WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY: WHS-33129

OUR HEROES

REPORTERS DIVE INTO HARM'S WAY WITH ONLY A PEN, A CAMERA AND A PASSION FOR TRUTH.

News From the Front

BY MARY-LIZ SHAW

DICKEY CHAPELLE

1919-1965

Fidel Castro called her the "polite little American with all that tiger blood in her veins." Dickey Chapelle, indeed little at just 5 feet, pursued her work with a nerve as steely as the Marines she admired. In 1945, she talked her way onto Iwo Jima, where she promptly climbed a hill to snap the battle amid the annoying buzzing of wasps. She realized later those wasps were bullets.

For the next 20 years, Chapelle reported on conflicts in hot spots around the globe, including Lebanon, Algeria, Hungary and Vietnam. In fatigues, bush hat and pearl studs, she kept up with the boys no matter what, even learning to parachute in her 40s. When a young reporter named Mike Wallace asked whether she, a woman, should be out there covering all that war, Chapelle didn't hesitate.

"It is not a woman's place, there's no question about that," she told him. "There is only one other species on earth for whom a war zone is no place, and that's men."

She died of shrapnel wounds from a tripwire mine on a search-and-destroy mission with her beloved Marines in Vietnam. They dedicated a plaque in her name near the place where she fell: "She was one of us and we will miss her."

> "As long as men continue to fight wars, I believe observers of both sexes will be sent to see what happens."

AP/SHUTTERSTOCK

DICKEY CHAPELLE wades through a swamp in Vietnam in 1962, far left. Above, Chapelle's favorite picture of herself. Marine Master Sgt. Len Lowery took it during the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959.

"The war photographer's most fervent wish is for unemployment."

TROOPS PLUNGE through the cold surf toward Normandy on June 6, 1944, in one of 11 of Capa's shots that survived, out of the 106 he snapped that day, after an overeager London darkroom technician botched the processing.

D-DAY: ©ROBERT CAPA ©INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY/MAGNUM PHOTOS; PORTRAIT: HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

ROBERT CAPA

1913-1954

Born in Budapest, Hungary, the young man who would become Robert Capa was kind-hearted and his mother's favorite. His interest in photography was piqued by a girl he liked. He followed her as she took pictures.

He worked as a darkroom technician in Berlin, then fled the Nazis in 1933 to settle in Paris, where he pursued photography—and fellow expat journalist Gerda Taro. Together they covered the civil war in Spain, where Capa captured a wrenching image—"Death of a Loyalist Soldier"—of a fighter at the moment he is fatally shot. It and Capa's other Spain work led *Picture Post* to declare him "the greatest war photographer in the world" in 1938.

Known to say, "if your pictures aren't good enough, you're not close enough," Capa routinely braved the storm of battle to get the truest shot. On D-Day, he leapt onto Omaha Beach with E Company, taking pictures and taking cover where he could, feeling, he later wrote, "a new kind of fear shaking my body from toe to hair."

He died when he stepped on a land mine in Indochina, on assignment for *Life* magazine to cover the fighting between the occupying French army and Viet Minh forces.

MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE

1904-1971

One of the first photographers hired for the fledgling *Life* magazine in the mid-1930s, Margaret Bourke-White had an easy grace and an artist's eye for composition. She made her name as a chronicler of the industrial age. But she found purpose and a mission traveling with writer Erskine Caldwell through the South, documenting the working poor of the Great Depression.

Covering World War II, Bourke-White displayed uncommon empathy for the human cost of conflict. In 1941, she was the first woman to fly on a B-17 bombing raid, and the only Westerner in Moscow when the Germans invaded. She crossed Germany with Gen. George S. Patton in 1945 as his army liberated concentration camps.

Bourke-White went on to photograph India's independence movement, the effects of apartheid in South Africa and the Korean War, but finally shuttered her camera in 1957 due to Parkinson's disease.

BETTMANN ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

THIS PORTRAIT of Margaret Bourke-White in full air gear became an unlikely popular pinup during WWII.

MARGUERITE HIGGINS travels on a military plane in 1956.

BETTMANN ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

MARGUERITE HIGGINS

1920-1966

Born in Hong Kong to a French mother and an American father, Marguerite Higgins grew up poised to interpret the complex global conflicts she later wrote about for the *New York Herald Tribune*. Her fearless pursuit of stories paid off in remarkable scoops: At Dachau's liberation in 1945, she and Peter Furst of *Stars and Stripes* were the first to enter the prisoners' area.

As the *Herald Tribune*'s Tokyo bureau chief in 1950, she rushed to Korea at the first sign of hostilities. A general tried to ban Higgins and other women from the front, but she appealed to Gen. Douglas MacArthur, who cabled her editors: "Ban ... lifted; Marguerite Higgins is held in highest professional esteem by all." That September, she landed with the Marines at Inchon, writing—on deadline—an eloquent account of the invasion from the viewpoint of the men on the ground. Higgins was the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for foreign reporting, an award she shared with five other (male) reporters for coverage of Korea.

> "I wouldn't be here if there were no trouble. Trouble is news, and the gathering of news is my job."

