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# Broadcasting Canada's War: How the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Reported the Second World War

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Broadcasting Canada's War: How the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Reported the Second  
World War

by

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A THESIS

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## **Abstract**

Public Canadian radio was at the height of its influence during the Second World War. Reacting to the medium's growing significance, members of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) accepted that they had a wartime responsibility to maintain civilian morale. The CBC thus unequivocally supported the national cause throughout all levels of its organization. Its senior administrations and programmers directed the CBC's efforts to aid the Canadian war effort. Similarly, CBC news editors conceded that the necessities of total war and the intimate nature of radio news demanded that they adapt new measures of censorship wholly unique to the medium. At the frontlines, CBC war correspondents broadcast eye-witness testimonies and sounds of the conflict which mitigated the geographic distance between the war overseas and the Canadian homefront as never before. This unprecedented advance in the realism of war journalism propagandized the values and achievements of the Canadian armed forces.

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## Introduction

Fighting during the Second World War pervaded the airwaves. As an intangible form of communication, broadcasting was not subject to artificial boundaries. Thus, radio propagandists were capable of penetrating the hearts and minds of citizens in countries at home and abroad.<sup>1</sup> Belligerent nations harnessed the power of radio to propagandize their war directly into the homes of a large and increasing number of radio owners.

Broadcasters combatted propaganda with propaganda. In Germany, the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, under the leadership of Joseph Göbbels, controlled broadcasting through its national network, the *Reichs-Rundfunk-Gesellschaft* (RRG). Tightly regulated under the Nazi regime, the RRG only aired material that aligned to the agenda of the National Socialist Party.<sup>2</sup> In the United Kingdom, the publically-owned broadcasting service, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), played a crucial role in promoting the British war effort and mobilizing the masses as well. The BBC's contribution earned it a reputation as one of the key instruments of war through which Britain and her allies finally achieved victory.<sup>3</sup> In Newfoundland, the wartime role of the publically-owned Broadcasting Corporation of

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<sup>1</sup> Carlton McNaught, *Canada Gets the News* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1940), 155-6; William R. Young, "Academics and Social Scientists versus the Press - the Policies of the Bureau of Public Information and the Wartime Information Board, 1939 to 1945," *Historical Papers* 13.1 (1978), 223. Because the influence of McNaught's work pervaded the thinking of Canadian civil servants and media elite, this thesis uses his definition of 'propaganda,' which says that it is a means of "creating a certain impression on the public mind... by presenting facts in a certain way." McNaught explained: "propaganda may be quite innocent, and the motive quite sincere. In the wider sense, it is simply the presentation of a case. It seeks, nevertheless, to influence opinion, and is therefore distinct from information imparted with no end in view other than enlightenment. Thus it is always suspect, no matter how sincere. It may prove to be the truth, but it cannot be accepted as such until the other side has been heard."

<sup>2</sup> H. J. P. Bergmeier and Rainer E. Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves: The Inside Story of Nazi Radio Broadcasting and Propaganda Swing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 4ff.

<sup>3</sup> Siân Nicholas, *The Echo of War: home front propaganda and wartime BBC, 1939-45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 1-2; Desmond Hawkins, *War Report: BBC Radio Dispatches from the Front Line, 1944-1945* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1985), 9; Simon J. Potter, *Broadcasting Empire: The BBC and the British World, 1922-1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 110.

Newfoundland (BCN) proved indispensable for its war effort.<sup>4</sup> Although an inherently different national experience than countries with state-owned broadcasters, the privatized system of American broadcasting ultimately saw corporate self-interest and business leaders advertise the American war effort as well.<sup>5</sup> In these cases, radio broadcasting was an integral part of each national cause.

In Canada radio broadcasting was important too. Yet there is no comprehensive study on Canadian radio – nor about Canada’s public radio broadcaster, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) – during the Second World War. Several writers have commented on the wartime importance of the CBC. “The task of ‘welding together the diverse elements of the population’ which had been given to the CBC by Parliament took on a much greater sense of urgency;” Peter Stursberg reflected, “[and] the CBC was to become the main instrument for keeping the home fires burning and maintaining the nation’s confidence and morale.”<sup>6</sup> As Canada’s voice of wartime propaganda, the Corporation was an indispensable instrument of Canada’s war. However, historians offer only limited surveys of the CBC’s wartime experience.

A handful of Canadian historians provide summaries of the Corporation’s story in the Second World War. Howard Fink and John Jackson, for instance, have examined the propagandist radio plays of Gerald Noxon on the CBC.<sup>7</sup> Several works refer to the CBC’s Overseas Unit, stationed in London, and they mention the remarkable work of the Corporation’s

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<sup>4</sup> Jeff A. Webb, *The Voice of Newfoundland: A Social History of the Broadcasting Corporation of Newfoundland, 1939-1949* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 112ff.

<sup>5</sup> Gerd Horten, *Radio Goes to War: The Cultural Politics of Propaganda during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 7-9. As Horten argues, “America fought a unique kind of propaganda war during World War II: it was a privatized war, shot through with appeals to the personal sacrifices or consumerist desires of the American people.”

<sup>6</sup> Peter Stursberg, *Mister Broadcasting: the Ernie Bushnell Story* (Toronto: Martin Associates, 1971), 81.

<sup>7</sup> Howard Fink and John Jackson, eds. *The Road to Victory: Radio Plays of Gerald Noxon* (Waterloo and Kingston: Malcolm Lowry Review Press and Quarry Press, 1989), 10.

war correspondents.<sup>8</sup> Administrative and political histories of the CBC credit the war for the Corporation's 'inevitable' descent into subservience as a 'wartime arm of the government'.<sup>9</sup> French-Canadian historians, in particular, argue that the CBC's refusal to allow airtime to the opponents of the 1942 plebiscite on conscription is an example of the Corporation's willingness to bow to the national government's agenda during the war.<sup>10</sup>

The lack of any comprehensive study of the CBC's war years is disconcerting. This may, in part, be a consequence of the pitiful state of the historiography of Canadian radio. Mary Vipond has asserted that the topic is all but mute. "Too little radio history has been written in Canada," she lamented, "and too little of it by academic historians."<sup>11</sup> Josephine Langham, having arrived at the same conclusion, claimed that Canadian researchers and archivists have possessed a long-standing disinterest in broadcast material.<sup>12</sup> This dearth of academic literature about Canadian broadcasting has left our understanding of Canada in the twentieth century incomplete. Undeniably, the influence of broadcasting media has been crucial for molding regional, national, and transnational cultures. The rise of radio and television created a

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<sup>8</sup> Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, *CBC: A Brief History and Background* (Ottawa: CBC, 1972.), 12; Bill McNeil and Morris Wolfe, *Signing On: The Birth of Radio in Canada* (Doubleday: Toronto, 1982), 226-245.; Earnest Austin Weir, *The Struggle for National Broadcasting in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965), 273.

<sup>9</sup> T. J. Allard, *Straight Up: Private Broadcasting in Canada: 1922-1958* (Ottawa: Heritage House, 1979), 131-6.; Michael Nolan, *Foundations: Alan Plaunt and the early days of the CBC Radio* (Toronto: CBC Enterprises, 1986), 170.; Frank W. Peers, *The Politics of Canadian Broadcasting, 1920-1951* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1969), 300ff. These histories attribute the war with aggravating the struggle between William Gladstone Murray, the CBC General Manager and staunch imperialist, and Alan Plaunt, member of the CBC Board of Governors and neutralist. Michael Nolan, in particular, provides an unflattering account of Murray, the victor of the rivalry, who later resigned in 1942 as a result of inappropriate dealings with the CBC's finances. Nolan, in comparison, characterizes Plaunt as a martyr of democratic broadcasting.

<sup>10</sup> Warner Troyer, *The Sound & The Fury: An Anecdotal History of Canadian Broadcasting* (Toronto: Personal Library, 1982), 93-4.; Alain Canuel, "La censure en temps de guerre: Radio-Canada et le plébiscite de 1942" *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 52.2 (1998): 224, 230 Marc Raboy, *Missed Opportunities: The Story of Canada's Broadcasting Policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 67-69.

<sup>11</sup> Mary Vipond, "Stand By for That Report": The Historiography of Early Canadian Radio," *Fréquence/Frequency* 7-8 (1997), 13.

<sup>12</sup> Josephine Langham, "Tuning in: Canadian Radio Resources," *Archivaria* 9 (Winter 1979-80), 105.

“mediatized world,” as Vipond calls it, of which Canada was a part.<sup>13</sup> To adapt Gerd Horten’s argument about the similar state of American radio historiography, “we cannot fully understand American [or Canadian] society from the 1920s to the late 1940s until there are more studies on radio’s impact and its interaction with the society and culture at large.”<sup>14</sup> Without studying the role played by Canadian radio during the Second World War – a period historians nevertheless attribute as generating the ‘Golden Age’ of radio in Canada – it is impossible to fully comprehend Canada’s wartime experience.<sup>15</sup>

Although historians generally overlook the history of radio in Canada, they have invested more attention into studying the wartime censorship of the Canadian press. A notable consequence of this is that historians tend to make the censorship of radio broadcasting nearly indistinguishable from print media. This is in spite of the probability that a greater understanding of Canadian radio broadcasting, and its unique wartime experience, could contribute to the historiographic discussion about wartime censorship and propaganda in Canada.

Historians have generally accepted the *modus operandi* that the ‘voluntary’ censorship system of the Canada’s domestic press during the Second World War relied on the willing cooperation of Canadian media. The voluntary system, which they describe, allowed for an environment wherein the media were not required to consult official censors before releasing information to the public. In Gillis Purcell’s 1947 article he demonstrated a bleak retrospective about wartime censorship under this system. “In the six years of the Second World War,” he noted, “the Canadian people were subjected to a press censorship as effective and almost as

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<sup>13</sup> Mary Vipond, “The Historiography of Canadian Broadcasting” in *Communicating in Canada’s Past: Essays in Media History* eds. Gene Allen and Daniel J. Robinson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 239.

<sup>14</sup> Horten, 1.

<sup>15</sup> Mary Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada Second Edition* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1992), 42.; Wayne Schmalz, *On Air: Radio in Saskatchewan* (Regina: Coteau Books, 1990), 79.

powerful – and potentially as politically dangerous – as any in the world.”<sup>16</sup> Purcell argued that the censorship system in Canada flourished because Canadian news agencies let infringements against their journalistic integrity go largely uncontested. The “unqualified co-operation by the press” with the Canadian censorship regime, Purcell claimed, “carried the greatest threat to freedom of speech.” Through the course of the war, the press “gradually felt the deadening effect of years of censorship and came to accept the censors’ edicts unquestioningly.”<sup>17</sup> Daniel German arrived at a similar conclusion in his 1996 article about the November 1944 mutiny of the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade in Terrace, British Columbia. He demonstrated that official censors were not heavy-handed in regulating war news.<sup>18</sup> Rather than succumb to military or government pressure to institute tight control over information released to the public, German argued, the role of the censors was much more ambiguous. Censors were adamant that the current voluntary system – seeking to adequately inform the population about the war and entrust the discretion of the press to censor anything potentially dangerous – would best meet the national needs. In the case of the Terrace mutiny, censors did not impose a complete news blackout. Instead, they allowed news agencies to report the facts while agreeing to “down-play news of the outbreak” so that the situation did not become exacerbated. Had the crisis escalated, censors feared that “the army might act unilaterally to create a more stringent form of censorship.” Thus, censors wished to defend the freedom of the press.<sup>19</sup> By demonstrating that official censors were not bent on suppressing war news, German explained that Canadian news agencies and journalists were compliant with official censorship regulations and committed to their wartime responsibility,

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<sup>16</sup> Gillis Purcell, “Wartime Press Censorship in Canada,” *International Journal* 2.3 (Summer, 1947), 250, 261.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 260.

<sup>18</sup> Daniel German, “Press Censorship and the Terrace Mutiny: A Case Study in Second World War Information Management,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 31.4 (96, 1997): 124-142.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

entrusted to them, to censor the news. Claude Beauregard, likewise, reached an identical conclusion in 1998 with his comprehensive study of Canadian censorship during the Second World War. “Patriotisme, loyauté, coopération, volontariat, compréhension, voilà des mots clés qui nous aident à comprendre la censure de la presse pendant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale,” he said about Canada’s domestic press censorship, “[et] dans ce contexte, la presse doit faire sa part et les éditeurs sont conscients de l’importance de leur rôle.”<sup>20</sup>

Historians writing about wartime censorship in Canada tend to distinguish between the domestic censorship system that was voluntary and the compulsory system managed by the military overseas. Beauregard’s study utilized a multi-level approach – separating censorship regulated by the government, the press, the military, and the postal censors – to analyze Canadian wartime censorship. The military imposed stringent restrictions on what they allowed Canadian war correspondents to report during the war, granting the reporters little journalistic freedom when compared to the domestic press. “Dans un contexte de guerre totale,” he said, “les correspondants et les journaux deviennent une arme au service de la cause des Alliés.”<sup>21</sup> Timothy Balzer has since contributed to our understanding of this by exploring how severely the military regulated war news from a theatre of war. Between his 2006 article about the information cover-up of the 1942 Dieppe raid and his comprehensive 2010 book, Balzer argued that the military meticulously conducted the gathering and presentation of operational war news to the public. He asserts that as the war progressed “the Canadian Army’s [public relations] organization grew

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<sup>20</sup> Claude Beauregard, *Guerre et censure au Canada, 1939-1945* (Sillery, QC: Septentrion, 1998), 57. [Translation: “Patriotism, loyalty, cooperation, volunteerism, understanding, these are the keywords that help us understand the press censorship during World War II... In this context, the press must do its part and publishers are aware of the importance of their role.”]

