict with Russia is experienced almost solely through the media. In that theater, it hasn't been close.

Virtually all of the war's indelible images — a woman's chilling offer of sunflower seeds to a Russian soldier, city residents turning old bottles into Molotov cocktails, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy saying he wants ammunition instead of a ride — have served to rally the world to his country's side.

Ukraine may ultimately be overcome by sheer military might, but the power of war's imagery will likely never be underestimated in the future.

News coverage has emphasized a David vs. Goliath theme, capturing both the fortitude and suffering of Ukrainians, and the country's leaders have skillfully provided material to advance the narrative.

"They seem to recognize that this is a war of images as much as a ground war," said Kenneth Osgood, a professor of history and an expert on propaganda and intelligence at the Colorado School of Mines. "Because without support, as a military reality, Ukraine doesn't stand a chance. As a political reality, it absolutely does."

Read more [here](#).

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***In Russia, I Learned, Threats Were Always Real*** (New York Times)

By **Megan K. Stack**  
Contributing Opinion Writer

It started with a weekday interview in an office near the Moscow River. The man was a murderer, it was said, but when I asked about the crime, he smirked and said he was framed. I remember his shoes, pointy and shined like glass.

I published a lot of articles as Moscow bureau chief for The Los Angeles Times, but this is one story I never wrote: About the problem that began with that 2008 interview and unfolded gradually over years — slowly enough to create the illusion that nothing was happening.

Russian power has a tendency to work that way. You detect a suggestion of a threat, but then it just lingers, unrealized, until finally you shrug it off. What I learned reporting on Vladimir Putin and his Russia is that, maybe sooner but more likely later, it will happen. And once it does, you think: Just as promised, nobody made a secret of it.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Sylvia Wingfield, who noted: "A chilling story of reporting in Russia from a former AP colleague who spent part of her early career in Texas."

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## ***Russia's invasion of Ukraine sends news network ratings up*** (AP)

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — Cable news viewership jumped during Russia's invasion of Ukraine, with Fox News Channel leading the way and CNN showing the most dramatic increases.

CNN, Fox and MSNBC collectively averaged 6.4 million viewers in prime time between the start of the war last Wednesday and Sunday night. That's up from their January average of 4 million, the Nielsen company said.

For the full day between Wednesday and Sunday, Fox averaged 2.32 million viewers, up 64% from the quieter news month of January. CNN's audience soared from 633,000 in January to 1.75 million last week, up 178%. MSNBC had 980,000 for its war coverage, up 51% over January.

Those numbers match a trend: CNN tends to have the most dramatic increases during big news events while its rivals, more focused on political talk, are steadier in the quiet periods.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***NBC News, known for TV, makes aggressive podcasting push*** (AP)

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — NBC News is making an ambitious push into the podcast market, with audio series on conspiracy theories, the British royalty and legacy of Title IX in scholastic athletics planned in the next few months.

Bonus episodes of two popular recent podcasts, "Southlake" and the "Dateline" spinoff "The Thing About Pam," are also being released in early March.

NBC News was tied for 11th in Edison Research's list of top podcast networks by reach, the only company that is known primarily as a television news broadcaster in the company's top 18. NBC News said the audience for its podcasts in 2021 grew by 19% over the year before.

"One of our biggest priorities continues to be generating original, distinctive reporting and pushing out across a variety of platforms," said NBC News President Noah

Oppenheim. "Podcasts are a new format for us to play in, but it's rooted in the same fundamentals that drive all of our work."

Read more [here](#).

# The Final Word

*Shades of Mt. Surbachi*



Joe Rosenthal's classic AP image for the ages...in yet another war. Shared by Steve Graham

## Today in History - March 3, 2022



## By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, March 3, the 62nd day of 2022. There are 303 days left in the year.

### Today's Highlight in History:

On March 3, 1974, a Turkish Airlines DC-10 crashed shortly after takeoff from Orly Airport in Paris, killing all 346 people on board.

### On this date:

In 1791, Congress passed a measure taxing distilled spirits; it was the first internal revenue act in U.S. history.

In 1845, Florida became the 27th state.

In 1849, the U.S. Department of the Interior was established.

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signed a measure creating the National Academy of Sciences.

