

WW II Radio News And "The Murrow Boys"



Brian Belanger
Curator

Radio News Prior to WW II

Circa 1930, newspaper-owned stations e.g.,

WGN – *Chicago Tribune*

WWJ – *Detroit News*

read headlines, but in-depth newscasts were rare

Radio News Prior to WW II

- Speeches and political conventions were broadcast live by networks
- Election returns
- FDR's "Fireside Chats"



Radio News Prior to WW II

- Rivalry between radio and newspapers
- Associated Press refused to provide news to radio stations (AP relented in 1939)

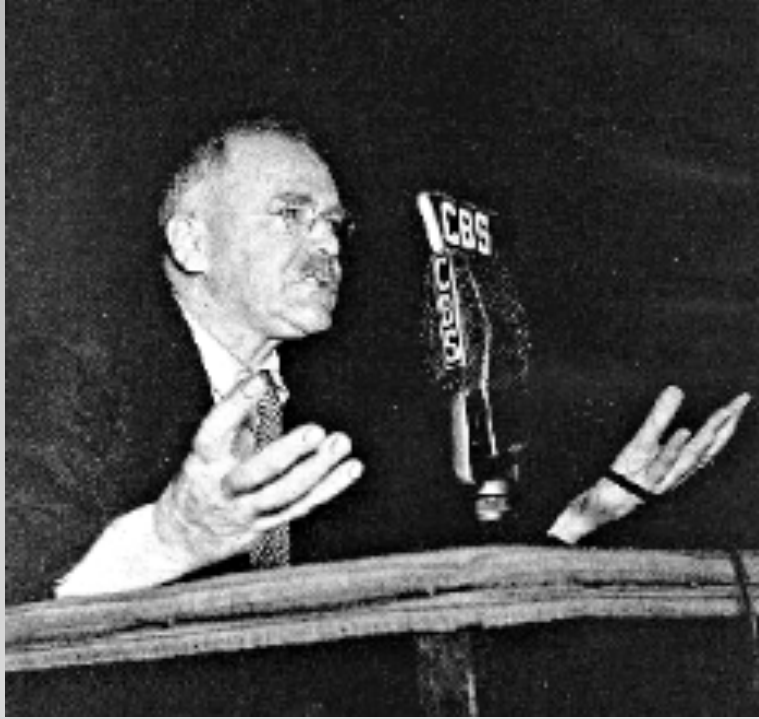
Radio News Prior to WW II

“Commentators” discussing
current events rather than
newscasters



Lowell Thomas

15-minute nightly newscast (M-F)
on NBC-Blue beginning in 1930



H. V. Kaltenborn

Three short newscasts/week
beginning in 1920s

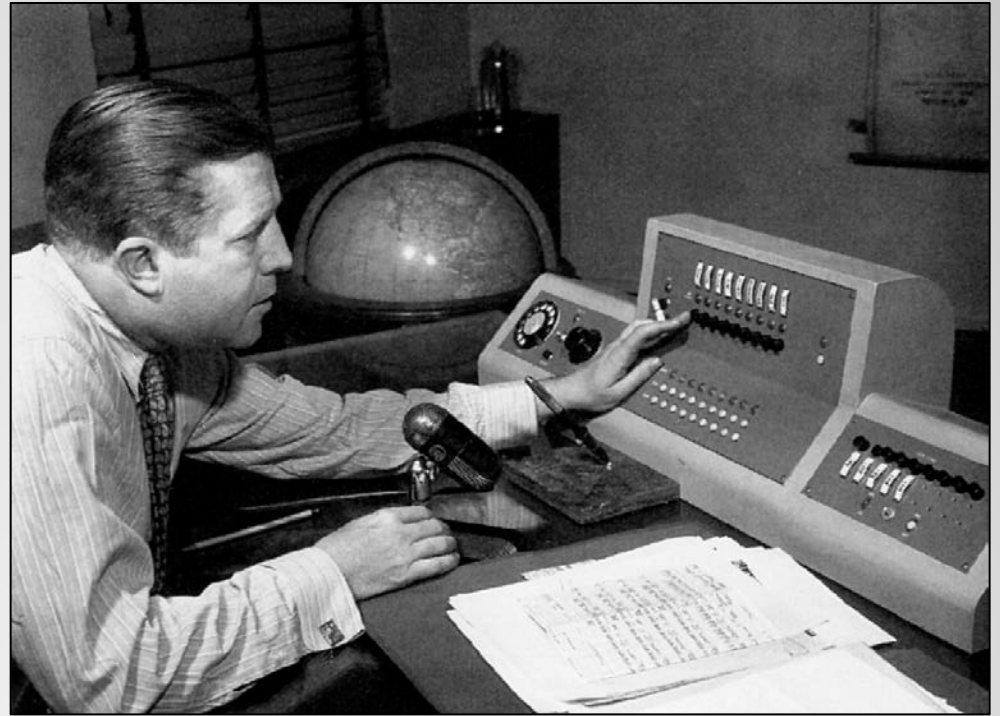


Boake Carter

Evening newscasts in 1930s

As WW II was breaking out, CBS' Paul White created a news service

- White hired Murrow in 1937 to arrange special shortwave broadcasts from Europe



Murrow's Team:

- Edward R. Murrow (London)
- William Shirer (Berlin)
- Larry LeSueur (France, Moscow)
- Thomas Grandin (Paris)
- Eric Sevareid (Paris)
- Mary Marvin Breckenridge (Netherlands)
- Howard K. Smith (Berlin)
- Charles Collingwood (London)
- Richard C. Hottelet (D-Day)
- Winston Burdett (Rome)





Murrow and Shirer



Grandin, Murrow and Shirer



Mary Marvin Breckinridge



Howard K. Smith and his wife



Eric Sevareid

- CBS captured a greater audience than NBC or Mutual
- During the war, CBS aired “The Evening News Round-up,” from foreign capitals via shortwave radio

Finding shortwave transmitters was a constant problem, also fading, censors, jamming, and interference



This is America..

...where you can listen to your radio in your living room -- not in a hideout. Where you are free to hear both sides of a question and form your own opinion • *This is your America*