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 129. [Translation: “In a context of total war, correspondents and newspapers become a weapon in the service of the cause of the Allies.”]

from nothing to a well-oiled publicity machine as the army influenced what Canadians knew of the war.”<sup>22</sup>

Balzer’s emphasis on the draconian control of military publicity officers and censors, however, overlooks the agency of war correspondents and news agencies. Certainly the military authorities, as in the case of Dieppe, imposed a great many restrictions on the press that prevented them from accurately reporting war operations to the public. According to censorship regulations, war correspondents could not report information that was useful to the enemy, speculated or false, or anything that authorities could construe as detrimental to Allied morale and recruiting.<sup>23</sup> But these constraints, reinforced by the threat of fines or revoking the accreditation of unfaithful war reporters, should not disregard the willingness of the war correspondents and the press to depict the Allied effort in a favourable light. At Dieppe, the ‘stick’ did not solely motivate war reporters. As Ross Munro of the Canadian Press (CP), a war correspondent who covered the Dieppe raid, later reflected:

I was committed to the war completely and utterly, right from the start... I don’t think young people today could ever feel the commitment that we had. Maybe it was just jingoism, chauvinism, and stupidity, but we felt that the Germans were going to wreck this world of ours and that we would have to stop them. The troops were committed to it and I think the correspondents were – I certainly was. But it won’t ever happen again. The war we were involved in was very clear cut. It really was a crusade.<sup>24</sup>

Munro’s comments about their work was in keeping with the opinion that journalists increasingly expressed following the Vietnam War. This shift was first evident in the 1975 book of Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty*. In his work, Knightley shined a spotlight not only on

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<sup>22</sup> Timothy Balzer, *The Information Front: The Canadian Army and News Management during the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 169.; Timothy Balzer, “‘In Case the Raid Is Unsuccessful ...’: Selling Dieppe to Canadians,” 87.3 (2006), 411.

<sup>23</sup> Balzer, *The Information Front*, 74.

<sup>24</sup> Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist, and Myth-Maker* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 348.

the complex censorship bureaucracy policed by the military – which Balzer later expanded upon. Knightley illuminated the propagandist efforts of the war correspondents themselves. Using interviews that he conducted with several, Knightley argued that the willingness of journalists to aid the Allied cause influenced their coverage of the war.<sup>25</sup> Charles Lynch perhaps best captured their determination to help the war effort, in his oft-quoted interview with Knightley:

It's humiliating to look back at what we wrote during the war. It was crap – and I don't exclude the Ernie Pyles or the Alan Mooreheads. We were a propaganda arm of our governments. At the start the censors enforced that, but by the end we were our own censors. We were cheerleaders. I suppose there wasn't an alternative at the time. It was total war. But, for God's sake, let's not glorify our role. It wasn't good journalism. It wasn't journalism at all.<sup>26</sup>

Balzer has only slightly backtracked from his earlier hard-nosed stance. In his 2010 book he conceded that war correspondents “were also eager to promote Canada's war effort,” and that “there is no doubt on whose side the news organizations and correspondents with the Canadian Army stood.”<sup>27</sup> But the ambiguous power of military authorities and censors tends to provide a convenient excuse for Balzer and others for why war correspondents slanted their dispatches so favourably towards the Allied side. As CBC war correspondent Peter Stursberg said in his 1993 memoirs,

The fact of the matter is that in total war the war correspondents were propagandists. Censorship saw to that. Every report, every broadcast had to be passed by the censor, and there would have been serious consequences if any had been transmitted without the

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 349. As Knightley asserted, “In a war in which the wickedness of the enemy did not have to be invented, a patriotic war correspondent got on side. But this meant that the war-time reader had to learn to treat most correspondents' dispatches like official communiqués – with some scepticism.”

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 364.; Gene Allen, *Making National News: A History of Canadian Press* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 160. Another Canadian war correspondent, Bill Stewart, later took offense to critics describing his profession as ‘cheerleaders’. In an interview with Gene Allen he said, “there was nothing very cheerful about the goddamn war.” Nevertheless, Stewart's testimony attests to the reality that he and his colleagues were fully committed to the war effort. He continued: “You see, I either wanted to go overseas as a war correspondent or go in the air force. I had three brothers in the services, and a sister, you know. So you weren't on the Germans' side, that's for sure. You wouldn't want to write anything that would help the Germans. There was a lot of heroism and you wrote about it. *You were writing from one side of the issue*. Were you a cheerleader, or weren't you a cheerleader? I don't think you were a cheerleader. I think you were reporting what was going on, on your side.” Emphasis added.

<sup>27</sup> Balzer, *The Information Front*, 79, 173.

ensor's stamp of approval. Letters were checked and any offending remarks were scissored out, and some arrived looking like cut-out paper doilies.<sup>28</sup>

Stursberg, here, credited military authorities with most of the blame for distorting information about the war.

But concentrating on the 'ill-defined' authority of wartime censors runs the risk of overlooking the agency of the news organizations and journalists. War correspondents of the Allied nations wanted to aid the war effort. A patriotic sense of duty prevented them from deliberately writing material which might undermine the Allied cause. Aimé-Jules Bizimana, in his 2007 book about the French-Canadian war correspondents of the Second World, concluded that journalists were willing cogs in the complex machinery of Allied war censorship. Bizimana states:

La couverture médiatique faite par les correspondants de guerre a été fortement influencée par leurs sentiments patriotiques. Ils ont le plus souvent rapporté les gestes d'héroïsme et de bravoure des soldats que les erreurs et les horreurs de la guerre. Limitée à la fois par une censure stricte et par l'auto-censure, la couverture journalistique de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale s'est révélée, d'une manière générale, non pas critique, mais bien complice de l'effort de guerre.<sup>29</sup>

That the innate patriotism of journalists and news agencies compromised the purity of their work for the benefit of the war effort comes as little surprise. Accordingly, historians have started to restore the agency of journalists in terms of wartime censorship. Mark Bourrie argues that news agencies and journalists were actively involved in censoring the war to benefit the national cause.<sup>30</sup> "On paper, the censorship system had enormous power," he asserts, "[but] in reality, it

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<sup>28</sup> Peter Stursberg, *The Sound of War: Memoirs of a CBC Correspondent* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 50.

<sup>29</sup> Aimé-Jules Bizimana, *De Marcel Ouimet à René Lévesque: Les correspondants de guerre canadiens-français durant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale* (Montreal: VLB Editeur, 2007), 16. [Translation: "The media coverage made by war correspondents was strongly influenced by their patriotic feelings. They most often referred to the heroic actions and bravery of the soldiers rather than their errors and horrors of war. Limited both by strict censorship and self-censorship, journalistic coverage of the Second World War has revealed a general way, not critical, but complicit in the war effort."]

<sup>30</sup> Mark Bourrie, *Fighting words: Canada's best war reporting* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2012), 167.

acted as shepherd to Canadian media that were usually all too willing to play the role of sheep.”<sup>31</sup> Indeed, historians and journalists have reasonably documented the general complicity of the Canadian media and war correspondents. Yet Canadian historians have rarely examined the part played, in connection with their war reporters, by specific news organizations in wartime censorship and propaganda. Like the war correspondents whom they employed, Canadian news organizations supported the war effort. Their contributions were institutionally linked with that of their war correspondents. Gene Allen’s 2013 institutional history of the Canadian Press utilizes a rare, yet valuable, perspective that reveals how the news organization was an active participant in censorship regulations domestically and at the front-lines. In his book, Allen argues that members of the CP were more than willing to aid the national cause and censor their work:

Censorship was one point at which CP’s national/patriotic and journalistic roles overlapped and often came into conflict. On one hand, the operation of censorship involved close cooperation and negotiation between CP and the censorship authorities. Within Canada especially, this included frequent efforts to mitigate and push back against censors’ restrictions, efforts that were fairly often successful... On the other hand, CP’s decision to ‘comply implicitly’ even with unreasonable censorship decisions seems in retrospect to have conceded too much ground to the censors’ authority... On balance, the war brought a significant diminution of the press’s traditional critical, watchdog role – although CP was far from being alone in this.<sup>32</sup>

Institutional perspectives, such as Allen’s, are needed to better demonstrate how the war efforts conducted by Canadian news organizations – in regards to their internal propaganda and censorship activities – were not confined to either the domestic or the front-lines. “Il ne faut pas croire pour autant que les différents niveaux de la censure s’exluent,” as Beaugard asserts. “Au contraire, un niveau en implique un autre lorsque la situation l’exige. Il n’existe pas de limite

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<sup>31</sup> Mark Bourrie, *The Fog of War: Censorship of Canada's Media in World War Two* (Madeira Park: Perseus Books Group, 2011), 51.

<sup>32</sup> Allen, 181.

bien déterminée qui s'appliquerait strictement à un type de censure.”<sup>33</sup> The contention here is that wartime censorship and the work of war correspondents can only be truly understood by investigating them in relation to the wartime policies of their respective news agencies, and *vice versa*.

In the case of the CBC, Canada's public broadcasting corporation and its radio war correspondents were undoubtedly dedicated to the war effort. Robert T. Bowman, who reported the Dieppe raid for the Corporation, was among those in the CBC loyal to the Allied cause. Before he disembarked at the Dieppe beachhead on 19 August 1942, he was intent on doing whatever he could to assist Canada in winning the war. “Tired of sitting” in London, Bowman wrote a letter on August 10 to Ernest Bushnell, the general supervisor of programmes of the CBC, declaring, “I should be working to help the war effort.”<sup>34</sup> He urged Bushnell to improve the war programming of the CBC by giving it “a fresh approach and energy.” Believing that the “overseas unit [was] falling off,” Bowman worried that those in Canada would start to become apathetic towards the war.<sup>35</sup> For Bowman, an opportunity to contribute to the war presented itself when authorities permitted him to cover the Canadian raid at Dieppe as a war correspondent for the CBC. To that end, he was able to help soften the blow of the operation's failure which the Canadian public had to endure.

In an afternoon broadcast from London on August 20, Bowman recounted his impressions of the unsuccessful raid to CBC radio listeners. He did not hide the reality of heavy

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<sup>33</sup> Beauregard, 184. [Translation: “Do not believe that the different levels of censorship are exclusive. On the contrary, one level implies another when the situation demands. There is no definite limit that would apply strictly to a type of censorship.”]

<sup>34</sup> Library Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada [hereafter, LAC]. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 4. Bowman, Robert T. – correspondence. Letter, R. T. Bowman to E. Bushnell, August 10, 1942.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

casualties, although he remained vague about the operation's failure, at least in part, from his own lack of information. "We've suffered heavy losses, and I saw our men die," he confessed. But despite those losses he reassured them that the raid "was definitely a success." Bowman told his audience that "losses haven't been sustained without reason" and that "a most valuable lesson" was learned "which may enable us to free the continent of Europe and end the war." In addition, he comforted them by describing the heroics and courage Canadian soldiers displayed during the attack. "Never have I seen men die more bravely or fight with such great heart as our Canadian troops," he said, "[and] I wish I could tell you about the journey home and the hundreds of stories I know about personal acts of bravery." He concluded his broadcast with an understandably somber reassurance to his listeners that the raid was not a total loss:

I hope you in Canada, despite those losses, will feel very proud that our men have been able to play at last the part that they wanted to play. I do know that they fought well and that everything – things which seemed to have exceeded the limits of human courage and endurance – have been done to protect our troops during the fight and to get them off after it was over. Those of us who managed to get back, even wounded, feel very lucky indeed. It's been a bitter, hard fight.<sup>36</sup>

After the raid and his subsequent broadcasts, a re-inspired sense of duty overcame Bowman. As he wrote to Bushnell on August 29, "all I want is to see the CBC do a job. We're not delivering the goods and we should be." He felt strongly that the CBC had a responsibility to contribute more:

It is the duty of every one of us to help to win this war. Our Canadian lads who are fighting the enemy are doing a nice, clean job. They are risking their lives, and I've seen them do it, and die. Surely the least the CBC can do is to work honestly, and energetically and back them up, both here and in Canada.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> CBC Digital Archives. Robert T. Bowman [Radio Broadcast], "Carnages on the beaches of Dieppe," Robert Bowman Reports, CBC, 20 August 1942. <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/1942-carnage-on-the-beaches-of-dieppe>.

<sup>37</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 4. Robert T. – correspondence. Letter, R. T. Bowman to E. L. Bushnell, 29 August 1942. Emphasis in the original.

Like Bowman, the CBC was firmly dedicated to the national cause. Its senior administrators were representative of the institutional patriotism. For instance, the second general manager of the CBC, James S. Thompson, formerly the president of the University of Saskatchewan and member of the CBC's Board of Governors, reluctantly accepted the position in 1942 out of a sense of duty to the war effort.<sup>38</sup> Thompson was well aware of radio broadcasting's increased importance during the war. Following his appointment, he reassured the Canadian government that the CBC's devotion to the national enterprise remained steadfast. CBC senior executives presented this institutional attitude in a brief prepared for the National Selective Service of the Department of Labour in January 1943:

Broadcasting in Canada, as in other countries, has taken on a special significance since the outbreak of war... The broadcasting service is essential not only for the broadcasting of special war-time programmes and appeals, but more especially for its effect on the morale of the people. Without an adequate national service, listeners in Canada would become more under the influence of foreign broadcasts and propaganda and it is consequently imperative that a national service should be effective as well as having a popular appeal... The effectiveness of radio as the only media for reaching a national audience in a time of peril and crisis cannot be too strongly stressed.<sup>39</sup>

The Corporation's war effort, aired directly into Canadian homes, extended across Canada and into the frontlines. With the likelihood approaching of Canadian soldiers participating in a continental invasion of Europe, on 2 April 1943 Bushnell recommended to Thompson that they re-organize the Overseas Unit into a competent news unit and amalgamate it as part of CBC's National News Service. Bushnell suggested that the CBC strengthen the

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<sup>38</sup> Special Committee on Radio Broadcasting, 1943. No. 1. Page 18. According to the minutes of the committee: "The Board of Governors unanimously felt that one of their own members, Dr. James S. Thomson, had exactly these qualifications, and they approached him with an invitation to accept the position of General Manager. Dr. Thompson is president of the University of Saskatchewan and he felt unwilling at that time permanently to give up his office there. However, *for the sake of the corporation's work and as a contribution to the wartime effort of Canada*, he expressed his willingness to apply to the university's Board of Governors for a year's leave of absence to enable him to become general manager during a period of reorganization." Emphasis added.

