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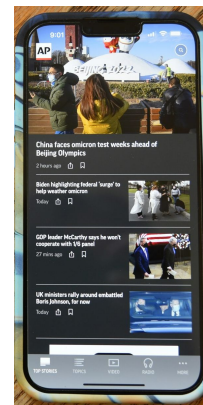
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Connecting

Nov. 21, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning on this Nov. 21, 2023,

Connecting has received sad word that former AP foreign service reporter **Jennifer Parmalee** – whose byline was well known from Italy and the Middle East - died this past weekend. We will bring you more detail in a future edition.

A reminder that tonight, PBS’ Frontline and The Associated Press will present the U.S. broadcast premiere of 20 Days in Mariupol: a visceral, first-person account of the war in Ukraine, told through the perspective of Ukrainian filmmaker and AP video journalist **Mstyslav Chernov**.

The 94-minute film has been met with critical acclaim and an audience award at the Sundance Film Festival. Click on [this AP story](#) on here’s how to watch. Check your local listings for the airing time in your neck of the woods.

The death of Rosalynn Carter evoked a fond family memory from 1979 of the First Lady and her husband President Jimmy Carter by our colleague **Lou Boccardi**, then AP executive editor and later president and CEO. We lead with his story.

And In today's Final Word, Connecting brings you the first of two stories by our colleague **Doug Daniel**, recently retired from AP's Washington bureau, on the bravery shown by US Marines on Thanksgiving Week 80 years ago.

Both arose from Daniel's ongoing research into Marine Corps combat correspondents. Those are the journalists turned Gyrenes who covered the Pacific war and sent their stories to hometown newspapers and other media, big and small, to promote the USMC and record its history. He is working on a book about them.

This week is the 80th anniversary of the battle for Tarawa, Nov. 20-23, 1943, which was one of the bloodiest in the history of the Marine Corps. Of the handful of Marine combat correspondents, called CCs, covering the battle, two were veterans of the AP's Maryland bureaus.

Finally, Connecting looks forward to your response on what you're thankful for in journalism. [Here](#) is what 19 Poynter employees had to say about the topic.

Have a great day – be safe, stay healthy, live the day to your fullest.

Paul

A night at the White House long-remembered by the Boccardi family



ABOVE: Lou and Joan Boccardi with Rosalynn and President Carter at the White House in 1979.

RIGHT: Lauren Boccardi, today a senior attorney with The Nature Conservancy.

Lou Boccardi - Word of Rosalynn Carter's passing brings a Boccardi family memory from her time as First Lady.



In January 1979, my wife, Joan, and I and a handful of media types were invited for a private dinner with the Carters in the family quarters at the White House. The others from AP whom I remember being there were Walter Mears and then COB Marv Arrowsmith, both now deceased.

Joan was in the final month of her pregnancy with our 5th (and final) child. I thought she looked lovely though, as the saying goes, she looked very pregnant. When we talked to her doctor about her making the trip, he said as long as you won't be flying in a single-engine two-seater, go ahead.

Walter's wife called me the day before and insisted that I take down the name of her Washington obstetrician. I told her this was overkill, but I took it down and stuffed the info into my wallet.

The dinner was lovely, and both Carters could not have been more solicitous, asking often if Joan was okay. After dinner, they invited us to the living space upstairs and both were anxious that Joan could handle the staircase.

Fast-forward a couple of hours to our room back at the Mayflower Hotel. Joan shook me awake, "We have to go to the hospital." And so we did, met there in the middle of the snowy night by Joyce Mears' doctor.

Daughter Lauren was born several hours later. All was well.

Later that afternoon, Joan's hospital bedside phone rang. A formal-sounding female voice said, "This is the White House calling. Is Mrs. Boccardi available to talk with the president?"

In my best New York, I said, "Yeah, sure" and handed the phone to Joan, telling her I was certain it was one of our prankster friends in New York motivated by my having phoned home with word of our adventure. A minute into the conversation, and after hearing Joan repeat "Mr. President," "thank you, Mr. President," "thank you both", my skepticism melted. It was indeed himself.

The dinner table conversation was, of course, filled with politics, contentious issues, global concerns and so on. (The AP folks steered clear of opinionizing.)

But the Carters' personal warmth came through memorably, brought back by news of Mrs. Carter's passing.

We had a much-appreciated weekend array of visitors from the Washington bureau while we were at Sibley Memorial Hospital. One of them leaned over and whispered into Joan's ear that she had just found out she was pregnant. I don't know if she had yet told her husband and I didn't have the nerve to ask.

