

Reporting the War: World War II Reporting Stations Answer Key

"We interpret the broadcast for an important new bulletin"



Stations #1 – Newseum – How was World War II Reported

To better understand how news was reported during World War II. Go to the Newseum website at <http://www.newseum.org/warstories>. Select *Media and Technology* and pick *World War II*. The information is divided between Coverage, Reporting, and Technology. Read each section and answer the questions below. To see the entire reading scroll down on the side bar. Keep clicking continue or the special captions to find out more information.

War Reporting and Technology – How has war reporting changed over time from the Civil War to modern day?

The technology to report war has changed how we view war. During the Civil War the cutting edge technology was war reporters, sketchers, and photographers reporting from the battlefield. War photographers, such as the ones employed by Matthew Brady, took the pictures and developed them on the battlefield. Most of the battlefield pictures are of fallen soldiers and animals due to the need for plate glass photography to have still subjects. The people at home had as up to date reporting as was possible at the time. By World War II technology had advanced war reporting to the live radio. Edward R. Murrow reported live from London during the Battle of Britain and flew with bombing campaigns over Germany. Other reporters, such as Ernie Pyle, were imbedded with the soldier for a more person reporting. By the 1960's war reporting changes how Americans view war. The Vietnam War was reported live from the field with images that often upset Americans as they watched the coverage on the nightly news with Walter Cronkite. The live reporting of the war negatively shifted American's view of war and their support for American involvement in a war that seemed to have no purpose and no end.

Coverage – How did the U.S. government treat censorship of the media during World War II?

War reports were censored by the Office of War Information (OWI). Most of the reporters were on their honor to follow the censors and provide a patriot report of the war. Reporters had to receive a passport from the State Department and a press pass from the War Department. What was the purpose of the Office of War Information (OWI)?

The Office of War Information (OWI) checked the credentials of reporters and regulated information releases about the war. There were censors who checked reports, but their job of censoring was primarily left up to the individual reporter. Why is overseas war reporting more efficient than during other wars?

The radio changed how war is reported. For the first time people could sit in their living rooms and hear live reports about the war. Many families relied on the radio to bring them daily updates about the war.

Why was Robert Capa a controversial World War II reporter? Why has much of his work been lost?

Endrei Freidmann changed his name to Robert Capa to appear to be a successful American photographer. He was born in Budapest, Hungary and studied journalism in Berlin. He became famous during the Spanish Civil War, but was considered a possible spy at the beginning of World War II. Later he was cleared and reported from live reporting from the front lines. He took some of the most graphic photographs of the war, but due to a dark room accident only eleven images still exist. The photographs that still exist are the most graphic of the D-Day invasion.

Reporting - How did the job of the reporter change during War World II? Why was this more effective for the public audience than past war reporting? Explain

The job of the reporter was to report up to date information about the war to the people.

Ernie Pyles' reporting was praised by the public and even Mrs. Roosevelt. What about his style of reporting resonated with the public?

Pyle lived with the soldiers and reported on firsthand account of events. Even Mrs. Roosevelt followed his column because he provided a personal voice to the war. His style of reporting made people back home feel like they were with their family members fighting the war. His writing is the enlisted man's journal.

What type of relationship did Pyle form with the soldiers he served with? What evidence supports your answer? Provide a quote from the reading.

The soldier's Pyle served with respected his reporting. When he was killed by a Japanese sharp shooter the men erected a sign that read: "At this spot/the 77th Infantry Division/Lost a Buddy/Ernie Pyle/18 April 1945"

Technology - How did modern broadcast journalism start? Explain?

Broadcast journalism started with the field reporter who with the invention of audio recording could bring the war directly to the people.

How did the radio impact war news reporting? Explain

The radio brought the war into the living rooms of the people back home. It provided an intimate side to war reporting.

Edward R. Murrow gained the respect of the print media. How was his reporting different? Why was he respected? Explain

Edward R. Murrow went to England before the war, but changed how war is reported by providing live reports from the Battle of Britain in London. He flew

with bombing raids and report back his experiences. His bosses at CBS insisted he stop reporting from dangerous missions on the front. Even though his response was always cooperative he continued his dangerous war reporting methods.

