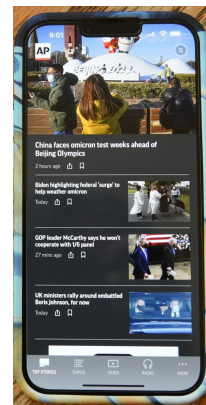


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Connecting

Dec. 29, 2022

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning on this Dec. 29, 2022,

Memories of our colleagues who have passed is the theme that continues in today's Connecting, after our issue of yesterday that listed Connecting colleagues and retirees who died in 2022.

First, these corrections (and an addition) to that list: John Vinocur – not John Vinocure. Thomas Harrigan – not Thomas Harrigon. Recent addition: Thelma Linder, the spouse of deceased retiree Leon Linder.

We bring you the obituary for longtime AP Communications executive **Jack Pace**, who died Dec. 21. Thanks to his son **Geoff** for sharing.

We also bring you the obituary of colleague **Edward Seaton**, longtime publisher and editor in chief of the Manhattan (Kan.) Mercury who was active in journalism far beyond his family newspaper. One of his sons, **Ned Seaton**, is a colleague who once worked for the AP early in his career.

And we thought further recognition is warranted for our senior Connecting colleague, **Fred Hoffman**, who turned 100 on Dec. 26. Our colleague **Chris Connell** profiled Fred for the Dec. 26, 2015, issue of Connecting, when Fred turned 93, and in The Final Word, we bring you excerpts of that interview. Some great stuff.

Have a great day – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

Jack E. Pace, Sr. Sept. 21, 1928 - Dec. 21, 2022

Jack E. Pace, Sr., 94, formerly of Metuchen, N.J., died on Wednesday, December 21, 2022, at Complete Care at Bey Lea in Toms River surrounded by his family.

Born in Huntington, West Virginia, he came to Metuchen 65 years ago. He worked at the Associated Press as the Chief of Communications. He was a member of the 1st Baptist Church in Metuchen & belonged to the Choir & loved music. He played the violin, flute, harmonica, piano, & guitar.

He is predeceased by his loving wife of 60 years, Nyda (d.2005) & loving wife Dorothy of 5 years (d.2016); his son, Jack Jr. (d.2021); & his parents, Claude & Bethel.



He is survived by his son, Geoffrey & wife Judy of Toms River; a daughter-in-law, MaryAnne Pace of Perth Amboy; 6 grandchildren, Jack III & wife Colleen, David & wife Cindy, Gregory & wife Angela, Robert, Jason & Wife Sheryl, & Lesa Enchura & husband Jeffrey; & 8 great-grandchildren, Genevieve, Amelia, Evan, Sawyer, Griffin, Nathaniel, Aaron, & Benjamin.

All services will be private at Hillside Cemetery in Metuchen.

In lieu of flowers please make donations to the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Click [here](#) for the obituary.

Seaton Publications chairman, former Mercury publisher Edward Seaton dies at 79

Edward Seaton, 79, chairman of the board of Seaton Publications, former publisher of The Manhattan Mercury and champion of press freedom throughout the Americas, has died.

Seaton was at his home in Manhattan. He died Monday night of natural causes, according to his son, Ned.



Ed was born Feb. 5, 1943, in Manhattan to Mary (Holton) and Richard Melvin Seaton.

Seaton was born into a newspaper family. His grandfather, Fay Seaton, bought The Mercury in 1915. Fay's sons, Fred and Richard, became involved in newspapers and led the family media operations. Then Richard's sons, Edward and David, became publishers. And Edward's sons, Ned and Jay, followed in his footsteps.

Edward Seaton earned a bachelor's degree with honors at Harvard College in 1965 and was a Fulbright scholar at Universidad Central in Quito, Ecuador. He also did graduate work in journalism at the University of Missouri.

He began his journalism career as a reporter and copy editor at the Louisville (Kentucky)

Courier-Journal.

He came to Manhattan in 1969 as The Mercury's publisher and associate editor. In 1981 he became the publisher and editor-in-chief.