Terry Taylor was open to innovation

Sheila Norman-Culp - The late Terry Taylor was everything that AP folks have already said about her: Funny, tough, no-nonsense, decisive, an excellent editor and journalist with a kind heart at her core. But what I want to emphasize about Terry was just how incredibly open she was to innovation.

In 1992, I had been trying to get the AP sports desk to cover the Vendee Globe, the round-the-world-solo yacht race. The collective response was "No f..... way." They felt they had enough to do. So in the time before email and the internet, I got the Vendee organizers to fax me the coordinates of all the racers once a week and would put together a short spot story for the AP's world wire, which was separate from the sports wire. One day, Terry marched over and demanded "So who the hell is covering global sailing from the night shift on the world desk?" I said it was me. She said, "Well, send the damn stories to my desk, dammit." And the issue was decided.

At the 2012 London Olympics, Terry fully backed the fledgling "AP Latest" desk even as some longtime sports folks dismissed it as "Olympics Lite." That vision was rewarded when the daily Latest got some of the highest usage figures of any Olympic stories. People wanted to read Olympic snippets all in one place. That feature is now an absolute staple of AP breaking news coverage.

Twenty years later, in 2012, Terry approved my proposal for the AP to do a global investigative series on match-fixing in soccer called The Dirty Game. At the time, AP had no structure to do this: no international investigations team, no separate budget, no weekly team meetings, no forms for such ideas to percolate up. In addition, several AP sports folks were against the project, fearing it would hurt their ties with FIFA or that it was blowing actual soccer corruption out of proportion. But Terry really backed the concept of going beyond weekly games or scores to see sports as an enormous influence on our daily lives, to cover sports from viewpoints that integrated news, business, the courts and lifestyles. In 2013, AP's international competitors were shocked by the quality of the Dirty Game series — especially from an American news organization! Within a year, AP created an international investigations team to handle such stories in the future and in 2016 it won a Pulitzer Prize for a tremendous series on slavery in international fishing.

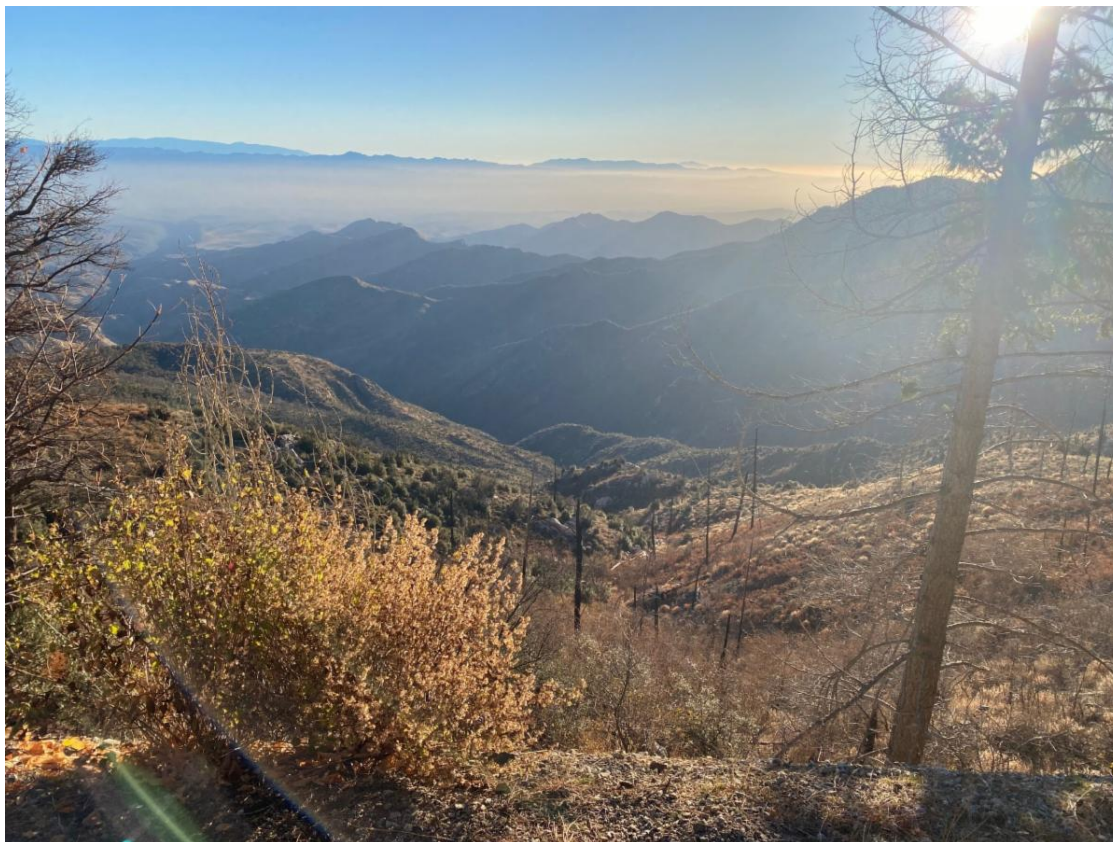
I won't forget that Terry was the first AP executive to say "yes" to such a global project. Maybe we can remember that as one of her strongest legacies: Just say "yes" to change.