... Keep it Free!

© 1951 RCA

- Radio news was changed forever!

Now, let's listen to some broadcasts



Hitler and Chamberlain

Edward R.
Murrow:

1939
**"On the Eve
of War"**





Subway station air raid shelter

Edward R.
Murrow:

1940
“London
After Dark”





Air raid damage

Edward R.
Murrow:

1940
**"Murrow on
a Rooftop"**





Edward R.
Murrow:

Dec. 1942
"CBS World
News Tonight"





Edward R. Murrow

Dec. 1943
“Bombing Run
to Berlin”



After the War:

- Some of Murrow's team continued with radio news, some went into television
- Howard Smith - ABC Television,
Collingwood did CBS news specials

After the War:

- Murrow became CBS News Director



After the War:

- He took on Senator McCarthy on *See it Now* in 1954



After the War:

- In 1961 Murrow became Director of the US Information Agency
- He died in 1965

The logo for the United States Information Agency (USIA) is displayed in a stylized, bold font. The letters are colored as follows: 'U' is blue, 'S' is red, 'I' is orange, and 'A' is green.



Edward R.
Murrow:

A Legend in
News
Broadcasting



Edward R. Murrow Park in D.C. (18th & H NW)

Who gave his profession a standard of excellence and whose clarity, humanity, and courage helped his country and the world to know what America at its honest best could be.

Visit the National Capital Radio & Television Museum

ncrtv.org



Become a Museum member and receive multiple benefits!

About the Museum

- Free Parking, Free Admission
- 5-star Trip Advisor rating. “One of the ten best museums in the state of Maryland”
- Rare items, (e.g., first mass-produced commercial radio, first radio with wireless remote control, three pre-WWII TV sets, first transistor radio, radio fax machine)
- Classes in vintage radio repair
- *Dials and Channels*, our scholarly quarterly journal
- Library with thousands of books and journals
- Restoration shop