During his career, Seaton built The Mercury's current building and expanded the company. He and his family built a group of affiliated media companies in Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska, South Dakota and Wyoming. Locally those include The Pottawatomie County Times, The Junction City Union, and Manhattan Broadcasting.

Seaton spent much of his career working on behalf of journalists for democracy and press freedoms, particularly in Latin America. When he began his crusade in the 1970s, 80% of the countries in the region were without either. Today most countries have an independent press and credible elections.

As president of the Inter American Press Association and of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, he spoke to world leaders including Fidel Castro.

Seaton served as a member of the Pulitzer Prize Board for nine years, including as its chairman. He was a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. He served as chairman of Harvard's Latin American Scholarship Program of American Universities.

He also received Columbia University's Maria Moors Cabot Award and is a knight-commander of the Order of Christopher Columbus, Dominican Republic.

Read more [here](#).

When Fred Hoffman Saved My Butt ... or the Power of the AP

[Ruth Gersh](#) - I was Norfolk correspondent in May 1980, when the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz returned to its home port after staging the failed attempt to rescue the hostages in Iran. President Carter was flying out to the ship while still at sea to address the sailors, and the press corps was being flown out in helicopters from Norfolk. The Nimitz was part of a battle group with a couple of cruisers and destroyers, and some of the press was going to end up on those vessels instead on the Nimitz with Carter. I was assigned to cover the event on the Nimitz from the Navy's perspective, but the Norfolk naval officials decided the AP already had enough reporters on the Nimitz as part of the White House press corps and decided I should go elsewhere.

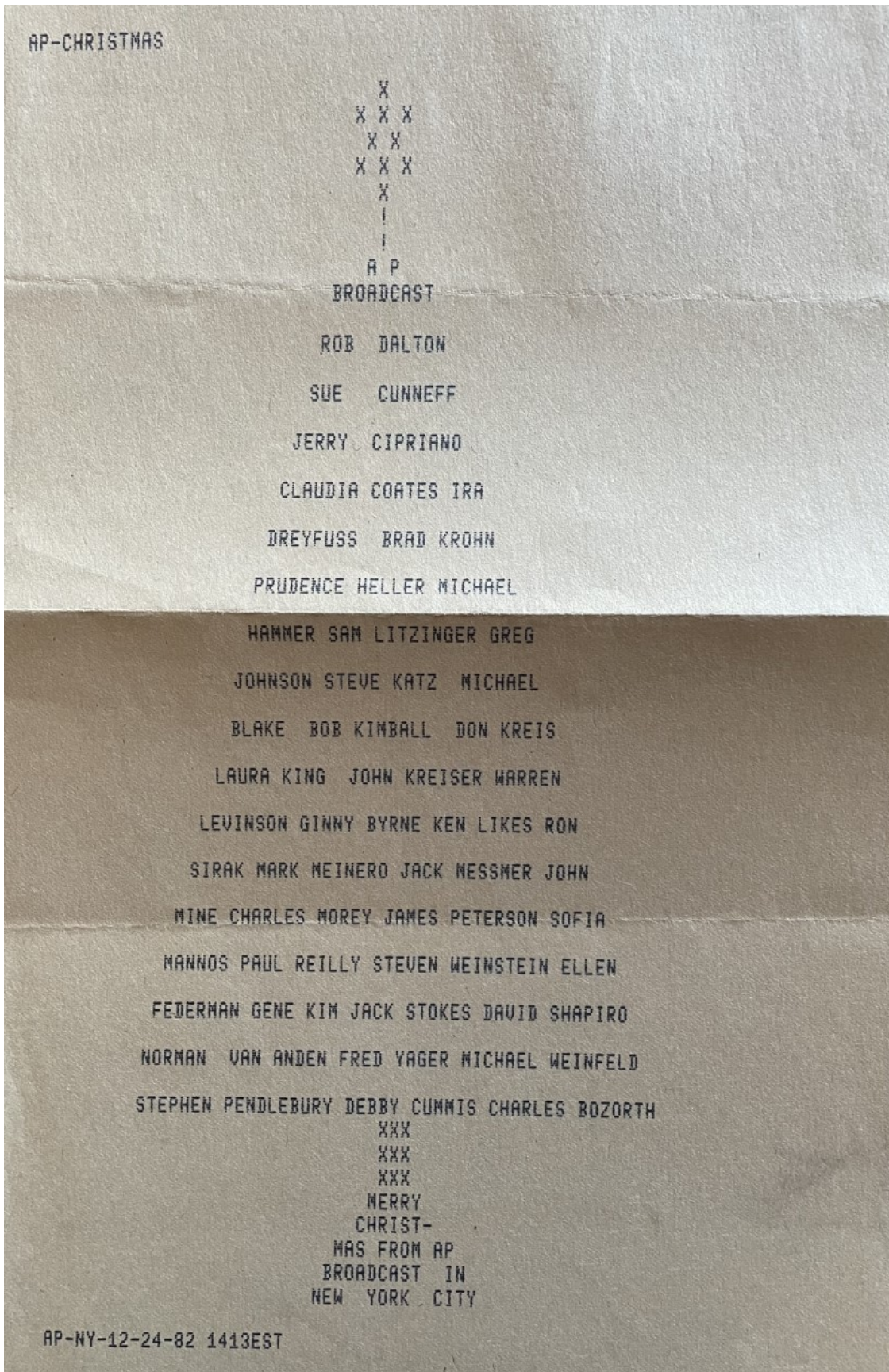
No disrespect to the complement of those cruisers and destroyers, but I was supposed to be on the Nimitz. So, I called Fred Hoffman. He, as I pieced together later, called CHINFO (chief of information) at home on Memorial Day Weekend. Next thing I know the officer at the staging area answered the phone, said "Yes, sir" several times and I was off to the USS Nimitz.