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AP Sports Editor Terry Taylor (right) editing copy at the 2005 Kentucky Derby. Pictured with her, from left, Beth Harris, Jim Litke and Rich Rosenblatt. Photo by Hank Ackerman.

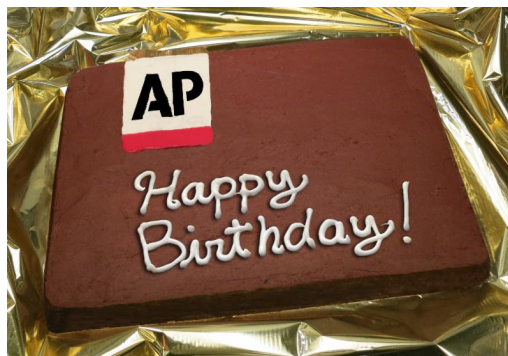
Connecting sky shot - Arizona



Mark Mittelstadt - The view from near the top of 9,100-foot Mount Lemmon just east of Tucson on Monday showing haze and clouds in the valley below. Mary and I enjoyed a stay in a Mt. Lemmon Hotel cabin, a birthday gift from our son.

The 28-degree overnight low left frost on our windshield, something unfamiliar to people who just two months ago were experiencing triple-digit heat down below.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



Andrew Selsky

Stories of interest

Company that created ChatGPT is thrown into turmoil after Microsoft hires its ousted CEO (AP)

(NOTED IN THE STORY: The AP and OpenAI have a licensing and technology agreement allowing OpenAI access to part of the AP's text archives.)

BY COURTNEY BONNELL AND MATT O'BRIEN

The company that created ChatGPT was thrown into turmoil Monday after Microsoft hired its ousted CEO and many employees threatened to follow him in a conflict that centered in part on how to build artificial intelligence that's smarter than humans.

The developments followed a weekend of drama that shocked the AI field and fueled speculation about the future of OpenAI, which named a new chief executive on Friday and then replaced her on Sunday. The newest CEO vowed to investigate the firing of co-founder and CEO Sam Altman, who's been instrumental in OpenAI's transformation from a nonprofit research laboratory into a world-renowned commercial startup that inaugurated the era of generative artificial intelligence.

Microsoft, which has been a close partner of the company and invested billions of dollars in it, announced that Altman and OpenAI's former president, Greg Brockman, would lead its new advanced AI research team. Brockman, also an OpenAI co-founder, quit in protest after Altman was fired.

Hundreds of OpenAI employees, including other top executives, threatened to join them at Microsoft in an open letter addressed to OpenAI's four-member board that called for the board's resignation and Altman's return.

Read more [here](#).

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LA Times blocks reporters who signed open letter criticizing Israel from covering Gaza (Semafor)

The Los Angeles Times is prohibiting staff from covering the Gaza war for at least three months if they signed a strongly-worded open letter criticizing Israel's military operations in the region.

Earlier this month, nearly a dozen staffers at the LA Times signed the open letter condemning the Israeli government's bombing of Gaza, and saying the military operations were harming journalists and threatening newsgathering. The letter also called on newsrooms to use language including "apartheid," "ethnic cleansing," and "genocide" when referring to the Israeli bombardment of Gaza.

Two people with knowledge of the situation told Semafor that staffers who signed the letter have been told by the paper's management that they will not be allowed to cover the conflict in any way for at least three months.