<sup>39</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 433. 27-3-2 War Emergency Measures - Manpower within the Broadcasting industry. CBC, "The Canadian Broadcasters Industry: A Brief Prepared for National Selective Service Department of Labour January, 1943."

overseas staff by gathering experienced journalists to act as war correspondents. He advised that they also appoint a CBC news editor in London to oversee them.<sup>40</sup> Consequently, executives met at the CBC National Programme Conference in Toronto on April 5 to put the plan into effect. Here, Dan McArthur, CBC's chief editor of its national news service, confirmed plans to recondition "the basic function of the CBC Overseas Unit" to be "reportorial rather than to provide entertainment." With this new "emphasis... on timeliness and first-hand reporting" the committee agreed "that the personnel of the Overseas Unit should be strengthened by men with news judgment and experience, who can organize and carry out the important assignment of radio war correspondents with the Canadian Army in action."<sup>41</sup>

The CBC spared little expense in reinforcing its Overseas Unit into an impressive news detachment and instrument of war. Most of its original members were replaced as part of this overhaul. Bowman and Rooney Pelletier, the administrative head of the unit, left the office for other positions and opportunities to aid the war effort.<sup>42</sup> Albert Powley, the senior editor of the CBC newsroom in Toronto, transferred to the London office to be the senior editor in the repurposed war reporting unit. Alongside Jack Peach, already in London, were experienced journalists: Peter Stursberg of the CBC staff in Vancouver; Andrew Cowan, of the Talks Department; and one of Canada's most famous foreign correspondents, Matthew Halton of the *Toronto Star*. Preparing to provide captivating French language coverage for French-Canadians

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<sup>40</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 488. 2-3-3-2 (Organization & Establishment - Wartime Overseas Unit - London). Memorandum, E. L. Bushnell to J. S. Thompson, 2 April 1943.

<sup>41</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 4. CBC - National Programme Conferences, N.D., and 1942 - 1947 - minutes. "Minutes of the National Programme Conference. April 5th- 8th, 1943 New York Hotel, Toronto," 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> April 1943.

<sup>42</sup> A. E. Powley, *Broadcast from the Front: Canadian Overseas Radio in the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 36-38. Pelletier joined the BBC to work as the programme organizer of the North American Service. Bowman left for Canada wherein he participated in a series of speaking tours – several of which he introduced veterans of Dieppe as heroes.

as well, the Montreal newsroom sent over its senior editor, Marcel Ouimet, to act as the lead French correspondent for the unit, along with Benoît Lafleur and Paul Barette.<sup>43</sup> By 1944, William Herbert, a famous sports broadcaster from the Vancouver office, also joined the overseas staff, and Donald Fairbairn, a former CBC farm commentator, delivered broadcasts as a semi-official CBC war correspondent during his overseas service with the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF).<sup>44</sup>

Several of these arrangements were not easy to make for the CBC. For one, it drained a considerable amount of talent from domestic Canadian newsrooms. “The trouble is,” McArthur wrote to Powley on 22 January 1944, “competent men are getting so damned scarce on this side.” McArthur half-jokingly told Powley that mostly “mediocrities” remained in Canada to run the CBC’s domestic news service.<sup>45</sup> The Corporation also had to request deferments from the armed services for several of its war correspondents. It did so for both Cowan and Stursberg.<sup>46</sup> In order to ensure Cowan’s employment for the Overseas Unit, Thompson wrote personally to Col. Hopper, Cowan’s commanding officer in the Manitoba contingent of the Canadian Officers Training Corps (COTC). “The CBC,” he said, “requires his [Cowan’s] services rather urgently for work overseas as a war correspondent.” Thompson pressed the colonel that Cowan’s “exceptional abilities” in journalism were essential in order for the CBC “to provide coverage [of the war] through the highly important medium of the radio.” In working for the CBC as a war

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<sup>43</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Powley, Overseas Unit – Correspondence June 1943. *CBC Programme Schedule*, “The CBC News Service Ready for Big Push,” 13 June 1943.

<sup>44</sup> Powley, 36-38.

<sup>45</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. McArthur, Dan (Toronto) and A.E. Powley (London, Eng.) – personal correspondence – 1944. Letter, D. C. McArthur to A. E. Powley (or Andy [Cowan]), 22 January 1944.

<sup>46</sup> Peter Stursberg, *Journey into Victory: Up the Alaska Highway and to Sicily and Italy* (London: George G. Harrap, 1944), 49.

correspondent, he argued, Cowan “can render a highly important service to the war effort....”<sup>47</sup>

Thompson thereby equated the potential contribution of CBC war correspondents to that of those fighting in the armed services, if not more valuable.

In addition to its willingness to invest such a large measure of its best talent in London, that the CBC concentrated its skilled technicians into the Overseas Unit is also evidence that the news organization valued its radio war reporting as the spearhead of its institutional war effort. These technicians, who were accredited war correspondents as well, operated the sound and recording equipment in the front-lines alongside the journalists. In addition to the basic training required for all war correspondents,<sup>48</sup> the CBC maintained several quasi-military qualifications for these men:

- “1) The employee should preferably be single, although married men will be given consideration, if they feel that their domestic affairs are such that they would not prevent their absence for a long period.
- 2) They should be in good physical condition
- 3) They should have a very good knowledge of field work and of recording.
- 4) They should be very good truck drivers.
- 5) The personality and judgement of these men should be very good, as in many occasions they will have to make important decisions.”<sup>49</sup>

To prepare CBC frontline coverage for the upcoming continental invasion, on 14 April 1943

Kannawin reaffirmed to G.W. Olive, the CBC’s chief engineer, the need to “approach this thing with seasoned troops. The experimental and ‘show’ days are over,” Kannawin contended,

the business is about to start. This also applies [to] my programme people, news men, and observers. Our organization must be firm, well knit, and specialized. I will need the best

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<sup>47</sup> Canadian War Museum’s Military History Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada [Hereafter, CWMMHRC]. Cowan Papers 58A1 289.14 (20120090). Letter, J. S. Thompson to Col. Hopper, 15 January 1943.

<sup>48</sup> Bourrie, *The Fog of War*, 16-17.

<sup>49</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 438. 27-9-6 (pt. 1). War Emergency Measures CBC War Correspondents. Memorandum, General Supervising Engineer to All Regional Engineers, “Operating staff for CBC overseas unit,” 15 November 1940.

men and the most physically fit men and the most ingenious men with which engineering and programme can supply men, and I know I can count on you to give me every support.<sup>50</sup>

During the spring and summer of 1943 the unit expanded to include six technicians – Arthur W. Holmes, Alex J. McDonald, F. Paul Johnson, Lloyd R. Moore, Joseph L. Beauregard and F. Harold Wadsworth. By the end of the war, Clifford Speer, Fred McCord and Laurence Marshall also joined the unit as engineers.<sup>51</sup> Again, transferring a considerable portion of the CBC’s skilled engineers was not easy. By the beginning of 1942 the labour demands of the war had already put a severe strain on the CBC’s manpower – especially in regards to skilled technicians. Out of a total 180 engineers working for the CBC, over fifty left for military service. The CBC attempted to replace these engineers with less experienced men and, for the first time, women operators not eligible for military service. But such replacements tended to require additional technical training.<sup>52</sup> A few of the skilled technicians desired for the Overseas Unit, such as Moore, had to be discharged from military service in order to fill “our urgent need for additional suitably qualified personnel,” in the words of the chief engineer.<sup>53</sup> On 27 February 1942 the CBC made another such appeal to the Department of National War Services by reminding the government that their goals during wartime were one and the same. “We do not want to deprive our country of the military services of our men,” the CBC request stated, “but, on the other hand, we believe that our broadcasting activities are essential at this time.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 438. 27-9-6 (pt. 1). War Emergency Measures CBC War Correspondents .Letter, J. M. Kannawin to G. W. Olive, 14 April 1943.

<sup>51</sup> Powley, 36-7.

<sup>52</sup> J.A. Ouimet, “Maintenance of Broadcast Operations in Wartime” *Proceedings of the IRE* 31.3 (1943), 96.

<sup>53</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 438. 27-9-4. War Emergency Measures Eng. Div. Weekly War Diaries. Memorandum, G. W. Olive to Miss H. M. Ball, “Overseas Technical Organization,” 28 June 1943.

<sup>54</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 433. 27-2 (pt. 1). Memorandum, L. R. Lafèche (Department of National War Services) to all chairmen and divisional registrars, 27 February 1942.

By June 1943 the CBC had substantially reinforced its Overseas Unit. But only when its reporters were able to cover the war from the frontlines for Canadians back home would the Corporation's greater contribution to the war effort become measured. As Cowan wrote to one of his friends back home in a letter on 8 June 1943, "the big moment for the CBC over here will come when Canadians go into action."<sup>55</sup> That moment occurred after the Canadians joined the Allied invasion force in Sicily on 10 July 1943. Stursberg covered the initial phase of the invasion for the CBC. At the beginning, just as Bowman had at the Dieppe landing, Stursberg landed without an engineer and any recording equipment. For the first month of the assault he resorted to cabling his war reports to the CBC, returning to Algiers after the capture of Leonforte on 23 July to broadcast his impressions. Upon his return to Sicily shortly after, Johnson joined him and from then on the CBC was able to produce radio programmes from the front. Listeners heralded his frontline recordings and commentary, broadcast on 3 September, as "the first sound out of conquered territory."<sup>56</sup> *Maclean's* celebrated the achievement:

Today, voices bring us news of Mediterranean battles in which Canadian troops are fighting. They reach us over invisible spans thousands of miles long; carried by air waves. For instance, several times a week Canadians in every part of the Dominion listen to the voice of Peter Stursberg describing the progress of our troops in Sicily. One of 15 men serving with the CBC overseas unit, he was the first Canadian radio correspondent to land on the beaches on July 10. Since then he hasn't run 26 miles, but he has travelled much greater distances on his thumb.<sup>57</sup>

Prime Minister Mackenzie King, an avid listener of the radio, similarly congratulated the CBC in a letter to Thompson:

Will you please accept and convey to the staff of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, my congratulations upon the manner in which the news of the invasion of Sicily was handled... I wish to commend particularly the promptness with which the news was

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<sup>55</sup> LAC. Cowan Papers MG30 E 298, vol. 16. C.B.C. Overseas Unit and C.B.C. International Service (1943-1954). Personal Correspondence Overseas Unit, 1943-45. Letter, A. Cowan to Dr. Kazdan, 8 June 1943.

<sup>56</sup> Powley, 47-48.

<sup>57</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 1. Correspondence, Clippings. 1943. *Maclean's Magazine*, "In the Editor's Confidence," 4 September 1943.

given to the Canadian people, and the overseas arrangements which had been especially made.<sup>58</sup>

To which Thompson answered to the Prime Minister:

Along with the army, our staff have been awaiting more active operations, and now that the much-anticipated hour has come, we are happy to think that our arrangements have worked so well.

And, in closing, Thompson added: “Assuring you of the continual purpose of the Corporation to serve the national cause.”<sup>59</sup>

CBC war correspondents followed Canadian soldiers into battle, and they broadcast the war back into Canadian homes for the remainder of the conflict. They covered the conquest of Sicily, reported the fighting in Italy, broadcast the liberation of France, cheered the victories in Holland and Belgium, and described the final days of the war in Germany. Their reporting was propaganda for the Canadian war effort. As Knowlton Nash asserted,

The cheerleader reporting by Halton and other CBC correspondents was totally unlike the much more critical reporting in later wars in Korea, Vietnam, and elsewhere. There was a boosterism to it that reflected the CBC’s determination to raise morale by praising the Canadian military, vilifying the enemy, and supporting the government.<sup>60</sup>

Indeed, CBC war correspondents and their “battlefield broadcasts... served to stimulate the war effort,” Lynch likewise maintained, “a goal which the rest of us pursued without question.”<sup>61</sup> But it is impossible to fully acknowledge their contribution to the war effort without understanding that the institution for which they worked was serving the same purpose. As Powley states in his

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<sup>58</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 438. 27-9-4 War Emergency Measures Eng. Div. Weekly War Diaries. Letter, W. L. Mackenzie King to Dr. James S. Thomson, 24 July 1943. LAC Digital Collection. Diaries of William Lyon Mackenzie King. “Item 28160,” 26 March 1945. Prime Minister King regularly listened to, and was impressed by, the CBC war coverage, especially its frontline reporting. As he commented in his diary on 26 March 1945: “I listened to the news before going to sleep last night, which concluded with a talk from commentator Halton overseas. Hearing the roaring of flames, the landing of gliders on the eastern side of the Rhine was a terrifically impressive moment.”

<sup>59</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 438. 27-9-4 War Emergency Measures Eng. Div. Weekly War Diaries. Letter, Dr. James S. Thomson to W. L. Mackenzie King, 26 July 1943.

<sup>60</sup> Knowlton Nash, *The Microphone Wars: A History of Triumph and Betrayal at the CBC* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1994), 182.