-0-

[Claude Erbsen](#) - I was delighted to see the picture of Fred Hoffman celebrating his Centennial and looking in such fine fettle. I don't know if others also took note that in his picture as Pentagon spokesman, he still sported his trademark blue button-down oxford shirt, but was wearing a striped tie instead of his ever-present black knit tie as in his AP days.

I had the pleasure of working with Fred as a colleague during my few months in the Washington bureau before ending up in the Navy after the 1961 Berlin crisis, and later enjoyed wandering down to his Pentagon office in search of sanity and common sense, while serving on the staff of the Navy's Chief of Information.

More Christmas art off the Teletype



Michael Weinfeld - Here's some more teletype Christmas art from the AP Broadcast News Center in New York from 1982.

A sad farewell to a newspaper building



Warren Lerude - Yielding to passing eras, down today (12/26/22) comes the Reno Evening Gazette and Nevada State Journal building at 401 West Second Street where breaking news, depth coverage and full-throated editorial comment financed by robust local and national advertising lineage and printed on presses roaring at noon and midnight served the public from 1960 to 1980.

2022 Seen Through the Lens of AP's Emilio Morenatti



Stanislav, 40, says goodbye to his son David, 2, and his wife Anna, 35, on a train to Lviv at the Kyiv station, Ukraine, on March 3, 2022. Stanislav is staying to fight the Russian invasion while his family is leaving the country to seek refuge in a neighboring country. Emilio Morenatti / AP

The Atlantic

Emilio Morenatti, the Associated Press's chief photographer for Spain and Portugal, has spent the past year documenting important news stories across Europe. Morenatti, who is based in Barcelona, covered drought conditions in Spain, made several trips to Ukraine before and during the Russian invasion, documented the aftermath of wildfires in Catalonia, photographed mourners paying tribute to Queen Elizabeth II, and much more. Below, in roughly chronological order, is a look at some of the stories brought to us through Morenatti's lens in 2022.

Read more [here](#).

Photos That Changed The World



AP Photo/Ron Edmonds

[Ron Edmonds](#) - A friend of my daughter noticed this over the holiday. It was a History Channel [YouTube video](#) of a show that I hadn't seen before. It was made for UK audiences. I did the interview a few years ago and had forgotten about it. My daughter surprised me with it on Christmas.