From the **Reporting War Homepage** select **Video Interviews**. Listen to as many interviews as possible. Answer the questions below by recording the name of the reporter(s) and how he responded?

What is it like covering war?

Ernie Green reported live with the troops from Italy. Many of the casualties were not from the front line but behind the line due to mines.

Did the military tell you what to cover?

Ernie Green reported for the military paper *Stars and Strips*. He felt it was controlled by the soldiers but it was subject to military censors. It could not report anything about military matters but it could report on the soldier's life.

This is different the future wars. He felt General Eisenhower supported the reporters because it was the soldier's paper controlled by the soldier's.

Cyril D. O'Brien recalled reporting from the frontlines of a naval engagement including how missiles look in water and planes on bombing campaigns. He even explained how it felt when a bomb exploded.

Richard Hottlet relayed his memories of going into Germany after the Potsdam Conference to report on Auschwitz. He had to create phony credentials for the Soviets with various stamps including "airmail" and a signature from "Abe Lincoln." He explained his memory of the barracks having shelves where people slept that were an interesting rust color due to dead bed bugs.

Was there anything at the time the reporters missed?

Ernie Green - Each edition of the *Stars and Strips* was separate depending where it was being processed. The newspaper from England was different from North Africa or Italy. The army had to take everyone. Back home the newspaper editors were usually very experienced but on the front what was reported was often left up to the local editor's judgment or lack of judgment.

Describe the control of the military?

Cyril J. O'Brien felt that censorship was as important as bullets. He believed that "Loose Lips Sink Ships" and he had to be tight about what he reported.

Frank Bolden was not there to fight race relations but to report on the black troops. He had to go through three censors, the British, Russian, and American, to have a copy approved. He always started with the British and Russian censors because the American censors would not reject a story already approved by the other two. His goal was to get the story out about discrimination in the army out to the public.

What did you find interesting or surprising about the war reporters memories of reporting the war? How is there description of war different than a foot soldier?

There will be various answers. I found it surprising that journalists were self-censored and did not always try to report the sensationalized story of modern journalism. Instead the journalist reported a patriotic soldier's story.

Station #2 – We Interrupt This Program

Go to the University of Missouri Kansas City web site *Voices of World War II: Experiences From the Front and at Home*, <http://library.umkc.edu/spec-col/ww2/main.htm>. The website has collected radio newscasts from the World War II era. Listen to at least one radio newscast from the tabs Pearl Harbor, Europe and D-Day, and the Pacific Theater. They are all good and vary in length. While listening analyze how information is reported to the public?

Suggestions: Under Pearl Harbor select Newscasts. I liked the 3rd and 6th selection.

Europe and D-Day – Listen to the Eyewitness account from June 8, 1944. It is in red by *Now Hear This*.

Pacific Theater- Listen to the Report from Pacific Fleet Headquarter. It is in red by *Now Hear This*.

After listening to the broadcasts analyze the type of information the American public received? Would this information reassure you, cause panic, or kick you into action? How does it compare to modern day reporting? Write a paragraph below explaining your analysis.

The answers will vary.

The war reporting from World War II is very straight forward facts about what happened. The reporters try to paint a picture with words about the event, but they do not provide analysis or extensive interpretation. Instead it is one person reporting. There are a few instances of sideline reporters or guest speakers, but their report is similar with a straight relaying of information. The straight forward information might cause panic in some, but it can also reassure the listener because they at least have a supply of information. It is different than modern reporting because it is mainly heard through one voice. Modern day there are always on the scene reporters and guest analysis to interpret the events. We are used to hearing multiple voices and having at least an attempt at an expert guest speaker.

Station #3 Ernie Pyle and Edward R. Murrow

Ernie Pyle won the Pulitzer Prize for his reporting in World War II. He was an imbedded journalist whose columns touched the hearts of Americans. He was killed by a Japanese machine gunner months before the end of the war. As you read two of his columns analyze his writing style. Why do you think his columns were so popular on the home front?