The letter, published earlier this month and signed by over 1,000 current and former journalists, called for an end to Israeli military actions in Gaza which it said represented a “slaughter of our colleagues and their families by the Israeli military and government.” The letter laid out an estimate of the number of journalists and their families who had been killed in the conflict, saying Israel’s military actions “show wide scale suppression of speech.”

Read more [here](#).

-0-

NBC cuts ties with journalist arrested by Israel for glorifying Hamas attacks (New York Post)

By Shannon Thaler

NBC News has cut ties with a Palestinian freelancer who was arrested in Israel on suspicion of inciting terror and identifying with a terrorist organization.

Mirvat al-Azzeh, who lives in East Jerusalem, was jailed Thursday after sharing four recent Facebook posts regarding Hamas’ sneak attack on Israel on Oct. 7 that killed more than 1,200 people, according to the Jerusalem Post.

It’s unclear what al-Azzeh, 45, wrote in those posts, though police described them at a hearing at the Jerusalem Magistrate Court as “inciting and glorying the horrible acts committed against civilians,” per the outlet.

NBC, owned by Comcast, said Monday that the journalist was no longer working with them.

“Before we recently retained Marwat Azza for services as a freelance producer, we were not aware of her personal social media activity that provided the basis for the Israeli investigation,” an NBC spokesperson told The Post, using an alternate spelling of her name.

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

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For CNN’s Anderson Cooper, being a journalist and stepping into others’ lives is a ‘privilege’ (Poynter)

By: Angela Fu

Over the course of his three-decade career, CNN anchor Anderson Cooper has reported from more than 40 countries, documenting nearly every major world news event. Many of them have been tragedies.

Sometimes Cooper has had to insist on showing audiences footage that captures the pain of the people ensnared by those tragedies: “People who are suffering want you to know — the world to know — about what they are going through.”

“Everybody in this room wants to be seen and heard and felt,” Cooper told a crowd of more than 700 at Poynter’s annual fundraising gala Saturday. “Everybody wants that, all around the world. You don’t want to die in silence. You don’t want to have your child die in silence. So people want you to see what’s happening, and I want people to see what’s happening.”

Cooper received the Poynter Medal for Lifetime Achievement in Journalism at the gala, which was held in Tampa. The award honors journalists whose work has made a significant impact on democracy and its institutions. Past recipients include Bob Woodward, Carl Bernstein, Lesley Stahl and Chris Wallace.

Read more [here](#).

The Final Word

Looking back at World War II: ‘Fighter writers’ cover the battle of Tarawa



Bodies float amid the wreckage of amphibious tractors and lie beyond a seawall along a Tarawa lagoon, November 1943. A Marine public relations officer and a Marine combat photographer were killed during the assault. USMC photo

Doug Daniel - For Americans with family and friends in uniform, Thanksgiving week in 1943 was a time of hope tinged with dread. Not quite two years had passed since the nation's entry into World War II. Amid preparations for the holiday, celebrated on Nov. 25 that week 80 years ago, word was coming from the Pacific theater that U.S. Marines were engaged in a bloody clash with Japanese forces on a tiny atoll.

The four-day battle for Tarawa, Nov. 20-23, stands as one of the costliest in Marine Corps history. Casualties for the 2nd Marine Division surpassed 3,300, including more than 1,000 dead. Also killed or wounded were nearly 100 Navy personnel, most of them corpsmen who provided battlefield aid. The Japanese defenders of the atoll's heavily fortified main island, Betio, prized for its airstrip, suffered more than 4,900 dead, nearly the entire garrison, including conscripted Korean laborers.

The Associated Press was there, of course, represented by news photographer Frank Filan and correspondent Bill Hipple. Filan's photograph of a captured Japanese pillbox would be among the Pulitzer Prize winners for the year.