It begins:

A special series looking at the defining moments of the last century caught on camera. A startling, in-depth look at the most iconic events in recent history through the unique lens of the photographers and images that made them famous. Hear the stories behind world-changing photos from photographers, eyewitnesses, reporters, historians and more.

Michael Jackson remembered





Nick Ut – Fans from around the world left flowers for Michael Jackson Christmas Day 2022 at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Los Angeles.

Styles of Writing

Mark Mittelstadt - Holiday week: that time between Christmas and New Year's when substitute radio and television hosts fill in and show that they can keep going when substitute production personnel mess up.

Remembering Mexico City AP Bureau Chief Eloy Aguilar

[Monte Hayes](#) - Peter Eisner's description of covering the U.S. invasion of Panama in 1989 with Mexico City AP bureau chief Eloy Aguilar brought back a flood of memories of Eloy, an unforgettable character and one of the best journalists I have known. I worked under him as a correspondent in Mexico City from 1982 to 1985 before being assigned to Lima, Peru, as bureau chief. As Peter mentioned, Eloy was a mentor to generations of young AP writers, and I was one of them.

Once early in my days in Mexico City, Eloy saved me from the wrath of AP's legendary foreign editor Nate Polowetzky, who was well known for his irascibility. Nate had passed on using one of my features, a story about ranchers in northern Mexico dealing with a devastating drought. It was one of a package of stories I had sent to New York based on a trip I had made to the area. Nate used the other stories but apparently thought there was not enough interest in the drought story to use it. I, on the other hand, thought papers in Houston, San Antonio, Austin and Dallas might be interested because of their nearness to the border, so I sent the story directly to them.



I quickly learned that was a really stupid thing to do. Editors at several papers apparently liked the story and started calling Nate to ask what was wrong with it and why he had not used it. Nate hit the roof and called Eloy. Eloy motioned me into his office and held out the phone to hear Nate screaming along the lines of "Who the hell does Hayes think he is?" Finally, Eloy broke in and said, "Nate, the man has work to do. Leave him alone." The comment stunned Nate into silence. After a few seconds he shouted, "All right!" and hung up. I was speechless. I don't think anyone had ever talked like that to Nate. At that point Eloy became my hero.

The incident apparently did not damage Nate's regard for my journalistic abilities. Sometime later he offered me the news editor's job in Buenos Aires covering Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. Buenos Aires was the Paris of Latin America, a plum assignment, but I turned the offer down because of the great stories I was covering in Central America, which was aflame with revolutionary fires in the 1980s. Time passed and one day Eloy called me into his office. He said New York was offering me the bureau chief's job in Lima, and he added, "If you know what is good for you, you don't turn down a second promotion in the AP." So I took off for Peru with my family and stepped into a much bigger story than any I had been covering in Central America and Mexico: economic chaos, hyperinflation, a surging insurgency by the murderous Shining Path guerrillas, an auto-coup by President Fujimori, death squads -- an endless list of great stories.

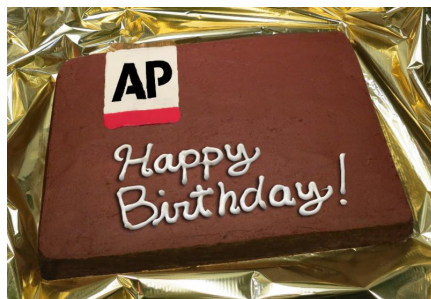
My strongest memory of how great a journalist Eloy was is from a few months after I had left Mexico City to take up my post in Lima. On Sept. 19, 1985, a historic

earthquake struck Mexico City, killing 10,000 people, injuring 30,000 more and cutting off communications with the outside world. There was no contact with the Mexico City AP bureau and the AP was desperate to get some kind of story on the wires. The foreign desk, believing the city had been flattened, called me in Lima and asked me to write a story about my memories of Mexico City and its neighborhoods. In the meantime, Eloy had swung into action. He had the bureau's writers produce as many stories as they could in a short time on their laptops, which were operating on batteries. Then he collected them along with rolls of film of the destruction, grabbed a cab to Mexico City's airport and hired a private plane to fly him to Dallas, where he filed more than a dozen earthquake stories to New York. The AP scooped the world's newspapers and TV stations, including dozens of foreign journalists based in Mexico City, among them writers for UPI, Reuters, AFP, EFE, the Washington Post and the New York Times.