For homework you read the two Ernie Pyle newspaper columns *The God-Damned Infantry* from May, 3, 1943 and *The Death of Captain Warkow* from Jan 10th 1944. The columns can also be found at <http://journalism.indiana.edu/resources/erniepile/wartime-columns/1/#WartimeColumns>,

Why do you think Ernie Pyle's' columns were so popular on the home front? Explain

Ernie Pyle's reporting is very narrative and personal. The reader back home felt like they were reading the journal of their love one who was also stationed in Europe and later the Pacific. His descriptions are very visual and spark the emotions of the reader. The two columns read for homework show a comparison in his style of writing. In *The God-Damned Infantry* Pyle is very funny and shows his sense of humor about the war, but in *The Death of Captain Warkow* the column is very emotional about the death of their leader.

"This...is London" – Edward R. Murrow is credited with being a forefather of broadcast news. He worked for CBS as a reporter in London before the outbreak of World War II. With the help of his colleagues known as the "Murrow Boys" CBS news brought live reports to the American public from the frontlines of the war in Europe and the Pacific. Go to *Radio News* section of the *Radio Days* website at <http://www.otr.com/news.shtml>. Select Edward R. Murrow. Listen to Murrow's live reports from London. After each report describe, in your own words, the image that Murrow created for the listener.

London Rooftop During the Blitz –

Murrow's live reporting from London helped me to see and hear the event. I could see the search lights looking for the German planes and visualize the soldier's firing the anti-aircraft guns we could hear in the background.

From Trafalgar Square During an Air Raid –

The live report from *Trafalgar Square* brought home how many people were impacted by the air raids. The sounds of the feet moving to the air raid stations underground in the Tunnel helped me to visualize the movement of people and how the British kept as normal of schedule as possible. I was surprised by the image of the bus traveling through the streets of London.

Why do you think Murrow's reporting was engaging to the average American listening to CBS radio from their homes? Explain. Think about his description, voice, topic select...

Murrow was able to provide descriptions of events that were simple but detailed.

It allowed for the average listener to feel a part of the events taking place in England and Europe without being there. His voice is authoritative and his style is informative, but it does not create panic or sensationalize the events. He reports on what he sees and hears around him which helps to bring Americans into the frontlines of World War II.

Compare and Contrast the Reporting Styles of Pyle and Murrow			
Similarities		Differences	
Pyle	Murrow	Pyle	Murrow

Reporting live from the frontlines of the war. Wanted to bring the story of the war to directly to the people through his writing. Won the Pulitzer Prize for his war reporting.	Reported live from London. He flew with pilots and reported the soldier's story. He also reported the story of the people in London during the Battle of Britain. Won the Pulitzer Prize for his war reporting.	Reports as an imbedded reporter from the frontlines. He lived with the soldiers. His column was read by thousands and was syndicated to numerous newspapers in America	Reported from the frontlines but was based in London. He had a team of reporters, the <i>Murrow Boys</i> who helped to cover the stories. Reported from airplane raids and rooftops on the radio. Interacted with the military but was not imbedded.
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Station #4 – Newsreels

Even during times of economic depression and war Americans still went to the movies. At the movies they could escape their everyday lives and watch newsreel updating them on what was happening in World War II. Watch the newsreel from the National Archives. As you watch make notes on how the video uses sound effects, camera angles, and propaganda. Also keep a list of how the enemy troops are referred to compared to the image of the American soldiers.

Listen to the newsreel from the National Archives titled *Allied Drive on in Italy – Planes Smash Foe In Air, 1944*. To find the video go to the National Archives at <http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/videos.html> select *60 World War II Newsreels*. Play the #7 video. Either play it in a Quicktime download or Youtube. (Streaming may be too slow)

Notes on Construction of the Video – sound effects, camera angle, images

Notes on Content of the Video – propaganda, references to the enemy, actions of the soldiers

Looking over your notes analyze what the American public was viewing about the war? How did this impact our viewpoint about the war, our troops, and our leaders?