True to form, Higgins was also an early reporter in Vietnam. While there, she contracted the tropical disease leishmaniasis from a sand fly bite, which eventually proved fatal.

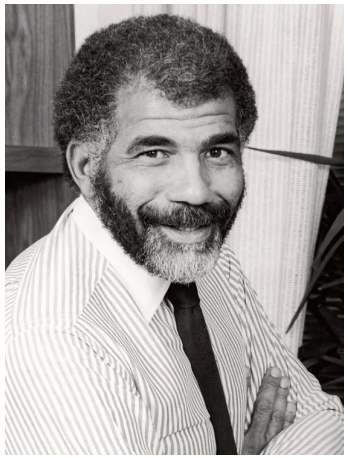
ED BRADLEY

1941-2006

With an education degree from then-Cheyney State College in 1964, Edward R. Bradley Jr. was drawn to broadcasting and soon caught the attention of WCBS radio in New York.

In the early '70s, he distilled the complicated Vietnam peace talks in Paris in lucid reports for CBS TV, and then went to cover the war itself. While with Cambodian soldiers in April 1973, Bradley was hit by shrapnel from a mortar round. He went back to Vietnam to cover the fall of Saigon in 1975.

With a quick mind and unfailing sympathy for the human struggle, Bradley tackled strife at home and abroad, from his student days covering rioting in Philadelphia to his long career with *60 Minutes*, where he reported on the plight of Cambodian refugees, forced-labor camps in China and the AIDS crisis in Africa. "People might want to characterize him as a trailblazer for Black journalists," fellow broadcaster Charlayne Hunter-Gault told *The New York Times*. "I think he'd be proud of that. But I think Ed was a trailblazer for good journalism. Period."



BRADLEY: CBS PHOTO ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES; GELLHORN: FPG/GETTY IMAGES

MARTHA GELLHORN

1908-1998

Raised in a socially conscious St. Louis family, Martha Gellhorn was an aspiring novelist when she was hired to write for the Federal Emergency Relief Association, a precursor to the Works Progress Administration. Documenting the lives of people in the grip of poverty, she found her voice as a journalist.

Covering conflicts over the next 50 years, from Spain's civil war to America's invasion of Panama, Gellhorn always wrote from the perspective of civilians and foot soldiers, ignoring generals and government flacks. Her going door-to-door, at age 81, in a Panama slum to report on civilian casualties is often cited as evidence of Gellhorn's commitment to finding the story hidden under the blanket of officialdom. But that tenacity was forged on D-Day, when she slipped onto a hospital barge and followed minesweepers through the roiling water onto Omaha Beach as a stretcher bearer. Virtually all other writers, including her husband at the time—Ernest Hemingway—witnessed the action through binoculars, never reaching Normandy's shore that day.

ERNIE PYLE

1900-1945

The only son of Indiana tenant farmers, Ernie Pyle was humble and soft-spoken, but his quiet manner hid a powerful longing for adventure. Early on, Pyle saw journalism as a way of satisfying his wanderlust, but it wasn't the only way: At varying points, he was an oil field worker, cabin boy and freighter hand.

In the mid-'30s, he was managing editor of the *Washington Daily News* in D.C. when he conceived his own dream job: roving the globe and writing about the people he met. He kept up a punishing pace, filing six columns a week, until by 1940, he estimated he had covered 200,000 miles and written 1.5 million words. His syndicated columns gained him millions of readers. When he reached London to cover the war in Europe, his natural, friendly way earned him the trust of troops and civilians, which gave him unique insights on the effects of the conflict on ordinary folk. In detailed, sympathetic reports, he told of the resiliency of Londoners and, later, of the bravery of American infantrymen.

Pyle covered battles in North Africa, Italy and France, winning the Pulitzer in 1944. On April 18, 1945, while with the 77th Infantry on the Okinawa campaign, he was killed by enemy fire on the island of Ie Shima.

ERNIE PYLE shares a companionable moment with troops during the Pacific campaign in 1945.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

"To be persuasive we must be believable; to be believable we must be credible; to be credible we must be truthful."

FROM LONDON Ed Murrow brought the startling reality of Hitler's onslaught in Europe into American living rooms.

BETTMANN ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

EDWARD R. MURROW

1908-1965

Born in rural North Carolina and raised in Washington state, Edward R. Murrow had a talent for organization and managing people—he should have had a respectable career as a media administrator. Instead, he became one of the most trusted voices of early broadcast journalism.

His foray into reporting occurred in 1937, while he was head of CBS' European operations. Germany invaded Austria, and Murrow rushed to cover it. From then on, aided by a cadre of talented reporters known as the Murrow Boys—among them Eric Sevareid, Howard K. Smith, William L. Shirer and one woman, Mary Marvin Breckinridge—he detailed in cogent dispatches the brunt of the European conflict for American listeners.

During the 1940 London Blitz, when Germany bombed the English capital for 57 straight nights, Murrow spoke from the teetering rooftops and blasted avenues of a great city that was down but not out. In one, he told of piercing sirens and smoke billowing over the streets; in another, of "the red, angry snap of antiaircraft guns."

Murrow was credited with helping to turn American opinion away from isolationism to joining the fight. ●