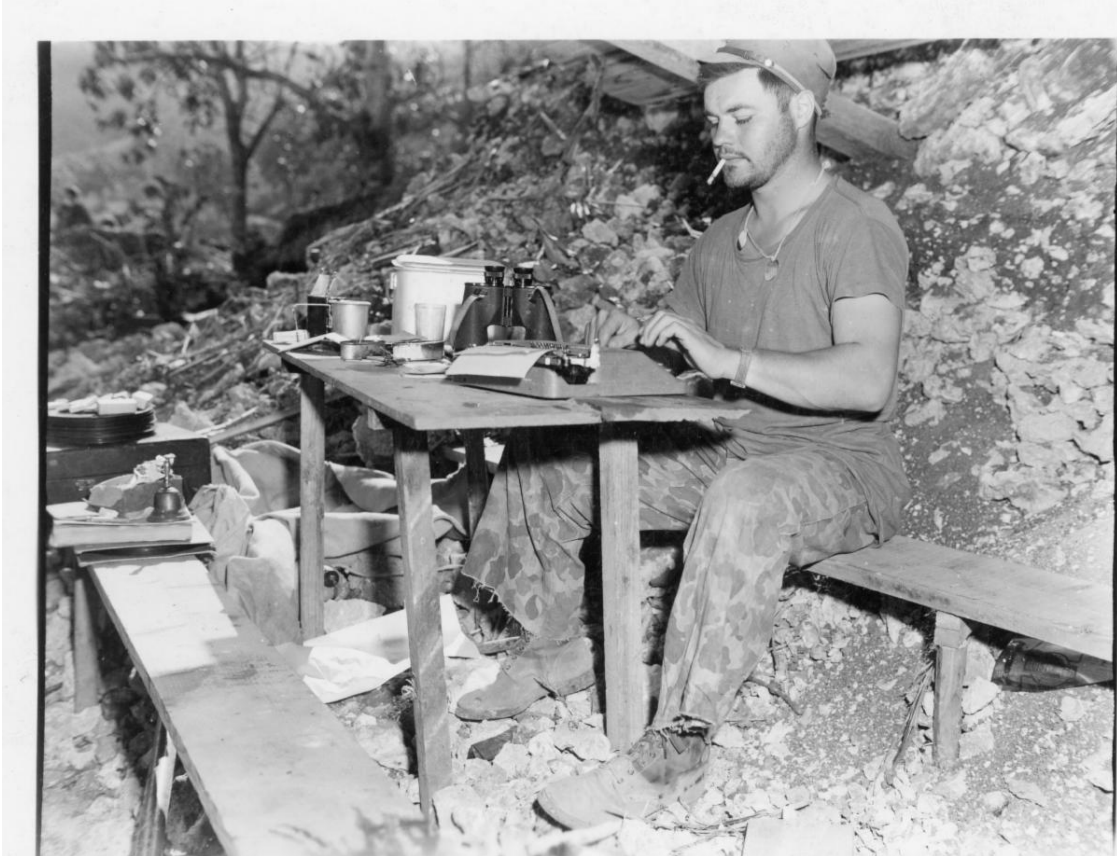
Less heralded were two other men on Tarawa, both with AP pedigrees from their work in Maryland bureaus. Pete Zurlinden had been a newsman in Baltimore and Annapolis, and Mason C. Brunson Jr. had reported from Baltimore. They packed the requisite gear for covering the war, including typewriters and plenty of paper, but they also carried rifles onto Tarawa's beaches as Marine combat correspondents, then a new breed of American newsman the Marines dubbed a "fighter writer."

The Marine Corps Division of Public Relations (DPR) began in 1942 recruiting men with experience in print, photography and other media, just months after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The idea was to put them through basic training, assign them the rank of sergeant, and place them with Marine divisions as they deployed across the Pacific. Aiming to bolster recruitment, the DPR offered their work to civilian media, particularly hometown papers, to highlight regular Marines doing their duty before, during and after battle. Running the "city room" processing news and other material flowing into DPR headquarters in Arlington, Va., was another veteran of the AP's Annapolis bureau, David Nopper, then a Marine captain.

Unlike the AP's Hipple and other civilian reporters, Marine combat correspondents, nicknamed "CCs," took orders from superior officers, carried firearms and pitched in to kill the enemy as needed. A single CC accompanied the 1st Marine Division to Guadalcanal in August 1942 for the initial U.S. offensive of the war. More fighter writers would follow as training ramped up.

At the first dawn of the battle for Tarawa, Sgt. Pete Zurlinden was among eight passengers aboard an American landing craft waiting for Navy guns to soften up their objective. Defenders on Betio island, about a third the size of New York's Central Park with no natural elevation higher than 10 feet, would face an assault force of more than 18,000 Marines and sailors.

“As the sky brightened, we had a ringside seat during the murderous bombing and shelling of Tarawa, the biggest Jap garrison in the Gilberts,” Zurlinden wrote in an account sent to American media. “Miles away we saw a continuous wall of fire flashing from the great battlewagons of one of the largest task forces ever assembled. Overhead roared more carrier-based planes than we could count.” He added: “During the first hour Tarawa was a smoking hell.”