Only Eloy was quick enough to realize that to get the stories of the earthquake's devastation out to the world, he would have to fly them out of the country on a plane!

Eloy was bold in everything he did, a larger-than-life character and at the same time, a great guy to hang out with and have a beer. That was Eloy Aguilar.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Arlon Southall](#)

The Final Word

Fred Hoffman remembers...



Excerpts from profile of Fred Hoffman, Dec. 26, 2015, issue of Connecting.

By CHRIS CONNELL ([Email](#))

During the Vietnam War longtime AP Military Writer Fred Hoffman did four stints reporting from the war-torn country and its troubled neighbors in Southeast Asia. An investigative series he coauthored with Hugh Mulligan on rampant corruption was a Pulitzer Prize finalist in 1966. In a conflict that claimed the lives of more than five dozen journalists, including six from the AP, Hoffman followed one rule: get as close to the action as possible, but don't spend the night in the field, especially with South Vietnamese troops "because the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese tended to attack at dawn." His resolve was tested once when he ventured out to the headquarters of the Army 1st Cavalry Division's Ironhorse brigade on the famed Michelin rubber plantation. "I bummed a ride on a transport plane, sitting alone in the back with these 55-gallon drums. On the way in we started to take fire. You could see the tracers doing by. Suddenly it dawned on me that this was high octane aviation fuel. One hot round and that was it. I was very lucky," he recalled. He spent the day reporting and then, as the sun was going down, returned to the air strip and looked for the first aircraft headed south. "A small supply plane came in carrying ammunition. I said, 'Can I fly back to Saigon with you?' and he said, 'Yeah, if you help me unload.' He never turned off the engine. I helped him unload cases of grenades and we got out of there before full darkness. That was the closest I came to violating the Hoffman Rule not to spend the night out there in the boondocks."

Fred was sitting in the living room of his Alexandria, Virginia, home, spinning tales a few days after attending the funeral of another AP legend, Barry Schweid, and a week before Boxing Day and Fred's 93rd birthday. The poignant graveside service for Barry drew scores of mourners and when the last words were spoken, many pressed forward not only to console Barry's soulmate, Nina Graybill, but to clasp the firm hand of Hoffman, instantly recognizable across the decades with that shock of white hair, square jaw and sharp wit, a cane the only recognizable concession to age. Most had not laid eyes on Fred since he retired from AP in 1984, or perhaps during the next five years when he served as deputy assistant secretary for public affairs - the No. 2 guy - under Defense Secretaries Caspar Weinberger, Frank Carlucci and Dick Cheney.

Fred has always relished a reputation for being crusty - daughter Lisa Hoffman says he "is as curmudgeonly as ever. Actually, I think he was born a curmudgeon" - and the outpouring of attention and affection from old friends took him by surprise. But it took little prompting to get Fred to recount the story of his life and career, which began in Boston, where his father, a paperhanger, struggled during the Depression and his mother cashed in a \$300 life insurance policy so he could enroll in the journalism school at Boston University. An Army Reservist, he was called up in the middle of his junior year and sent to the backwaters of Georgia for combat infantry training, where he came down with a serious illness that mystified the medics. "They didn't have the doctors or beds to spend on somebody like me, so they discharged me in '43 on disability. At the time I was very uncomfortable. I was physically ill and also it was not a time to be in your 20s and wearing civilian clothes."

"But it was a break. So many people in the trade were away at war, there were openings that would not have been there had I come out in normal times. So I went to work as a go-fer at UP [United Press] for \$18.25 (a week), and learned the craft in what Harrison Salisbury called the Henry Minor School of Journalism. Minor was the bureau chief in Boston and a superb wire service writer and all-around newsman." After 18 months, it was on to Washington with his bride Norma to work for a small, independent news agency, which in turn led to a job as a news editor for WWDC radio

station. "I didn't feel comfortable. I wanted to get back into wire service work, where I felt at home," he said.