<sup>61</sup> Charles Lynch, *You Can’t Print That: Memoirs of a Political Voyeur* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1983), 60.

history of the CBC's Overseas Unit, "radio played a vital role in the reporting of the war, and it was the CBC which, as Canada's national broadcasting agency, undertook the Canadian part of the job."<sup>62</sup>

The purpose of this study is to provide a better understanding of the CBC's role in the Canadian war effort. As such, it seeks to comprehend the CBC war contribution alongside that of its war correspondents. In doing so, it makes use of CBC internal files and correspondence as well as memoirs written by CBC journalists and authorities of press censorship. In addition, the study analyzes the CBC war broadcasts – rarely examined in detail by historians – in order to reveal how radio war reporting was a unique contribution of the CBC and its journalists. This study separates the chapters in a manner that explores the different levels of Canadian radio broadcasting by the CBC during the Second World War and how each impacted, and was impacted by, prevailing cultural interests and authorities. The first chapter establishes the rising popularity of radio in Canada as a result of the war. It argues that the contemporary language used to describe radio suggests that Canadians increasingly viewed it as an essential medium for the war. Focusing on the early years of the war, from 1939 until 1942, the second chapter shows how senior administrators of the CBC initially shaped the trajectory of its programming to support the war effort. The third chapter, roughly covering the period from 1941 until 1945, examines the service of the CBC news editors who, largely on their own accord under the voluntary system of censorship, censored the war in a manner that was distinctive for the intimate nature of radio broadcasting. Then, concentrating on the final years of the war, during which the Canadian army was continuously engaged, the fourth chapter demonstrates how the CBC war correspondents, loyally dedicated to the national cause, expressed their own agency by

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<sup>62</sup> Powley, x.

censoring their reports in advance of military censors. Finally, the last chapter explores the war broadcasts of the CBC war correspondents. In doing so, it argues that the CBC utilized radio's specific ability to relay the sounds of war directly into Canadian homes in order to reinvigorate the domestic war effort and combat the perceived distance between the homefront and the battlefronts. At all levels, the CBC successfully harnessed radio broadcasting in support of the Canadian war effort.

## Chapter 1

### Radio in War

The Second World War expedited the rise of radio. Commonly, historians claim that the war brought about the ‘Golden Age’ of radio in Canada. They usually provide little more than anecdotal evidence to link the sudden popularity of the medium with the outbreak of the war, however. Deeper investigation is required in order to better demonstrate how radio and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) became immensely important in Canadian society during the war. Anecdotal and statistical evidence, substantiated by personal and institutional correspondence, reveal that Canadians increasingly listened to radio during the war, and, in doing so, Canadians came to identify the medium as indispensable for the homefront.

Radio broadcasting was in its infancy at the end of the First World War. The medium only became a popular form of mass communication by the 1930s. In Canada, J. Frank Willis’ dramatic and seemingly instantaneous coverage of the Moose River Mine Disaster in April 1936 revealed the potential for immediacy of broadcast journalism.<sup>63</sup> On-location recorded material, assisted by stirring reporter commentary, provided an exciting medium to deliver the news that absorbed scattered radio listeners, simultaneously, more closely into distant events than ever before. The CBC increasingly became willing to undertake ambitious ventures with radio and on-location recordings before the war. This was evident through its meticulously organized, and highly popular, coverage of the royal tour of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in June 1939.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Jeff. A. Webb, “Canada's Moose River mine disaster (1936): radio-newspaper competition in the business of news,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 16.3 (August 1996): 365-376.

<sup>64</sup> Mary Vipond, “The Royal Tour of 1939 as a Media Event,” *Canadian Journal of Communication* 35.1 (January 2010), 150.

The impending crisis in Europe ignited a growing interest in world news that drew Canadians closer to radio broadcasting. Hour-by-hour radio coverage of international developments, such as the Sudetenland Crisis in February 1938, awakened listeners to the probability of another world conflict.<sup>65</sup> Following Britain's declaration of war against Germany on 3 September 1939, the voice of Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King broadcast over Canadian radio to announce that Canada would stand by Britain's side. King concluded his radio address with a reminder that, in the imminent struggle, all of Canadian society would mobilize for the war. He appealed for all Canadians to contribute to the national cause:

Our effort will be voluntary. The people of Canada will, I know, face the days of stress and strain which lie ahead with calm and resolute courage. There is no home in Canada, no family, and no individual whose fortunes and freedom are not bound up in the present struggle. I appeal to my fellow Canadians to unite in a national effort to save from destruction all that makes life itself worth living, and to preserve for future generations those liberties and institutions which others have bequeathed to us.<sup>66</sup>

The outbreak of the international conflict made Canadians more reliant on their radios. "Immediately following the declaration of war," asserted George H. Allen, chairman of the New York Chapter Discussion Group on Radio Listening Habits, "set ownership in Canada rose to unprecedented heights."<sup>67</sup> This "boom in set purchases was due," according to Allen's research findings, "first of all, to the declaration of war and to the desire for war news which brought up the radio listenership."<sup>68</sup> Ernest Bushnell, the general supervisor of programmes for the CBC, reported that between 1938 and 1942 the number of "licensed listeners of Canada... increased

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<sup>65</sup> Robert J. F. Albota, "Dan McArthur's concept of objectivity and his struggle to defend the integrity of the CBC News Service, 1940-1945," Carleton University Master's Dissertation (1988), 60-61.

<sup>66</sup> CBC Digital Archives. William Lyon Mackenzie King [Radio Broadcast], "Mackenzie King addresses Canadians as Britain declares war on Germany," CBC, 3 September 1939. <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/mackenzie-king-addresses-canadians-as-britain-declares-war-on-germany>

<sup>67</sup> George H. Allen, "Wartime Changes in English and Canadian Radio" *Journal of Marketing* 7.3 (1943), 223.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

from 1, 038, 500 to 1, 454, 717.”<sup>69</sup> Another study found that in 1939, out of 2, 415, 285 families in Canada approximately 1, 558, 060 owned receiving sets. This number, as well as the receiving power of radio sets, was steadily rising.<sup>70</sup> Mary Vipond, similarly, now estimates that roughly three-quarters of all Canadian homes had radio sets in 1940 and “almost all” by the end of the decade.<sup>71</sup> Radio became the first electrical appliance, as Graham Broad says, with “widespread” ownership throughout Canada.<sup>72</sup> Essentially, in the prophetic words of Allen, “if this war does nothing else, it is establishing radio or giving radio certain recognition by force of circumstances.”<sup>73</sup>

In addition to the novelty of easily tuning into a range of appealing sound programmes – such as news reports, drama shows, and musical performances – several factors made radio alluring to Canadians listeners. “Only the cinema could match this appeal,” argues Siân Nicholas,

but there was always a certain distance between the screen and the audience. Radio had a direct relationship with the listener in his or her home or workplace, and its wide range of presentation styles (bulletins, talks, features of all kinds, variety, drama, music, etc.) appealed to the imagination more vividly and in more varied ways than any other medium.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Library Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada [hereafter, LAC]. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 1. CBC Correspondence and memoranda... 1942 – 17. Speech, E. L. Bushnell, “Broadcasting – Everybody’s Business,” 14 January 1942.

<sup>70</sup> Carlton McNaught, *Canada Gets the News* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1940), 247.; Warner Troyer, *The Sound & The Fury: An Anecdotal History of Canadian Broadcasting* (Toronto: Personal Library, 1982), 92. Figures did not account for Canadian households that owned more than one radio. They also did not account for built-in car radios, although, during the early years of the war, these were a rarity. As Warner Troyer recalled, “there were beginning to be a few in our cars, too, but these were still chiefly the preserve of the wealthy.”

<sup>71</sup> Mary Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada Second Edition* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1992), 39.

<sup>72</sup> Graham Broad, *A Small Price to Pay: Consumer Culture on the Canadian Home Front, 1939-45* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), 147.

<sup>73</sup> Allen, 223.

<sup>74</sup> Siân Nicholas, *The Echo of War: home front propaganda and wartime BBC, 1939-45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 5.

As Gerd Horten explained, radio was a much more “friendly activity” when compared with the solitude of reading newspapers or magazines. Listening to the radio could be done socially, in groups of family or friends, as participants were greeted with an intimate interaction in the “warm, personal touch of the human voice” emanating from their radio sets.<sup>75</sup> Listeners could use radio much more passively too, as Guy Starkey and Andrew Crisell argue in their study of the medium. Textual media require the reader’s full attention because “words... are fixed and stable.”<sup>76</sup> Starkey and Crisell compare that to the freedom of radio:

the lack of vividness [of radio] allows the radio listener to do other things while listening. Radio is, in other words, a *secondary* medium, and thus much more pervasive than television or newspapers: we can absorb its messages while driving or cooking, or even with our eyes shut.<sup>77</sup>

Although radio broadcasting is a ‘blind’ medium, as it does not provide any visual stimulation for its listeners, it can nevertheless produce an engrossing, and informative, experience for listeners. For example, the accessibility of radio moved Mrs. E. J. Nicolle, an all-but blind listener, to compose a letter wherein she confessed her gratitude towards radio for allowing her to stay well informed of the news despite her limited sight. “I listen to the radio a great deal not being able to see a word and I feel I practically know Matthew Halton [a war correspondent for the CBC] now,” she said. “Thank God for radio,” she continued, “is all I can say, in keeping abreast [sic] of the times I now know more than my friends who have eyes but do not use them.”<sup>78</sup> Granted, Canadians did not completely abandon newspapers and magazines for radio.

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<sup>75</sup> Gerd Horten, *Radio Goes to War: The Cultural Politics of Propaganda during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 26.

<sup>76</sup> Guy Starkey and Andrew Crisell, *Radio Journalism* (London: Sage, 2009), 102-103.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.* Emphasis in the original.

<sup>78</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Miscellaneous 1938-1944. Letter, Mrs. B. Nicolle to Mr. Golding (Saint Johns), August 1944. The writer, Mrs. E. J. Nicolle, “almost blind,” was apprehensive to write this letter at all. Having “seen nothing in print for thirty years,” she admitted that “reading my writing is no pleasure and I do not let people read it” because “it is hard to imagine what that does to ones [sic] spelling as I was quite young then.” After listening to one of Matthew Halton’s broadcasts, an interview Halton recorded with Capt. Jack

For many, radio news played a more supplementary role in their acquisition of information. But during the war years, much of the Canadian public found solace with radio as a much more accessible medium for their news.<sup>79</sup>

Motivated by their desire for quick international news, listeners grew almost inseparable from their radio sets. As one Canadian recalled,

From midnight on, this radio, which had a short wave knob on it, would be tuned in all over the world. The fact that my dad could both speak and understand the majority of the European languages was to his advantage and he would sit by the hour hunched over, smoking endless roll-your-own cigarettes and drinking pots of hot, strong tea until the early hours of the morning. In the morning, huddled in the kitchen which was the only warm room in the house, drinking hot chocolate before facing the icy blasts on our long walk to school. We could tell how bad the foreign news was by looking at how blood shot his eyes were.<sup>80</sup>

The CBC sought to satisfy such insatiable demand for reliable world news. Particularly, the Corporation attempted to fulfill the demand for news from a Canadian perspective, which American stations never offered and the BBC overseas service supplied only in a cursory fashion (at best). Between 1936 and 1942 the CBC improved the transmission capabilities of its network coverage from an estimated 49% to over 90% of the Canadian population.<sup>81</sup> More importantly, the war became the catalyst to motivate the CBC into creating its own national news service at the start of 1941. Popularity for the service was unmistakable. Albert Powley recalled crowds of

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Golding, who was the son of her neighbour, she scribbled this letter to her neighbour, who, in turn, forwarded it to Jack Golding and Halton in France.

<sup>79</sup> Paul F. Lazarsfeld, *Radio and the Printed Page* (New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1971), 135-6. Lazarfeld's comprehensive studies on radio listening provide a rich source for general listening habits during the war years. One of his conclusions is that those with lower reading skill tended to rely on radio for their news and programming. He says, "if people have the choice between radio and print for fairly comparable subject matter, the higher their cultural level the more likely will they be to prefer to read rather than to listen."

<sup>80</sup> Bill McNeil and Morris Wolfe, *Signing On: The Birth of Radio in Canada* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1982), 244.

<sup>81</sup> J.E. Hodgetts, "Administration and Politics: The Case of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation," *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 12.4 (November 1946), 460; A. Frigon, "Radiobroadcasting in Canada." *Electrical Engineering* 60.9 (1941), 897.

people in a Canadian city gathered “outside a store... listening to the National News.”<sup>82</sup> By 1944 the CBC split its English radio service into two networks – the Trans-Canada Network and the Dominion Network – in order to keep pace with growing demand for additional programming.<sup>83</sup>

In addition to an effective source of information, Canadian listeners depended on radio as a pastime, and they listened to radio more frequently. Radio etiquette and habits, as a result, became intrinsically linked with the war effort. The *Summer Listening Guide of 1941* advised radio users that “there is nothing which can fan a mild antagonism like a blaring radio.” It recommended Canadian listeners with open windows “keep [their] radio tuned softly so that [their] neighbourliness may be clothed in consideration for the other fellow’s tastes.” Neighbourly consideration while listening to radio news was required, in the interest of the war effort:

This summer more than ever, with war industries employing men and women in increasing numbers at night, war news keeping others in anxious vigil and war endeavour on every hand taxing the nerves of the nation, the rest hours of the populace are precious. It is the responsibility of every patriotic Canadian to help his fellows meet the new and heavier strain in good health, good spirits and good humour. A softly-tuned radio turneth away wrath.<sup>84</sup>

In the same vein, to curb the tendency of workers in war industries deprived of sleep from staying up late, the Department of National War Services requested the CBC move its nightly news bulletin one hour earlier (from 11 p.m. to 10 p.m. Eastern Time).<sup>85</sup> Radio listening need not jeopardize a well-rested work force.