2nd Lt. Pete Zurlinden, a Marine combat correspondent promoted to public relations officer, writes about the Marines’ advance on the city of Garapan, Saipan, June 1944. Zurlinden had worked in the AP’s Annapolis and Baltimore bureaus before the war. USMC photo

Then it was the enemy’s turn as American landing craft headed for the beaches. A heavy shell fired by a Japanese naval vessel whistled over the bow of Zurlinden’s craft, its explosion raining sea water on its passengers. For the first time in the war Zurlinden found himself ducking enemy fire. Much more – bullets, mines, mortar rounds, grenades, bayonets – was to come for the Marines.

Over the next 48 hours, none of the dozen or so CCs covering the Tarawa battle knew what had happened to Zurlinden. They assumed the worst, that he was among the missing or the dead. He turned up safe, enemy shell and machine gun fire having turned back his landing barge every time it attempted to make the beach. His portable typewriter, slung over his side, had been badly damaged by a bullet. He managed to repair it at least partially.

Technical Sergeant Mason Brunson had a similar experience. The landing craft carrying Brunson was in the third wave. “Bullets whistled overhead as we bumped and

churned over the reef and we kept our heads well down," he wrote. "Our coxswain, crouched as low as possible behind the wheel, alternately grinned and cursed at the Japs. Every now and then he would duck and exclaim, 'That one was pretty close!'" Brunson would wait 36 hours before reaching shore under deadly shell fire. He kept his typewriter but lost his briefcase.

One of the numerous stories Zurlinden wrote noted how a medical crew turned a captured pillbox into a hospital to treat Marine wounded. They used no more than four flashlights to guide their work. Zurlinden later described the first mass burial of Marines, more than 100 men, mostly cut down several hundred yards off the beach as they waded in from transports. "All the chaplains invoked funeral prayers for the Marine victims," he wrote, "so that all faiths were represented." During the battle, he reported, Catholic priests moved about the front lines to administer final sacraments.

Zurlinden encountered a pair of Marines who had been dissatisfied with their assignment to perform rear echelon work aboard a transport ship. Eager to get in on the fighting ashore, the two slipped aboard an outbound boat on the morning of the battle's second day. They spent the next two days with an infantry unit, trading gunfire with Japanese soldiers one moment and throwing grenades into a pillbox the next. When the fighting ebbed, the two headed back to their ship and the discipline that awaited them. A great story of Marine courage – but rejected by DPR editors wary of publicizing men who disobeyed orders.

Zurlinden, Brunson and other CCs often gathered information for stories after a battle, at times interviewing wounded Marines in the sick bay of a ship. For one story, a Marine private described to Brunson how two Japanese soldiers wearing Marine clothes slipped among them at night, only to be shot. The private also witnessed a suicidal charge by a Japanese officer and four men rushing out of a pillbox toward a tank. "They were mowed down," he said.

The battle for Tarawa was one of many covered by CCs as the U.S. and its allies continued the "island hopping" strategy aimed at overtaking enemy forces one island at a time and bringing the war to Japan's own shores. The CCs and other DPR personnel suffered scores of casualties during the war, including more than a dozen killed in action. On Tarawa, a Marine public relations officer, 2nd Lt. Ernest A. Matthews Jr., died in a mortar blast. A Marine combat photographer, Staff Sgt. Wesley L. Kroenung Jr., was also killed by an explosion.

Pete Zurlinden and Mason Brunson continued covering the war for the Marines, with Zurlinden badly wounded on Iwo Jima some 15 months later. After the war Zurlinden returned to the news business, including a stint with the AP's Columbus, Ohio, bureau. A reporter for the Los Angeles Times since 1955, he had just completed a banner story for the final edition on May 8, 1957, when he suffered a fatal heart attack in the newsroom. He was only 42. Brunson later worked for the Baltimore News American; he died in 2003 at age 93.

While America was victorious, officials waited for more than a week before releasing the grim details of the battle for Tarawa. Readers recoiled from the death toll. Reports from the CCs as well as civilian correspondents tempered holiday spirits as 1943 drew to a close. The takeaway was clear: Much more fighting and dying lay ahead.

(Doug Daniel, recently retired from the Washington bureau, is writing a book about Marine combat correspondents. If you'd like to know more, email him (douglaskdaniel@yahoo.com) for a digital copy of his study appearing in the anthology "Reporting World War II," published earlier this year by Fordham University Press.)