"I began going to the AP bureau and lobbying for a job there. They didn't exactly brush me off, but AP didn't hire in Washington. They rewarded promising staffers around the country by bringing them to Washington. "But I kept coming and making a bit of a nuisance of myself" until he landed a spot in 1949 on the Washington city wire, which marketed a stripped down version of the full AP report along with a calendar of upcoming news conferences and other events. "It was about as far down as you could get, but it was a toe in the door, so I took a pay cut and went to work," said Hoffman. "I was off in a corner, editing the city wire, and I began beating on Bennett Wolfe, a very friendly and fatherly guy who was head of AP's very good regional staff." It took years, but Hoffman eventually snagged a regional plum, covering the influential Ohio delegation. "This was the era of Bob Taft, Mr. Republican. We had 48 papers in Ohio and I got several good national stories because my members were so high up. I had a great time those years."

His next stop was on the night desk as a rewrite man under the tutelage of the great Don Sanders. Hoffman was eager to get back to reporting and eventually got the opportunity to cover the Pentagon in 1961 as the understudy to veteran military writer Elton Fay, nearing the end of a 42-year AP career that started in Albany covering then-Gov. Franklin Roosevelt. Fay made a habit, as Fred later did, of coming in to the bureau only once a week to pick up mail. "He'd stroll in on Saturday afternoon. Usually the lid was on at the Pentagon and the White House and we would chat. When the second slot at the Pentagon opened up, Elton asked if I was interested. I grabbed at it."

It was the height of the Cold War and the space race with the Soviet Union. The Berlin Wall, the Bay of Pigs and Cuban missile crises all posed enormous challenges for John F. Kennedy, the young, war hero president whose mettle Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev was eager to test. Ngo Dinh Diem, the president of South Vietnam, was looking to Washington for help in quelling the communist insurgency there. "Jack and Bobby Kennedy were both enamored of the idea that using the Special Forces. I hear echoes of it now when this president says he's sending 50 Special Ops guys to Syria and Iraq to train the locals to fight for themselves," said Hoffman.

Hoffman was on a Kennedy trip to visit Camp Lejeune in North Carolina when he got a call from bureau chief Marv Arrowsmith to tell him the White House was sending a high-level delegation to Vietnam, Thailand and Laos and "we want you to go" as part of a five-person press pool. "I had no passport, nothing, so there was a big scramble. They got me a passport and the following Sunday the mission left for Vietnam, led by Walt Rostow, the president's national security adviser, and Max Taylor, who'd been a wonder-boy general in World War II," he said. Taylor didn't cotton to having reporters so close. "We had one briefing between mainland United States and Hawaii on our way to Vietnam. When we got there, he said, 'You're on your own.' So with the help of the only American reporter in the country at the time, I was able to get around the country chasing Taylor and the others."

Fay more than welcomed the energy the eager Hoffman brought to the beat. "There was no competition between us. He gave me the time and in effect told me to just take off and learn the beat," he said. "That's what I did. I was like a police reporter,

roaming around learning who was doing what and who was active on what issue. Contrary to legend, the Pentagon was not a closed off building by any means. Except for the National Military Command Center and some of the more arcane areas involving research, it was open. I took advantage of that." Hoffman soon was breaking stories with sources he cultivated at all levels.

"I always felt the defense beat was the best reporter's beat in town because it was the most challenging. On Capitol Hill you had 535 people running after you to get your attention, and in the Pentagon you had everybody running the other way," he said. The military and civilian leaders would read Hoffman's reporting on the city wire, in newspapers and in the Pentagon's own Yellow Bird, a daily digest of news clippings, and "as you demonstrated you'd at least be fair, they would open up - perhaps." He found connections, too, at the Strategic Air Command in Omaha, Nebraska, the Atlantic Fleet in Norfolk, Virginia, and other key outposts that would serve him in good stead in times of crisis.

"My reach was pretty far and extensive. If I got a call from the desk late at night, I'd have to judge what was worth pursuing then and what was worth waiting until the next cycle in the morning. I had to be careful how often I would rouse valuable sources out of bed for something less than an end-of-the-earth-kind of situation," he said.