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<sup>82</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Overseas Unit, Correspondence re history of 1966. Letter, A. Powley to D. C. McArthur, 4 October 1966.

<sup>83</sup> CBC, *A Brief History and Background* (Ottawa: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1970), 13.

<sup>84</sup> McNeil and Wolfe, 242.

<sup>85</sup> Troyer, 94.

To prepare for participation of Canadian soldiers in battle overseas, the CBC expanded its war effort across the Atlantic. It enlisted radio war correspondents – accredited by the army – to cover the frontlines and to broadcast the war for Canadian listeners at home. By July 1943, in time for Canadian forces participating in the invasion of Sicily, the CBC reorganized its programming to include the *News Roundup*, a late-night programme for its national news service dedicated specifically to provide scheduled air-time and commentary for its war reports from overseas. The Overseas Unit recruited such prominent journalistic names as Matthew Halton, Peter Stursberg, and William Herbert to act as overseas correspondents.<sup>86</sup> In addition, news broadcasting was at a distinct advantage for breaking important war news faster than Canadian newspapers.<sup>87</sup> Journals that did not publish a regular Sunday edition, in particular, shelved the release of important war news from Sunday or Saturday evening until the following Monday.<sup>88</sup> Instantaneous radio news broadcasts, in comparison, were far less subject to the restraints limiting newspapers' circulation, such as delivery distance and time, in reaching their audience. As a result, the draw of CBC radio news continued to grow dramatically. By the end of 1943, a reputable survey conducted by Elliott-Haynes found that throughout the country's English-speaking population the CBC's news service had "a following of 86 per cent of the adult

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<sup>86</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. News Roundup, Commentaries, CBC News 1941-50. Internal Memorandum, Marion Grange (Press & Information Service) to D. C. McArthur, "CBC News Round-up," 13 March 1946, page 1 and 3.

<sup>87</sup> Webb, 365-376. Webb made argued that speediness was an important factor that allowed radio to be *the* medium to 'break' the story of the Moose River Mine Disaster before rival newspapers could. In addition, the promptness of its updates allowed it to hold onto its audience attention better.

<sup>88</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC News Policy, File C - War-time Directives, Post-War Directives re Returned men and terrorists 1941-46. Letter, W. G. Murray to *Ottawa Journal*, December 1941. Britain and Canada both entered the war on a Sunday (September 3 and 10, 1939, respectively). The attack on Pearl Harbour (7 December 1941), along with other events or announcements of the war, also occurred on that day. As Murray said in response to CBC's news coverage of the attack on Pearl Harbour, "we had a further responsibility to our listeners, in realizing that, since it was Sunday, they would not get the usual editions of their newspapers."

listening audience, about half of whom listen regularly, the rest occasionally.”<sup>89</sup> As David Halton remembers,

radio was involved in war coverage for the first time and beginning to dominate the mass media. It offered a sense of immediacy and a personal connection to soldiers in the war zone that print media couldn’t achieve. Tuning in to war news was becoming a habit.<sup>90</sup>

Halton recalls that “there were few more solemn moments in Canadian homes than when CBC newscasts and the longer *News Roundup* came on the air every evening. It was a time, when kids were shushed,” he continued, “[and] huddled around their radio sets, families would wait for the latest reports from the front, often straining to listen through the buzz and crackle of poor recordings or faulty transmission.”<sup>91</sup> The myriad of fan mail written to the CBC and its correspondents can further substantiate David Halton’s account. Bert Riggall, from Pincher Creek, Alberta, wrote one such letter to Matthew Halton. Riggall commended Halton’s work and expressed gratitude for radio’s speedy coverage of the war:

What a change there is from the last Great War, then we got the Family Herald or the Free Press once a week, now we sit and hear the world writhing and panting, with two feet of snow outside and kick like hell if there is a bit of static or interference from Mexico City!<sup>92</sup>

Such fan mail is a noteworthy development because it emphasizes just how interest in the war elevated Canadian radio personalities into stardom. Famous radio celebrities, such as Lorne Greene, whose dramatic reading of war news over the CBC national news service and narrations

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<sup>89</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC National News - general policy statements n.d., 1941-52. D.C. McArthur, “Statement on CBC News Service,” 1944, page 8-9.

<sup>90</sup> David Halton, *Dispatches from the Front: Matthew Halton, Canada's voice at war* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2014), 188.

<sup>91</sup> Halton, 199.

<sup>92</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Miscellaneous 1945-1949. Letter, Bert Riggall to M. Halton, 23 April 1945. In the letter, Riggall said: “we don’t often get mad at the C.B.C. but we did a few days ago when he cut you off just as you were telling what the mother of the young Werewolf of 8 years of age said when he threw a stone at your jeep... We pretty near threw the radio out of the window!” Radio interference, of this sort, was an occasional inconvenience for radio listeners. Despite this problem, however, the desire to listen to the radio evidentially far outweighed most frustrations that listeners had with static or wonky transmissions. Emphasis in the original.

for the National Film Board earned him recognition as ‘The Voice of Canada’, and Wayne and Shuster, a Canadian comedy duo made famous for their role on the CBC programme ‘The Army Show’, attributed their early reputations almost entirely to their work in the Second World War.<sup>93</sup> The CBC’s own war correspondents, for their novel and exciting coverage of the frontlines, ascended into celebrityhood. When CBC war correspondents returned to Canada from the war, Canadians welcomed them as household names. “Halton became the first of the great media celebrities,” Charles Lynch recalled. “When summoned home to help with the sale of victory bonds, [Halton] was a bigger box-office draw than Billy Bishop.”<sup>94</sup> Peter Stursberg found a similar reception upon one of his returns from the war:

I was interviewed, I was dragged from one radio show to another, I was treated as a celebrity. I shall never forget seeing a van with my name emblazoned across its side slipping and sliding through the snow-covered streets.<sup>95</sup>

Much of this fame, directed specifically towards CBC reporters, was a result of the dominance of radio. In the words of Stursberg,

... I thought about the impact radio had. Although it was so commonplace – almost everyone had a set by the forties – it was still a marvel to the average Canadian, making news out of thin air, bringing the sound of battle over an ocean and across a continent. At the same time, it was a much more personal medium: there was the reporter or his voice in the living-rooms and even the bedrooms of the nation. This was the reason why Matthew Halton and I had become so well known that we were household names, whereas fine correspondents such as Ralph Allen of the *Globe and Mail*, Toronto, and J. A. N. Cook of the *Winnipeg Free Press* were famous only to those who read those newspapers.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Linda Greene, *My Father's Voice: The Biography of Lorne Greene* (iUniverse, 244), 26, 29-30.; W. Ray Stephens, *The Canadian entertainers of World War II* (Oakville: Mosaic Press, 1993), 16-37-39.

<sup>94</sup> Charles Lynch, *You Can't Print That: Memoirs of a Political Voyeur* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1983), 60. Billy Bishop was the most famous Canadian flying ace pilot of the First World War.

<sup>95</sup> Peter Stursberg, *The Sound of War: Memoirs of a CBC Correspondent* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 235-6.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

The Canadian government was not oblivious to the importance that radio assumed as a result of the war. Already by January 1940, members of parliament threw around references to radio as “an important weapon of war.”<sup>97</sup> Such an opinion quickly permeated Canadian politics. At the annual Special Committee on Radio Broadcasting in the House of Commons in April 1942, the committee found

that public broadcasting is a great instrument of education and national unity as well as of entertainment. In war, broadcasting can play a major part in mobilizing the resources of the nation and the will of our people to defend our country and defeat the enemy.<sup>98</sup>

At the proceedings for the committee in June of 1943, Major L.R. Laflèche, Canada’s minister of National War Services, asserted that radio broadcasting had undeniable power during wartime:

It [radio] has assumed a very great importance and has become one of the principal means of communication. In military terms, radio is a war machine, a war weapon. With it one plays upon the minds and hearts of men. It can be used to strengthen the moral fibre of a people at war or it can be used to demoralize those far behind the fighting front. In a war where everything we have is at stake, as at the present moment – everything from property to liberty and life – at such a time it is to be remembered that the radio is essential in total warfare.<sup>99</sup>

Radio’s popularity in Canada during the Second World War is evident from the discourse that took place as a result of the shortage of radio batteries and tubes. Due to increased wartime supply rationing, in June 1941 the amount of zinc allocated for the production of radio batteries was cut by 10%, with a further 10% cut in December. An estimated 25% of radio batteries fell into disrepair.<sup>100</sup> During the first two years of the war, the amount of zinc allocated for battery cells steadily increased, but the cutbacks caused that supply to falter. According to the Canadian

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<sup>97</sup> Quoted in Kaur, Serjit, “The question of the independence of the CBC in the Second World War – A historical analysis,” University of Windsor Master’s Dissertation (1982), 51.

<sup>98</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 14. Broadcasting in Canada: History and Development of the National System, April 22, 1954. E. L. Bushnell, “Broadcasting in Canada: History and Development of the National System,” 22 April 1954.

<sup>99</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 434, 27-2 (pt 2). Extract from Special Committee on Radio Broadcasting Minutes, Major General L. R. Laflèche, 9 June 1943.

<sup>100</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 438. 27-9-2 (pt. 1). War Emergency Measures Home Radio Receivers. Notes for meeting, CBC, “Memorandum for Discussion with the Deputy Metals Controller,” 1 January 1942.

National Carbon Company, 13, 788, 182 were produced in 1939; 15, 357, 165 in 1940; 17, 370, 394 in 1941, but by June 1942 the number of battery cells produced had fallen to 7,321, 923 – well under half 1941 production.<sup>101</sup>

The increased demand for news in Canada coupled with the growing use and dependence on the radio compounded the situation. As one January 1943 study found, “the average set, which had previously been tuned in to get particular programs now was left tuned in all day to catch flashes of news.”<sup>102</sup> The demand for radio batteries in Canada was consistently rising. Approximately 32 million batteries were sold in 1939 and by 1940 the number reached 38 million. The amount was on pace to exceed 50 million, had the supply of zinc not been cut in May. Supply was not meeting the demand, and by 1942 the shortage in radio batteries and tubes became dire. By late-summer 1942, the CBC estimated that 549, 195 battery receiving sets were in use dominion-wide, and “over 22% of radio homes depend[ed] on battery sets.”<sup>103</sup> In rural communities stricken by the poverty of the Great Depression and with only limited electric distribution, the situation was at its most critical. A 1939 report from the Saskatchewan Power Commission found that more than 87% of people in Saskatchewan had battery-powered radio sets.<sup>104</sup>

The ensuing discussions and investigations which sought to correct the situation used wording that identified radio’s unique purpose in the war effort. On 28 July 1942 Augustin Frigon, the assistant general manager of the CBC, wrote to C. D. Howe, the minister of the

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<sup>101</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 438. 27-9-2 (pt. 1). War Emergency Measures Home Radio Receivers. Letter, A. Frigon to C. D. Howe, 26 August 1942.

<sup>102</sup> Allen, 223.

<sup>103</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 438. 27-9-2 (pt. 1). War Emergency Measures Home Radio Receivers. Letter, W. G. Richardson (Transmission and Development Engineer) to Mr. F. Dennis (Advertising Service Limited), 30 December 1942.

<sup>104</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 438. 27-9-2 (pt. 1). War Emergency Measures Home Radio Receivers. Letter, F. V. Scanlon (CJRM) to J. R. Radford (Supervisor of Station Relations, CBC), 29 September 1942.

Department of Munitions and Supply, to alert him “to the seriousness of the situation, and request that a thorough survey be made to determine the actual damage done to public opinion and to the conduct of the war on the civil front due to curtailment in the manufacture of radio batteries.” He reminded Howe of the CBC’s special role in the war:

It seems to us that in time of war and especially if conditions of emergency were to develop anywhere, it is of the utmost importance to keep our public radio service operating as efficiently as possible. This is required not only to keep the public informed on all matters of importance emanating from the Government of Canada but also to issue instructions to everyone in the country in case of emergency.<sup>105</sup>

Howe charged the Corporation to bring the matter to the Deputy Metals Controller, who oversaw the distribution of zinc in Canada. Doing so, the CBC and the battery manufacturers argued that “radio is the most effective and in many cases the only medium through which the government can control public thinking (propaganda) and this is recognized by the United States as well as by every European belligerent.” In addition, they submitted “that no further cut should be made, as this will create a situation which will be detrimental to our country’s war effort.”<sup>106</sup>

Furthermore, Alex McGill, the district sales manager of the Canadian National Carbon Company, wrote a letter to Joseph T. Thorson, the minister of National War Services, outlining how imperative it was to have radio accessibility for farm and rural residents:

It must be borne in mind that a very high percentage of these rural people employing battery operated radio sets do not read a daily or weekly newspaper or farm magazine... The rural resident is not subject to the same amount of visual propaganda as the city or town dweller. He does not view parades of soldiers or mechanized equipment – to him the war is more remote, and for this very reason he is less liable to be impressed with government plans and activity, not only regarding food production but also regarding war savings certificate drives, victory loans drives, income tax and national revenue regulations, etc. The effort of the rural resident in helping to win this war cannot be over-estimated... The addresses transmitted by radio and delivered by yourself and the other

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<sup>105</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 438. 27-9-2 (pt. 1). War Emergency Measures Home Radio Receivers. Letter, A. Frigon to C. D. Howe, 28 July 1942.