Today in History - Nov. 21, 2023



Today is Tuesday, Nov. 21, the 325th day of 2023. There are 40 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 21, 1980, 87 people died in a fire at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada.

On this date:

In 1789, North Carolina became the 12th state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1920, the Irish Republican Army killed 12 British intelligence officers and two auxiliary policemen in the Dublin area; British forces responded by raiding a soccer match, killing 14 civilians.

In 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Air Quality Act.

In 1969, the Senate voted down the Supreme Court nomination of Clement F. Haynsworth, 55-45, the first such rejection since 1930.

In 1973, President Richard Nixon's attorney, J. Fred Buzhardt, revealed the existence of an 18-1/2-minute gap in one of the White House tape recordings related to Watergate.

In 1979, a mob attacked the U-S Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan, killing two Americans.

In 1980, an estimated 83 million TV viewers tuned in to the CBS prime-time soap opera "Dallas" to find out "who shot J.R." (The shooter turned out to be J.R. Ewing's

sister-in-law, Kristin Shepard.)

In 1985, U.S. Navy intelligence analyst Jonathan Jay Pollard was arrested and accused of spying for Israel. (Pollard later pleaded guilty to espionage and was sentenced to life in prison, but was released in 2015.)

In 1990, junk-bond financier Michael R. Milken, who had pleaded guilty to six felony counts, was sentenced by a federal judge in New York to 10 years in prison. (Milken served two.)

In 1995, Balkan leaders meeting in Dayton, Ohio, initialed a peace plan to end 3 1/2 years of ethnic fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In 2001, Otilie (AH'-tih-lee) Lundgren, a 94-year-old resident of Oxford, Connecticut, died of inhalation anthrax; she was the apparent last victim of a series of anthrax attacks carried out through the mail system.

In 2012, Israel and the Hamas militant group in Gaza agreed to a cease-fire to end eight days of the fiercest fighting in nearly four years.

In 2017, Zimbabwe's 93-year-old president Robert Mugabe resigned; he was facing impeachment proceedings and had been placed under house arrest by the military.

In 2020, a federal judge in Pennsylvania tossed out a Trump campaign lawsuit seeking to prevent certification of Joe Biden's victory in the state; in a scathing order, the judge said Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani presented only "speculative accusations."

In 2021, a man drove an SUV into a suburban Milwaukee Christmas parade, leaving six people dead and more than 60 injured. (Darrell Brooks Jr. was convicted of 76 counts, including six counts of first-degree intentional homicide; he would be sentenced to life in prison with no chance of release.)

In 2022, NASA's Orion capsule reached the moon, whipping around the far side and buzzing the lunar surface on its way to a record-breaking orbit with test dummies sitting in for astronauts in the first time a capsule visited the moon since NASA's Apollo program 50 years ago.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Laurence Luckinbill is 89. Actor Marlo Thomas is 86. Actor Rick Lenz is 84. Actor Juliet Mills is 82. Basketball Hall of Famer Earl Monroe is 79. Television producer Marcy Carsey is 79. Actor Goldie Hawn is 78. Movie director Andrew Davis is 77. Rock musician Lonnie Jordan (War) is 75. Singer Livingston Taylor is 73. Actor-singer Lorna Luft is 71. Actor Cherry Jones is 67. Rock musician Brian Ritchie (The Violent Femmes) is 63. Gospel singer Steven Curtis Chapman is 61. Actor Nicollette Sheridan is 60. Singer-actor Bjork is 58. Pro and College Football Hall of Famer Troy Aikman is 57. R&B singer Chauncey Hannibal (BLACKstreet) is 55. Rock musician Alex James (Blur) is 55. Baseball Hall of Famer Ken Griffey Jr. is 54. TV personality Rib Hillis is 53. Football player-turned-TV personality Michael Strahan (STRAY'-han) is 52. Actor Rain Phoenix is 51. Actor Marina de Távira is 50. Country singer Kelsi Osborn (SHeDAISY) is 49. Actor Jimmi Simpson is 48. Singer-actor Lindsey

Haun is 39. Actor Jena Malone is 39. Pop singer Carly Rae Jepsen is 38. Actor-singer Sam Palladio is 37.

Got a story or photos to share?

Connecting is a daily newsletter published Monday through Friday that reaches more than 1,800 retired and former Associated Press employees, present-day employees, and news industry and journalism school colleagues. It began in 2013. 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 Central Region 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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