The newsreels show the actions of the war but they seem to only show the Americans doing well. We always look victorious. There is nothing overly graphic about the videos scenes. The images are of troops or of the airplanes but they do not show the enemy being killed or harmed. Our leaders always look confident with well pressed uniforms. The newsreels informed the American public, but they also promoted patriotism.

Station #5 – Censorship of the Press – Who decides?

The American Studies Department at the University of Virginia created a project on the press and media in World War II and Vietnam. Read their research findings titled *Censorship and War Propaganda*,

http://xroads.virginia.edu/~class/am485_98/lane/media/censor.htm.

After reading the article answer the following questions:

1. What form of media scared the U.S. government the most? Why?

The U.S. government was scared of the image. They were concerned that the images of war would have a negative impact on the support for the war. In the Civil War it was concern for the photograph, by World War II it is the photo and the visual images the radio reporting provided, and by Vietnam it is the live image on television that was beamed into the living rooms of most Americans.

2. For the most part how was the regular print media censored?

The print media was primarily self-censored. The government relied on journalist to censor their work especially with visual images. The images of mangled soldiers were not reported. Most images reported did not show the faces of the soldiers due to the consideration of love ones back home.

3. What was the purpose of the Office of War Information (OWI)?

The Office of War Information purpose was to censor the press and all types of journalism including written, film, and photography. The office also used the press to put out a patriot message to the public through war propaganda encouraging support for the war. The OWI walked a tight rope of censoring and using the press for their own purposes.

4. The government was concerned about the press but they liked the use of images in war propaganda. Why was the propaganda media acceptable? Explain

The press could help rally support for the war on the home front. There was a need for cross the board support for this war and OWI show their role as helping to manipulate the information presented to the public to help promote our war efforts.

5. What type of pictures were allowed in the American press? Why?

In 1943 opinion polls showed waning support for the war on the home front. To help boost the support of Americans they OWI allowed for limited images of fallen soldiers on foreign shores. It was the first time many Americans had seen images of our fallen men and helped to rally support behind the war effort.

6. As we head to post World War II wars why type of media becomes a concern? Why?

The concern after World War II is the live media broadcast of television. Now any journalist can report from the front without out a tight control on what is reported or its factual content. Vietnam showed war at its worse.

7. How do we censor media today? Can the media be controlled?

There is very limited censorship of the press today. It is still primarily self-censoring. The demand instant and constant information has increased. There is little the government can do to prevent the reporting of video images of war.

Now read the three documents from the Franklin Roosevelt library containing the issue of censorship during war time. Go to <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/cgi-bin/htsearch?words=censorship;page=>. The readings will appear in a transcribed version on the page about censorship. At the bottom of the page you can switch the document to the original version which is more fun to read. Also you will need to go to the beginning of the document to put the censorship in context.

1. Select *Hopkins on Conference With Stalin 4/11/41*. Harry Hopkins is a close advisor to Pres. Franklin Roosevelt. He is visiting Moscow helping to organize supply shipments to the Soviet Union. What does Stalin say about the Soviet Union and censorship? How accurate do feel Stalin is about Soviet censorship? Explain.

Harry Hopkins offers to share with Stalin and his advisors any journalistic reporting of his visit to Moscow for the Soviet censors. Stalin says there is no censorship in the Soviet Union. This is a surprising statement considering he is a communist dictator and was well known for limiting the reporting of

information and jailing reporters and writers who did not report within the tight controls of communist system.

2. Read FDR -> *Winston Churchill re: Leaks to Press About Anti-Submarine Methods 11/10/44*

What problem is Pres. Roosevelt addressing with Prime Minister Churchill? How are they using censorship to control the problem? Explain

The problem President Roosevelt is addressing with Prime Minister Churchill is reports about American submarines in the British press. The problem FDR is addressing is his concern about the United States' submarine warfare in the Pacific and the desire of "the barbarians" (the Japanese) for any information. FDR is trying to keep the lid on information as much as possible in American and would like the help of Churchill doing the same in England.