<sup>106</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 438. 27-9-2 (pt. 1). War Emergency Measures Home Radio Receivers. Notes for meeting, CBC, “Memorandum for Discussion with the Deputy Metals Controller,” 1 January 1942.

members of the cabinet are invaluable from the viewpoint of raising and maintain the morale of our people and it is interesting to note that a recent survey of this type of radio programme shows the rating to be very high.<sup>107</sup>

Seeking to improve its case, the CBC conducted “exhaustive” nationwide surveys in each of its broadcasting regions. J. R. Radford, the supervisor of station relations, on 5 September 1942 requested all station managers collect and submit data pertaining to the shortage of radio parts. “Evidence is to hand that this condition is already affecting the listening audience of many stations and it could be safely assumed that your stations [sic] one of them,” he informed them, “[and] this when maximum audiences are vital.”<sup>108</sup>

Answers to the survey typically reported a critical scarcity of radio batteries and tubes. This was especially evident in more rural areas such as Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Prince Edward Island. H. C. Buchanan, the manager of CHAB in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, noted a major shortage in the supply. He reminded Radford “how dependent the people of rural southwestern Saskatchewan are on batteries for their radios.” These were “the class of people with whom rumour and misinformation might quickly travel and the absolute necessity in the public interest that these people be given proper information in connection with our war activities and war news.” He continued:

In the very nature of things, radio is the only media which can do this. Our investigations have shown that not 1% of the rural population of southwestern Saskatchewan is served with daily newspapers and comparatively few even receive weekly publications. The reason is obvious. With poor train service and the distance of the farmers from post offices, it is not feasible for them to get daily newspapers and the same operates to a smaller extent in connection with the weekly publications. Instead of depending on the written word, these people have become more and more dependent on radio broadcasting.

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<sup>107</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 438. 27-9-2 (pt. 1). War Emergency Measures Home Radio Receivers. Letter, Alex McGill (District Sales Manager of the Canadian National Carbon Company) to J. T. Thorson (Minister of National War Services), 27 August 1942.

<sup>108</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 438. 27-9-2 (pt. 1). War Emergency Measures Home Radio Receivers. Letter, J. R. Radford to all station managers, 5 September 1942.

It would be tragic in the interests of our country if these farmers were deprived of practically their only means of obtaining news and information during this war period.<sup>109</sup>

For those in communities adrift from urban Canadian centres, radio was the only consistent source of information for learning about the larger world.

Those concerned with the shortage argued that radio broadcasting was an essential service during wartime. Failing to remedy the situation would leave a vast amount of the population in the dark. Without access to radio, Canadians could potentially fall victim to misinformation and the spread of rumours that were detrimental to national solidarity. This was especially true in rural communities where radio was dominant such as those common in Saskatchewan.<sup>110</sup> V. Forkin, the station manager of CBJ, asked the CBC “to remedy the shortage of dry batteries, especially if the Canadian Government relies partly upon radio to carry on its war effort propaganda.”<sup>111</sup> It was “of the utmost importance that every Canadian receive a true and up-to-date picture of present day events,” claimed J.E. Flynn, manager of the Maritime Broadcast Company. “To deprive Canadians of this much needed information is to backfire the war effort.”<sup>112</sup> In a letter penned to Alex McGill of the Canadian National Carbon Company, Frank Gerry from the distributors of Philco Radio and Replacement Parts argued,

that there should be some consideration given to a greater allotment of batteries, not to defeat the war effort but to keep the morale of the people in good standing, as we know that our Prime Minister and other outstanding figures in our Gov[ernment] feel that the radio must be of some advantage when they put on their broadcasts to the public.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 438. 27-9-2 (pt. 1). War Emergency Measures Home Radio Receivers. Letter, H. C. Buchanan (manager of CHAB in Moose Jaw Saskatchewan) to J. R. Radford, September 15, 1942.

<sup>110</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 438. 27-9-2 (pt. 1). War Emergency Measures Home Radio Receivers. Letter, F. V. Scanlon (manager of CJRM) to J. R. Radford, 29 September 1942.

<sup>111</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 438. 27-9-2 (pt. 1). War Emergency Measures Home Radio Receivers. Memorandum, V. Forkin (manager of CBJ) to J. R. Radford, “Shortage of Dry Batteries,” 17 September 1942.

<sup>112</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 438. 27-9-2 (pt. 1). War Emergency Measures Home Radio Receivers. Letter, J. E. Flynn (Maritime Broadcasting Company) to J. R. Radford, 18 September 1942.

<sup>113</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 438. 27-9-2 (pt. 1). War Emergency Measures Home Radio Receivers. Letter, Frank Gerry and Co. Ltd. (Distributors of Philco Radio and Replacement Parts ) to Alex McGill (Canadian National Carbon Co., Toronto), 16 September 1942.

V. Scanlon, the manager of CJRM, in his “thorough report from Saskatchewan about radios and batteries” similarly reported the following:

Many of these daily papers distributed to the country arrive at their point of destination as much as a week after publication and certainly cannot take the place of a radio out of service because of a shortage of batteries. When rumours start circulating, they should be squelched immediately and radio, to my mind, can squelch these rumours instantaneously. No other medium can make this claim. In the isolation of Saskatchewan during winter time, people depend more and more on their radio and if a large number of these rural radio sets are inoperative, then our campaigns for recruiting, national war loans, charitable drives etc. will suffer. In addition, the many people without the voice of radio will provide fertile ground for fifth column activities and the operation of rumour factories. At the same time the only contact with the outside world for many of our rural population, is their radio and these people must be served with news and information about the war in the general interests of supporting civilian morale.<sup>114</sup>

For remote communities isolated from urban centres, radio was an essential means of keeping connected to the rest of the country, and, in addition, to the effort overseas.

Willing “to do everything possible to bring relief,” the CBC first attempted to solve the problem by intensifying its conservation efforts. G. W. Olive, CBC’s chief engineer, noted on 16 December 1942 that the CBC would have to meet the battery shortage primarily “through conservation and concentration on essential requirements.” For one, Olive negotiated an “elimination [of production] of all types of dry batteries now considered non-essential,” with the exception of “ones evidently required to operate legitimate battery sets.” In addition, only licensed users could purchase radio batteries.<sup>115</sup> As J. Alphonse Ouimet, the assistant chief engineer, said, the CBC took “every possible means to keep its operators, as well as members of other departments, constantly ‘conservation conscious’.”<sup>116</sup> Olive suggested that the CBC create

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<sup>114</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 438. 27-9-2 (pt. 1). War Emergency Measures Home Radio Receivers. Letter, F. V. Scanlon (manager of CJRM) to J. R. Radford, 29 September 1942.

<sup>115</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 438. 27-9-2 (pt. 1). War Emergency Measures Home Radio Receivers. Letter, G. W. Olive to Mr. A. N. Cairns (manager of CFAC), 16 December 1942.

<sup>116</sup> J. A. Ouimet, “Maintenance of Broadcast Operations in Wartime,” *Proceedings of the IRE* 31.3 (1943), 95-6.

pamphlets to aid consumers and radio operators.<sup>117</sup> Subsequently, engineering headquarters released a series of war-emergency manuals in conjunction with newspapers and magazines to publicize “striking examples of shortage difficulties or of particularly interesting ways of meeting them.”<sup>118</sup> Such booklets as Northern Electric Company’s *Radio Conservation Hints for Your Customers* provided popular ten-point lists to increase the life expectancy of radios. These included such suggestions as advising radio operators to “keep your radio at least an inch away from the wall” to prevent overheating and to “clean the dust from your set as often as possible.” Radio brochures typically did not adopt one original suggestion that consumers “turn off radio set when not listening,” as doing so may have discouraged the use of the radio.<sup>119</sup> Reducing the amount Canadians listened to the radio was neither in the best interests of the CBC nor the country.

While a shortage of radio parts continued throughout the duration of the war, the pressure of the CBC and battery manufacturers placed on the Deputy Metals Controller evidently produced results. By 1943 the amount of zinc allocated for radio batteries was higher. As A. L. Brown, an administrator of the Electrical Equipment and Supplies in the Department of War Munitions and Supply, assured Frigon on 28 September 1943, “we have had more zinc allocated for dry battery production in 1943 than was allocated last year and I can tell you that considerably more zinc was allocated for radio batteries than was the case last year.”<sup>120</sup> Indeed,

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<sup>117</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 438. 27-9-2 (pt. 1). War Emergency Measures Home Radio Receivers. Letter, “Re: R. M. A. Service Committee,” G. W. Olive to Mr. G. H. Baldwin, (general supervisor of Canadian Westinghouse Company, Ltd.), 25 November 1942.

<sup>118</sup> Ouimet, 95-6.

<sup>119</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 438. 27-9-2 (pt. 1). War Emergency Measures Home Radio Receivers. Northern Electric Company, “Radio Conservation Hints for Your Customers,” “10 Point Radio Conservation Plan,” 1942. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>120</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 438. 27-9-2 (pt. 2). War Emergency Measures Home Radio Receivers. Letter, A. L. Brown (Administrator, Electrical Equipment and Supplies) to A. Frigon 28 September 1943.

the production and shipment of radio batteries in 1944 reached more than 20% more than 1942.<sup>121</sup>

Despite the increased production allocated for radio parts, many Canadians still struggled to get regular access to a functioning radio throughout parts of the war, and some were desperate enough to pen hand-written letters to the manufacturers or CBC representatives. Madeline T. Reid of Victoria authored one such plea to the general manager of the CBC at the time, James S. Thompson, on 11 May 1943. “It occurs to me,” she wrote, “[that] you may be in a position to swing this point of view before the right person and help to restore to my household as well as to many others, the privilege of listening again to daily broadcasts which we are missing so much.” Unable to purchase a new radio tube to repair her house radio and learning that retailers saw “no prospect” of acquiring “one in the near future,” Reid professed how important radio was in her household. She reminded Thompson of the medium’s undeniable significance during wartime: “It seems to me that in war-time our Radios are rather essential from the point of view of morale and as a means of reaching us with propoganda, appeals such as for Victory Loans, etc.,” she said, “and I cannot help thinking the government is unaware of the situation due to shortage of these tubes.”<sup>122</sup>

The Second World War propelled radio into a medium of great popularity and importance. Canadians began to see radio broadcasting on the homefront as intrinsically linked with the war effort. Whether Canadians used radio to listen to war news or as an escape to unwind, the war transformed radio into *the* electrical appliance central to Canadian society.

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<sup>121</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 438. 27-9-2 (pt. 2). War Emergency Measures Home Radio Receivers. Letter, A. L. Brown to Walter A. Rush (Controller of Radio, Dept. of Transport), 29 October 1943.

<sup>122</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 438. 27-9-2 (pt. 2). War Emergency Measures Home Radio Receivers. Letter, (Mrs.) Madeline T. Reid to the General Manger [of the CBC], 11 May 1943.

Because the Canadian government accorded the CBC with an overarching responsibility for radio broadcasting in Canada, a greater burden in the war fell upon the Corporation.

## Chapter 2

### The CBC Marches to War

Following Canada's entry into the war on 10 September 1939, William Gladstone Murray, the general manager of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), released a general order to all CBC employees. "In modern warfare," he wrote, "broadcasting is an essential part of the front line of defense and attack. We shall all be subject to the strain and stress of war conditions and without the stimulus of danger." He assured his staff that they "shall carry on with that quiet determination that is born of a consciousness not only of the importance of our task, but also of the rightness of our cause."<sup>123</sup> Murray believed that the war with Germany would be all-encompassing. He held that radio, already seen by many as the most influential medium of public communication, would have a critical part to play in the conflict ahead. As the CBC was responsible for the majority of broadcasting in Canada and possessed the only national broadcasting network, Murray knew that the Corporation and its employees found themselves with a considerable responsibility to bear. Understanding the weight of this responsibility, the CBC wholeheartedly directed its efforts to further the national cause.

National patriotism was ubiquitous in the CBC throughout the war. Its staff, its policies, its attention were geared towards the war effort. That is not to say that there were not some in the ranks of the CBC who were less inclined to propagandizing the war. Before the outbreak of the war, a few prominent members of the CBC were strongly against intervening in another European conflict. Principal among them was Alan Plaunt, founder of the Canadian Radio

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<sup>123</sup> Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario [hereafter, LAC]. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation [hereafter, CBC] Papers RG41, vol. 440. 27-9-32 War Emergency Measures Internal Memoranda. Memorandum, Gladstone Murray to all CBC Employees, "WAR EMERGENCY MEASURES," 12 September 1939.

League and key proponent of Canada's publically-owned national broadcasting system. Plaunt formed the Neutrality League in the fall of 1938 and in 1939 he worked vigorously (if unavailingly) to convince Prime Minister Mackenzie King to keep Canada out of another war. Joining the war, he believed, would threaten the delicate stability of Canadian society. Plaunt accused some of the CBC's pre-war programs of being overly jingoist; he disapproved of Murray's meetings with British agents before the war; and he protested the decision to carry BBC programming on the CBC after Britain's declaration of war on 3 September 1939 despite Canada's short-lived neutrality. He loathed the concept of radio censorship along with Murray's policies that brought the CBC closer to the Ministry of National War Services. Nevertheless, when Canada entered the war patriotism far outweighed any isolationist views held by elements within the CBC elite. Murray's rivals and Plaunt's supporters left the CBC one by one. Edward Pickering and Leonard Brockington resigned in October 1939, Plaunt took his leave from the Board of Governors on 30 August 1940, and in November 1940 Public Affairs Director Donald W. Buchanan followed suit.<sup>124</sup> Promptly after, the CBC Board of Governors "declared unanimously its full confidence in Murray."<sup>125</sup> During the course of the war the CBC was led by three different General Managers: William Gladstone Murray (1936 - November 1942), James S. Thompson (November 1942 - November 1943), and Augustin Frigon (November 1943 - 1951).