During the Yom Kippur War in 1973, he scored perhaps his biggest scoop and most satisfying story, breaking the news of how President Richard Nixon had ordered a worldwide military alert in a high stakes chess match with the Soviets as the Israelis were on the verge of wiping out Egypt's retreating Third Army. Fred tells that story himself in the accompanying sidebar.

An earlier high point was being in the pool when Alan Shepherd was shot into space in 1961 and dictating a running description of the launch while Howard Benedict watched from the "bureau" through binoculars from a nearby motel and wrote the leads. When Fred heard a thick German accent beside him, he looked around and realized he was shoulder to shoulder with Wernher von Braun.

Fred was renowned not only for his sources, but a preternatural ability to dictate smooth, richly detailed stories under deadline pressure. "I used to dictate most of my stories. I might write out the lean but from there on I would dictate," he said. "I found writing on a typewriter too consuming so I composed in my head."

The job was "all-encompassing. It was a news-rich beat. Frequently I worked until 10 or 11 at night and came into the Pentagon on Saturday and Sunday. My wife was very, very tolerant." Years later, when then-bureau chief Walter Mears told Fred he was being named a special correspondent, he told Mears, "I know why you're doing this. You don't pay special correspondents overtime."

By the time the Reagan administration rolled around, Fred, with 35 years of service, began thinking about kicking back. When he found a note of criticism from a supervisor in his mailbox one day in 1984, that clinched it. After stewing all weekend over a response, he made up his mind. "I went into the bureau chief and said, 'Hear this. I'm retiring the end of the week.' He said, 'You can't!' I said, 'Yes, I can, and I am and I will.' I had warned them several years earlier that AP had to start training

someone to follow me. This was not the kind of a beat that you can just walk in and immediately (handle). You had to learn story by story where the decisions were made, who made them and how the system worked."

Still shy of 62, Fred had no backup plan, but when he told the assistant secretary of defense, Michael Burch, "I was going to hang it up, he immediately said, 'Would you be interested in going to work for us?' I thought about it for a millisecond and said, 'Sure.'" He finished work at AP on a Friday and started the new job on Monday. Burch, a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel, told Hoffman later that when he sought Weinberger's blessing, the defense secretary replied, 'Well, it's your call, but can we trust him?' Weinberger soon did, and Hoffman later discovered the defense secretary had once written a column for a San Francisco newspaper and enjoyed the company of journalists.

When Norma joined the conversation, Fred switched to another war story: the triumphant battle his pixyish wife waged to stop Fairfax County from building a four-lane highway through parkland that the federal government had deeded to the county. "Norma, all five feet of her, organized the opposition. After 15 years of battling, she turned back the county and prevented the road from going through." Today the Nature Center at popular Huntley Meadows Park bears Norma Hoffman's name and the couple volunteers there one morning a week.

Lisa Hoffman, a veteran journalist who worked for Miami Herald, Dallas Times Herald, Cincinnati Post and Scripps Howard News Service and now is a freelance writer and editor, said her parents' "devotion to each other is breathtaking."

The couple met in downtown Boston after Fred heard a voice call out his name. "I looked around and saw this attractive girl, smiling at me. I went over. Turned out I'd dated her friend's older sister. So we made a date and went from there. Married at the very end of the war."

"I'm very proud of this guy. A wonderful fellow," Norma said before lobbying her sole reservation. "I was a professional dancer. He didn't dance." But she added, "It was fascinating living with this guy. He's got a lot of love for his family, particularly his wife, and he shows it. I'm 90 and still dancing."

Fred got the last word. "In a manner of speaking," he said with a smile.

Fred doesn't use computers or email ("The furthest advance we have gotten is the manual typewriter. I didn't even get as far as the high-speed typewriter.") but the Hoffmans' address is 6915 Lodestone Court, Alexandria, VA 22306 and he can be reached by phone at (703) 765-7498

In his words:

Lips were sealed when the U.S. went to DEFCON 3 during the Yom Kippur War - until the AP's Hoffman found out why:

By FRED HOFFMAN

Of all the thousands of stories I wrote over the years, the one I got the most satisfaction from was the hardest I ever had to develop.