In 1931, "The Star-Spangled Banner" became the national anthem of the United States as President Herbert Hoover signed a congressional resolution.

In 1943, in London's East End, 173 people died in a crush of bodies at the Bethnal Green tube station, which was being used as a wartime air raid shelter.

In 1945, the Allies fully secured the Philippine capital of Manila from Japanese forces during World War II.

In 1960, Lucille Ball filed for divorce from her husband, Desi Arnaz, a day after they had finished filming the last episode of "The Lucille Ball-Desi Arnaz Show."

In 1966, death claimed actors William Frawley at age 79 and Alice Pearce at age 48 in Hollywood.

In 1969, Apollo 9 blasted off from Cape Kennedy on a mission to test the lunar module.

In 1991, motorist Rodney King was severely beaten by Los Angeles police officers in a scene captured on amateur video. Twenty-five people were killed when a United Airlines Boeing 737-200 crashed while approaching the Colorado Springs airport.

In 2020, in a surprise move, the Federal Reserve cut its benchmark interest rate by a half-point, its largest cut in more than a decade, to support the economy in the face of the spreading coronavirus.

Ten years ago: Mitt Romney rolled to a double-digit victory in Washington state's Republican presidential caucuses, his fourth campaign triumph in a row.

Five years ago: President Donald Trump toured St. Andrew Catholic School, a private religious facility in Orlando, Florida, praising it as an ideal institution for "disadvantaged children" while re-emphasizing that his education agenda would focus on school choice. The Nintendo Switch, a hybrid game machine that works as both a console at home and a portable tablet on the go, made its debut.

One year ago: Officials testifying at a Senate hearing said Defense Department leaders had delayed sending help for hours on Jan. 6, despite an urgent plea for reinforcement from police protecting the U.S. Capitol building. Video showed a dramatic escalation of violence by security forces in Myanmar against opponents of a February military coup; a U.N. official said 38 people were killed. The manager of the Texas power grid was fired following February's deadly blackouts that left millions of people without electricity and heat for days. A man who admitted using a van to kill 10 pedestrians in Toronto in April 2018 was found guilty on charges including first-degree murder, bringing an automatic life sentence. Former NFL player Kellen Winslow II was sentenced in California to 14 years in prison for multiple rapes and other sexual offenses against five women.

Today's Birthdays: Singer-musician Mike Pender (The Searchers) is 81. Movie producer-director George Miller is 77. Actor Hattie Winston is 77. Singer Jennifer Warnes is 75. Actor-director Tim Kazurinsky is 72. Singer-musician Robyn Hitchcock is 69. Actor Robert Gossett is 68. Rock musician John Lilley is 68. Actor Miranda Richardson is 64. Radio personality Ira Glass is 63. Actor Mary Page Keller is 61. Olympic track and field gold medalist Jackie Joyner-Kersey is 60. Former NFL player and College Football Hall of Famer Herschel Walker is 60. Actor Laura Harring is 58. Contemporary Christian musician Duncan Phillips (Newsboys) is 58. Rapper-actor Tone Loc (lohk) is 56. Actor Julie Bowen is 52. Country singer Brett Warren (The Warren Brothers) is 51. Actor David Faustino is 48. Gospel singer Jason Crabb is 45. Singer Ronan Keating (Boyzone) is 45. Rapper Lil' Flip is 41. Actor Jessica Biel is 40. Rock musician Blower (AKA Joe Garvey) (Hinder) is 38. Musician Brett Hite (Frenship) is 36. Pop singer Camila Cabello is 25. Actor Thomas Barbusca (TV: "The Mick") is 19. Actor Reylonn Caster is 19.

## Got a story or photos to share?

Connecting is a daily newsletter published Monday through Friday that focuses on retired and former Associated Press employees, present-day employees, and news industry and journalism school colleagues. It began in 2013 and past issues can be found by clicking Connecting Archive in the masthead. Its author, Paul Stevens, retired from the AP in 2009 after a 36-year career as a newsman in Albany and St. Louis, correspondent in Wichita, chief of bureau in Albuquerque, Indianapolis and Kansas City, and Midwest vice president based in Kansas City.



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:

- **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.
- **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?
- **Most unusual place** a story assignment took you.

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