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<sup>124</sup> Michael Nolan, *Foundations: Alan Plaunt and the early days of the CBC Radio* (Toronto: CBC Enterprises, 1986), 154-166.; Frank W. Peers, *The Politics of Canadian Broadcasting, 1920-1951*, (Toronto: CBC Enterprises, 1986), 306-307. Regardless of Plaunt's initial apprehensions towards the war, Murray later wrote a letter to C. D. Howe wherein he said that Plaunt became loyal to the national cause. Murray said, "when, however, war was apprehended or declared, Mr. Plaunt was ready to drop all predilections in order to join in the national effort." Murray, suggested to Howe that Plaunt be reappointed onto the CBC Board of Governors. Although it does not appear that Plaunt acted against the war effort, the division between him and Murray deepened as a result of their fundamental disagreement over the extent to which the CBC was to propagandize the war and support the government.

<sup>125</sup> T. J. Allard, *Straight Up: Private Broadcasting in Canada: 1922-1958* (Ottawa: Heritage House, 1979), 134.

Yet despite these senior administrative changes the CBC's dedication to the war effort remained resolute.<sup>126</sup>

Murray was an ardent supporter of the Allied war effort. Having served with distinction in the Royal Flying Corps in the First World War, he was devotedly imperialist and a strong supporter of British foreign policy. Until being appointed the first general manager of the CBC, Murray worked as the director of public relations for the British Broadcasting Company (BBC). Believing that the interest of Canada was intimately linked with that of Britain, during his tenure as head of the CBC he maintained a close-working relationship with the BBC and leaders of British propaganda.<sup>127</sup> Beyond that, he believed that aiding the national war effort was part of the CBC's responsibility to serve the Canadian people. Although the CBC was a crown corporation and the decisions of its Board of Governors were ultimately subject to the Canadian federal government, its framework allowed it to operate as a predominately independent media organization. But as defined by the 1936 *Canadian Broadcasting Act*, the CBC was a national public service and it served the needs of Canada and the Canadian public, especially during times of crisis.<sup>128</sup> Like the vast majority of CBC employees, Murray interpreted this to have warranted the CBC's increased responsibility in the war effort. Seemingly confirming the government's confidence in the organization's role as well, by Order-in-Council on 5 September 1939, the federal government declared the CBC to be one of the essential services, which allowed the CBC

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<sup>126</sup> Robert J. F. Albota, "Dan McArthur's concept of objectivity and his struggle to defend the integrity of the CBC News Service, 1940-1945," Carleton University Master's Dissertation (1988), 203.

<sup>127</sup> Nolan, 153, 165.

<sup>128</sup> Earnest Austin Weir, *The Struggle for National Broadcasting in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965), 209-210.

to retain vital members of its staff who decided to enlist, were summoned for work by the Minister of National Defense, or, after 1944, found themselves conscripted.<sup>129</sup>

Prior to the outbreak of the war, Murray affirmed his support to the government for controlling information during wartime. In a letter to C. D. Howe, on 28 August 1939, he recommended that the government form a committee immediately to regulate censorship. Reminding the minister of the importance of managing the spread of information, he warned Howe that without an official machinery of censorship established by the government the CBC would take it upon itself to impose its own.<sup>130</sup>

When war broke out, the Canadian government created a Board of Censors which oversaw the management of the press during the war. The radio censor instructed the Station Relations Department of the CBC about what information they prohibited from broadcast.<sup>131</sup> Most were similar to those prohibited from print, such as anything pertaining to ship movements, escaped prisoners of war, and the names of Canadian casualties.<sup>132</sup> Because of unique aspects of broadcasting, radio also received a number of special censorship rules for broadcasting. Stations close enough to the coast and possessing a sufficiently strong signal to broadcast out to sea were forbidden to air weather reports, as German ships and submarines could pick up those transmissions.<sup>133</sup> Additionally, radio stations were not allowed to take musical requests and

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<sup>129</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41.vol. 434. 27-3-2 War Emergency Measures - Manpower within the Broadcasting industry. P.C. 2525, "At the Government House at Ottawa Tuesday, the 5<sup>th</sup> day of September, 1939," H.W. Lothrop. LAC.

<sup>130</sup> Quoted in Albota. 62-63.

<sup>131</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 4. Bushnell, E.L. - Personal typed record of speeches.... 1941-57. Speech, E.L. Bushnell, "The Role Of Radio in Wartime – Canada," Columbus, Ohio, May 1941.

<sup>132</sup> Mark Bourrie, *The Fog of War: Censorship of Canada's Media in World War Two* (Madeira Park: Perseus Books Group, 2011), 50.

<sup>133</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC National News - general policy statements n.d., 1941-52, Memorandum, Marion Grange to D.C. McArthur, "CBC News," 6 May 1946.

greetings by telephone because the enemy could possibly use those as codes.<sup>134</sup> However, censorship in Canada remained in the domain of news media. This meant that while any breach of censorship policy or release of a story considered a detriment to the war effort may have found news organizations and journalists in trouble, the responsibility for monitoring what they released was largely left up to the CBC and its employees.

The CBC's mobilization for the war was evident in developments at its facilities. Following the declaration of war, the CBC insulated its facilities from potential enemy sabotage. As the assistant chief engineer, J. Alphonse Ouimet, noted by the end of 1939, the CBC constructed barbed-wire fences, floodlights, and sandbag barricades "to protect vital parts against destruction by explosive projectiles." Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers were also stationed day and night in "heated guardhouses where the men on duty can recuperate between their rounds." The areas were further monitored and access restricted only to "identified personnel of the corporation" and visitors possessing proper documentation and possessing "special serious reasons."<sup>135</sup> Its facilities were also granted emergency equipment, such as standby electric or gasoline generators and emergency antennae and links to maintain contact with other transmitters. By the end of the war, the CBC claimed to have spent approximately \$83, 000, out of the total \$626, 383 in "losses and expenditures incurred because of the war," in order "to protect... plants against enemy action."<sup>136</sup> Undoubtedly, the enhanced security at its stations and facilities made it appear as though the CBC was at war.

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<sup>134</sup> Bourrie, 50.

<sup>135</sup> J. A. Ouimet, "Maintenance of Broadcast Operations in Wartime," *Proceedings of the IRE* 31.3 (1943), 94-6.

<sup>136</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 436. 27-4-8 War Costs and Budget. Letter, A. Frigon to J.J. McCann, 23 July 1945.

Additionally, the CBC drastically altered its programming to adjust to the war. The general supervisor of programmes at the time, Ernest Bushnell, was, like Murray, dedicated entirely to the war effort. He held a firm belief that radio could, and should, contribute to the Canadian war effort. On 1 December 1939, chairing the eighteenth meeting of the members of the CBC National Programme Committee, Bushnell told his colleagues that “as the chief means of maintaining and developing national morale we must address ourselves to the one task of winning the war.” “We must become the vibrant, vigorous expression of a proud nation at arms in every way,” he said, “[and] provide the kind of leadership” for the nation that is “strong, virile and positive.” Bushnell pledged his undying loyalty to the war effort; then he called for any members of the committee or the CBC “who cannot share with me the views I hold,” to leave the organization. In the CBC, commitment to the national cause had to be absolute. He told them that

no one, no matter how important he may have been, will be permitted to remain with the CBC who shows an unwillingness to turn his hand to whatever may be asked of him. This not only applies to you but to those who come under your supervision. If you feel there are those who fall into that category do not hesitate to make appropriate recommendations so that whatever action is necessary can be taken to eliminate the weak links in the chain.<sup>137</sup>

In this manner, Bushnell commanded members of the CBC to keep a watchful eye for any lack of enthusiasm in their colleagues. As he reiterated,

if you have among you any one whom you feel is not prepared to give wholeheartedly to the winning of the war, I should like you to try as best you can to find that out and to let us know. To put it bluntly and very flatly there are not going to be any slackers in this organization.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 1. CBC Report on organization and Personnel... 1939 - 10. “Minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the members of the National Programme Office, December 1st, at 10.00am,” E. L. Bushnell (Chairman), C. R. Delafield (Secretary).

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

He reaffirmed this position at the twenty-fifth meeting of the committee on 22 May 1940. Here, he proposed that CBC programmes “spend more time on the war effort” to stimulate the population towards it. Because the influence of radio “will be felt the length and breadth of Canada,” Bushnell suggested that the CBC needed to undertake a “more inspired and a more intensified effort – an effort demanding both greater mental and physical exertion.”<sup>139</sup>

In a series of public speeches, Bushnell told his audiences what he believed to be the role of radio during war. As he said in 1942 to the Canadian Club in Ottawa, “in the radio field as elsewhere the all-absorbing task of the moment is to further the war effort.”<sup>140</sup> The CBC would largely accomplish this by improving its wartime programming. According to Bushnell, the CBC was responsible to create wartime programmes

“(a) That will inspire the nation as a whole and every individual in it to greater effort.

(b) that will help to put everyone in the proper frame of mind to accept willingly the inevitable sacrifices that are the direct and indirect outgrowth of their country’s participation in armed conflict.

(c) that will remove, or at least palliate, sectional interests and racial prejudices; and conversely that will stimulate and revive a deep rooted, ever present consciousness of the absolute necessity of national unity.

(d) that will invigorate every man, woman and child with new courage, mentally and physically, in days that are dark or foreboding, of which there are bound to be many.”<sup>141</sup>

Bushnell’s vision for radio programming directed towards supporting the war was quickly realized. For starters, the rise of public interest in the news prompted the CBC to increase the number of news bulletins to provide listeners with prompt up-to-date information

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<sup>139</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 1. CBC Correspondence and memoranda 1940 – 13. “Minutes of the 25th meeting of the members of the National Programme Office, Wednesday, 22nd May 1940 at 10.00am,” E. L. Bushnell (Chairman), C. R. Delafield (Secretary).

<sup>140</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 1. CBC Correspondence and memoranda... 1942 – 17. Speech, E. L. Bushnell, “Broadcasting – Everybody’s Business” 14 January 1942.

<sup>141</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 4. Bushnell, E.L. - Personal typed record of speeches.... 1941 – 57. Speech, E. L. Bushnell, “The Role Of Radio in Wartime – Canada,” May 1941.

about the international crisis. The amount of air time devoted to news surged from only 9.4% prior to 1 April 1939 to 20.1% in the fall of 1941. This provided news with the largest proportion of air time of any type of programming broadcast over CBC radio.<sup>142</sup>

The CBC also moved towards closer cooperation between its programming and the government departments and armed services. It began producing and broadcasting programmes geared towards aiding the war effort. Such series included ‘Soldiers’ Wife’, which provided information about rationing by the Wartime Prices and Trade Board; ‘They Tell Me,’ which promoted the sale of war saving stamps and certificates for the Department of Finance; and the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) Quiz, a half hour quiz show to promote enlistment in the Women’s Division of the RCAF.<sup>143</sup> The Corporation aired special programs regularly to stimulate recruitment and show cooperation between the three armed services. Across its network, it broadcast many features which its mobile units recorded at Canadian army bases or RCAF airfields. The most prominent series was ‘Comrades in Arms’, and it brought such other programmes in support of the war effort as ‘Canada’s Fighting Services’, ‘Royal Canadian Navy’, ‘Story of the Canadian Army’, ‘the Army Sings’, ‘They Fly for Freedom’, ‘The Life Line Holds’, ‘Men of War’, and ‘The Army Show’. The CBC also collaborated closely with all of the victory loan campaigns, providing ample coverage and inviting Americans sympathetic to the Allied cause, such as popular American journalist Dorothy Thompson, to encourage Canadians to buy war bonds.<sup>144</sup> Live sound recordings recorded from war industries throughout Canada were broadcast “in order to emphasize the importance of the production of war materials,

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<sup>142</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 1. CBC, *Five Years of Achievement 1941 – 12*. CBC, “Five Years of Achievement 1936-1941: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation,” (Toronto: Sampson-Mathews, Limited), 1941.

<sup>143</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 434, 27-2 (pt 2). Memorandum, “Information required in the Preparation of Brief for a meeting with War Services Board,” M.L. Poole to Chief Engineer, 7 September 1943.

<sup>144</sup> Warner Troyer, *The Sound & The Fury: An Anecdotal History of Canadian Broadcasting*, (Toronto: Personal Library, 1982), 100.

weapons, foods as part of the war effort.”<sup>145</sup> In addition, the CBC worked with the Department of Labour to deliver employment announcements and call for registered nurses to serve in the armed services; it conveyed information to the public on behalf of the Department of Munitions and Supply in regards to rationing and shortages of goods; and it provided an effective medium to deliver official messages to the public.<sup>146</sup> After the entry of Japan into the war in December 1941, the CBC played an important role in organizing test blackouts on behalf of military and government authorities as well.<sup>147</sup>

Of course, the CBC could not overwhelm the public’s tolerance by turning all of its programming into a call to arms. And yet, its decision to maintain much of its regular broadcasting schedule was also, in part, a careful choice to stimulate war consciousness and guard against panic. Early in the war, CBC executives agreed that it was essential to retain its entertainment programmes in order to provide Canadians with a sanctuary of relaxation amid the strains of war. Augustin Frigon, referencing the opinion shared by the BBC, discussed the importance of this in a broadcast on 24 October 1939:

In wartime, no less than in peace time, people need relief and relaxation. In normal time the entertainment of broadcasting has been widely recognized. But just because the times are grave there is anything inappropriate in the broadcasting, for example, of light entertainment is to make a false reckoning of the people’s needs... And if those of light entertainment helps us to forget our trouble even momentarily there is no need to begrudge ourself that pleasure. But refreshments of this strengthens us to face the grimmest task.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 434. 27-2 (pt. 2). CBC, “A synopsis of the organization and operation of radio broadcasting in Canada with special reference to war service and essential personnel requirements,” 1943.

<sup>146</sup> LAC. RG 41 Vol. 434, 27-2 (pt 2). Memorandum, M. L. Poole to Chief Engineer, 7 September 1943.

<sup>147</sup> Weir, *The Struggle for National Broadcasting in Canada*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965), 270.