It was at the very end of the 1973 Middle East War - the Yom Kippur War -- There I had to go way up because very few people were knowledgeable. The Israelis had crossed the Suez Canal and surrounded the Egyptian Third Army and were in the process of destroying it. That much was visible. But things were going on in the background that weren't visible and were very, very touchy. At that time Egypt was a client of the Soviet Union.

About 1 a.m. I got a call from the desk. We were getting messages from bureaus in places like the Strategic Air Command and the headquarters of the Atlantic. They were hearing that the military people in their area were being called in from home. Now, I knew that SAC would occasionally pull a no-notice exercise to see if anybody was awake. But then as I began hearing from the bureau there were more and more of these calls, there was a pattern. So I said, this one I have to get on the horn.

I began calling around, first trying some of my more valuable sources in the Washington area, people who'd been very frank with me in situations like the Cuban missile crisis. One went like this: 'I'm getting these messages. What's going on?' 'Can't tell you.' 'What do you mean you can't tell me?' I thought about the world at large. I said, 'Does this involve the Middle East?' 'Yeah, I can tell you that much. It's in the Middle East.' 'Well, what's happening? We're hearing that people are begin called from home to go on duty.' 'Sorry. Can't tell you.' These were people I had dealt with for years. By that time I had been in the building for 12 years. They were very apologetic. 'We can't.'

But I was able to piece together a story that there was a worldwide military alert because it was happening in Europe and it was happening in the Far East. I was able to confirm the alerts, but not the reason for the alerts. I couldn't get that closing element. So I put out a piece saying there was a worldwide alert, all services. I forget how I worded it but I managed to relate it to the Middle East situation and then I went into some detail on what I could get of the visible nature. It was a solid story from what I could glean, but it still lacked the why of it.

Well, by then it was 5 o'clock in the morning and I said, 'You know, this one, I better go to the Pentagon. It's a 24-hour operation. Perhaps I can luck out and come across somebody in the building who'll be able to help me face-to-face.'

The press room was on the E-Ring just down the hall from the National Military Command Center, which was off limits. I came in the Mall entrance. The building was absolutely silent. There was no foot traffic. I walked toward the press room and coming the other way was a four-star general I knew and who knew me. I wouldn't say we had a personal relationship, but we had a working relationship. I said, 'What's going on? This is what I hear. I can't get anybody to tell me what's behind this.' He said, 'Oh, Brezhnev has sent Nixon a nasty message telling Nixon that the United States should get the Israelis to back off their assault on the Egyptian Third Army and, if they didn't, the Russians, the Soviets, may intervene.'

Nixon ordered this worldwide alert as a signal to the Russians to back off from what they were doing. At the same time Nixon put an order out throughout the

government that nobody talks and if they did, their heads were going to roll. He didn't want to put the Russians in an embarrassing position if they backed off.

In those days I had a few, very good contacts in the intelligence community. I contacted some of those and they told me they had picked up signals that the Russians were concentrating airborne troops at seven bases. So I had closed the loop in terms of what was driving all this. I put out a story as soon as I could get all my ducks together. It was still early in the morning and nobody was able to match that story for hours. I had it nailed by myself for hours. The Israelis did ease up on the Third Army -- and Brezhnev did not follow up on his threat.

I didn't get a bonus or anything, but I got a big boot out of it. I got a lot of applause from other reporters who came around.

Today in History - Dec. 29, 2022



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.

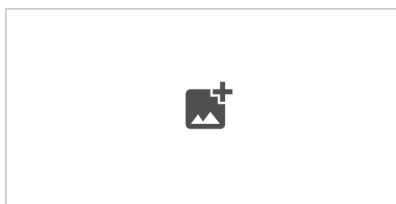
- **Volunteering** - benefit your colleagues by sharing volunteer stories - with ideas on such work they can do themselves.

- **First job** - How did you get your first job in journalism?

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



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