<sup>148</sup> CBC Digital Archives. Augustin Frigon [Radio Broadcast], “Broadcasting and the War,” CBC Radio Special, CBC, 24 October 1939.

<http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/broadcasting-and-the-war>

The CBC kept this attitude throughout the war, as noted in a 1942 brief to the National Selective Service:

The building of public morale is of supreme importance in order that there may be maximum effectiveness in the war effort, and it is evident that a balance should be maintained between strictly war programmes and those of entertainment value. Music, drama and other programmes of an entertainment type must be continued to preserve a contrast between the horror of war and normal activity.<sup>149</sup>

In some way or another, all CBC broadcasting connected to the war effort. Even music and drama programmes had their role to play. As Howard Fink and John Jackson have shown, the radio plays of Gerald Noxon produced during the war for the CBC, such as ‘The People’ (1942), were “a call to arms” and “primarily designed to raise the level of Canadian patriotism and commitment to the war effort.”<sup>150</sup>

In the wartime environment, the mood created by music in relation to the tone of a newscast became a rising concern for CBC programmers. If they were aware that incoming war news was “serious” or somber, they would modify “the subsequent program” or have a particular program, “in extreme cases, cancelled” to ensure that it did not worsen or entirely contradict the tone of the news.<sup>151</sup> This decision was in reaction to embarrassing oversights, such as on 10 September 1939 when Austin Willis interrupted an NBC show playing “raucous swing band music” to announce the declaration of war only to return to the jovial tunes. *The Financial Post*, in response, criticized the “incredible stupidity” of the CBC for failing to demonstrate the “sense

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<sup>149</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 434. 27-3-2 War Emergency Measures - Manpower within the Broadcasting industry. The Canadian Broadcasting Industry, “A Brief Prepared for National Selective Service Department of Labour,” January 1943.

<sup>150</sup> Howard Fink and John Jackson, *The Road to Victory: Radio Plays of Gerald Noxon* (Waterloo and Kingston: Malcolm Lowry Review Press and Quarry Press, 1989), 10-11.

<sup>151</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC National News - general policy statements n.d., 1941-52. Memorandum, Marion Grange to D. C. McArthur, “CBC News,” 6 May 1946.

of sober gravity of the moment.”<sup>152</sup> According to the *CBC Annual Programme Report* for 1941-1942, “when considering the CBC’s total war effort... it is almost impossible, in these times, to disassociate a large portion of our normal schedule from its relationship to some aspect of the war.”<sup>153</sup>

The greatest departure in CBC programming for the war was its creation of a reporting unit to follow the First Canadian Division to the United Kingdom on 10 December 1939. From humble beginnings, the Overseas Unit developed into a defining part of the CBC’s efforts to generate new war programming. As Frigon recalled in July 1945, early in the war CBC executives “thought it was in the interest of our country to establish a link between our troops overseas and their homes.” The great majority in Canada could claim at least some connection to the soldiers deploying overseas. According to Frigon, “it was in a sense our participation in direct warfare by sustaining the morale of both troops and civilians.”<sup>154</sup>

It is evident that Murray and Bushnell had been negotiating with the government and the armed forces for some time prior to December 1939. In fact, at the meeting of the National Programme Office on 1 December 1939, Bushnell commented that “there would be those whose privilege it would be to serve ‘in a more direct way’.” Only at the following meeting in May 1940 did he confirm that he was, in fact, referring to the Overseas Unit (which was officially operating by that time).<sup>155</sup> After secretive bureaucratic red-tape had been dealt with, Bushnell invited the CBC’s most recognizable and talented on-location broadcasters to provide the best

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<sup>152</sup> Knowlton Nash, *The Microphone Wars: A History of Triumph and Betrayal at the CBC*. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1994), 178-9.

<sup>153</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 526. - Annual Programme Reports. CBC, 1941-46. “Annual Report: Sustaining Programme Statistics April 1, 1941 – March 31, 1942, ix.

<sup>154</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 436. 27-4-8 War Costs and Budget. Letter, Augustin Frigon to J. J. McCann, 23 July, 1945.

<sup>155</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 1. CBC Correspondence and memoranda 1940 – 13. “Minutes of the 25th meeting of the members of the National Programme Office, Wednesday, 22nd May 1940 at 10.00am.”

publicity for the deployment of the First Canadian Division. The men invited, Robert T. Bowman and J. Frank Willis, were already national radio personalities in Canada. Willis gained fame – for both himself and live, on-site broadcasting – as a result of his dramatic coverage of the Moose River mine disaster in 1936.<sup>156</sup> Subsequently, coverage of the Royal Tour of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, earned further plaudits for him and Bowman, as well as the CBC.<sup>157</sup> The two strongly believed in the power of recorded, on-site news broadcasts to captivate radio audiences. Both possessed a strong attachment and loyalty to country. Even before the war, on 30 August 1939 Bowman wrote to Bushnell to remind him about his connections in Britain as well as his news and radio qualifications “in case of a possible reorganization in case of war.”<sup>158</sup>

The CBC unit captured and broadcast the departure of First Canadian Division in two parts. Willis covered the ships leaving Halifax harbour on December 18, with the broadcast delayed several days by the censor. He captured an audio of troops singing and cheering as they joyously left Canada.<sup>159</sup> A CBC technical engineer, meanwhile, accompanied Bowman to record material of the voyage to Britain and, on December 20, broadcast to Canada from London.<sup>160</sup>

The broadcasts covering the departure of the First Canadian Division and their arrival in the United Kingdom proved extremely popular in Canada. As a result, the CBC ordered Bowman to remain in London to capture more material about the troops – interviewing them and cataloguing their daily lives in preparation for the war. Bushnell, in addition, traveled to London,

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<sup>156</sup> J. A. Webb, “Canada's Moose River mine disaster (1936): radio-newspaper competition in the business of news,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 16.3 (August 1996).

<sup>157</sup> Mary Vipond, “The Royal Tour of 1939 as a Media Event,” *Canadian Journal of Communication* 35.1 (January 2010).

<sup>158</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 4. Bowman, Robert T. – correspondence. Memorandum, R. T. Bowman memo to E.L. Bushnell, “Crisis on War Arrangements,” 30 August 1939.

<sup>159</sup> CBC Digital Archives. J. Frank Willis [Radio Broadcast], “So long, Canada! Soldiers set off in 1939,” CBC Radio News Special, CBC, 20 December 1939. <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/second-world-war-so-long-canada>.

<sup>160</sup> A.E. Powley, *Broadcast from the Front: Canadian Overseas Radio in the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 1-4.

in February, and Paris, in March, in order to determine the potential for expanding CBC programming overseas. By May, Bushnell finished his report. He determined that there was enough material overseas that would keep listeners back home sufficiently interested to tune into CBC programming. Furthermore, he received approval from French radio transmitters, the BBC, General McNaughton – the commander of the Canadian army in Britain – and Vincent Massey, Canada’s high commissioner to the United Kingdom, that the unit would be able to cover the war from the front and broadcast material back to Canada. As Bushnell wrote in his report, “we were practically assured of transmission facilities from both Paris Mendial [sic] and the BBC; we had the assurance of Mr. Massey that he would do everything possible to secure the representation we wanted in France with the Canadian Forces and we were confident the BBC would provide a reasonable number of periods for CBC programmes in their ‘Forces’ schedule.”<sup>161</sup> The only amendment Massey relayed from the War Office was that the unit was expected to attend a newly organized War Time Publicity Committee in London, which could request the unit conduct “special” jobs “of publicity” on its behalf. By April 11, the Overseas Unit received approval from the War Office to travel with the First Canadian Division into battle as accredited war correspondents. While the First Division’s expected deployment was delayed until June 1, additional talent was shipped to London in preparation. But after the launch of the German *blitzkrieg* through the Low Countries and deep into France on May 10, the unit remained in the United Kingdom with the Canadian troops indefinitely. Still, the CBC was aware of its value and potential for the benefit of the war effort. Bushnell noted in the conclusion of his report:

Letters received from friends and relatives of soldiers of the First Division have been numerous and indicated this service was truly appreciated. That obviously is a natural

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<sup>161</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Bushnell, E. L., Report of General Supervisor of Programmes on his visit to UK and France, Feb. 1940-May 1940. E.L. Bushnell to the General Manager (CBC), “Report of the General Supervisor of Programmes on his visit to the United Kingdom and France, February 23, 1940, to May 12, 1940.”

reaction. The point that is not yet clear in my mind is what effect of the CBC has had or will be likely to have on the larger, but probably less directly interested body of public opinion. If it can be established within reasonable limits that these programmes have the approval of even a fair sized minority of listeners then I believe we should not hesitate to spend more money, to send more staff and to give more attention generally to this phase of the CBC's contribution toward the war effort; and this even should it become necessary to curtail other services.<sup>162</sup>

That Bushnell was willing to suggest that the need for a CBC Overseas Unit could warrant curtailing resources from other CBC programmes indicates just how strongly he felt that the CBC should direct most of its attention towards the war.

On Bushnell's return to Canada he launched a reinvigorated effort to improve CBC wartime programming. The devastating advances of the German *blitzkrieg* cast a shadow over much optimism about the war. At the meeting of the National Programme Office on May 22, Bushnell consoled his colleagues about "the titanic struggle which, even at this moment, is raging across fields that drank the blood of our fathers and brothers twenty-five years ago, our hearts and minds have been full of forebodings." Yet he reminded them of the importance of their duty at hand. He said, that it would

be necessary to strengthen the fibre of a people daily growing weary of war and all that it means. They will never need exhortation, for in them, now more deeply rooted than ever, is a consciousness of the justice of our cause and a firm conviction that the preservation of all that is fine and decent and of good repute rests upon the victory to which they have dedicated themselves. But there may be a few flagging spirits, who from time to time, will need stimulation. We must continue to give it to them.<sup>163</sup>

In the rising conflict, Bushnell knew that the dissemination of news would assume an even greater importance than ever before. He came to believe that delivering the news was "by far the most important function of a nationally operated broadcasting system such as ours."<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 1. CBC Correspondence and memoranda 1940 – 13. "Minutes of the 25th meeting of the members of the National Programme Office, Wednesday, 22nd May 1940 at 10.00am."

<sup>164</sup> Peter Stursberg, *Mister Broadcasting: the Ernie Bushnell Story* (Toronto: Martin Associates, 1971), 67-71.

Certainly the *blitzkrieg* drive past the Maginot Line, France's purportedly impenetrable border fortifications, sparked a flurry of public interest. Bushnell acted quickly. Immediately after his return to Canada he recommended to Murray that they appoint Dan McArthur as the full-time supervisor of the news for the CBC – a new position designed to oversee the growing demand and responsibility for public information. Likewise, special daily news bulletins were increased to follow the struggle overseas, and plans for additional morning and nightly news bulletins were penned for the coming year.<sup>165</sup>

Bushnell wanted the CBC to assume greater responsibility for delivering the news for some time. In an earlier 1938 report written after a trip to Europe, he commented on how Canada was the only major country wherein the newspapers had control of transmitting news. Bushnell “strongly urge[d]” Murray “that a definite plan of action be discussed as soon as possible and preparatory steps taken to strengthen what I consider one of the weakest links in our structure.” In effect, he wanted the CBC to create a news service modelled after that of the BBC which made it “an institution of national importance.”<sup>166</sup> Yet despite his insistence, the incentive for the CBC to do so would only come as a result of the war.

The war encouraged more CBC figures to see the need for greater control of news dissemination. Bowman wrote to Bushnell on 4 September 1939: “From now until the end of the war, the broadcasting of news will be our most important programme and possibly the most important function. This being the case, I think the CBC should assume full control of the preparation of news to be broadcast on the CBC network.” Bowman said that like Bushnell he

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<sup>165</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 1. CBC Correspondence and memoranda 1940 – 13. “Minutes of the 25th meeting of the members of the National Programme Office, Wednesday, 22nd May 1940 at 10.00am.”

<sup>166</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 14. CBC Bushnell.... 1940-41. E.L. Bushnell, Report (1938).

had “been hopeful, for some time, that we might be able to have a news office of our own” and that “the present situation may be a good lever to assist us in making this necessary change.”<sup>167</sup>

In his master’s thesis, Robert J. F. Albota correctly identified the war as the catalyst for producing the CBC’s national news service. Before the war, CBC news bulletins simply comprised reports submitted by various newspaper agencies. Although the bulk of its news received from the Canadian Press (CP) and the British United Press (BUP) was ‘responsible’ when it came to releasing news about the war, newscasts submitted by other sponsored and unmonitored news sources proved to be a considerable danger to the dissemination of news. These had the potential of adversely affecting the Allied war effort. For one, exuberant advertisements for such consumer products as soap or vacuums dramatically contradicted the serious tone of some war news.<sup>168</sup> Austin Willis, for instance, recalled considerable outrage after he followed a report on the sinking of the HMS *Hood* in May 1941 with an advertisement for waterproof Bulova watches.<sup>169</sup> The CBC thus sought tighter regulations and involvement in the dissemination of news to the public by taking a far more active role in its production and distribution. “The war,” as Albota asserted, “provided the Board of Governors with the pretext it needed to step in and regulate the broadcasting of commercial advertising during newscasts, and, at the same time, create a new player in the Canadian news system.”<sup>170</sup>

But the primary threat over the airwaves came from the unsolicited delivery of German propaganda. Of course, the spread of German propaganda over Canadian radio stations was forbidden. Sponsored news reports, however, were far more likely than those of the CP or the

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<sup>167</sup> Quoted in Albota, 70.; R. T. Bowman to Bushnell, 4 September, 1939, [LAC, RG 41, vol.171].

<sup>168</sup> Albota, 96.

<sup>169</sup> Nash, 207.

<sup>170</sup> Albota, 96.

BUP to include information based on German propaganda. But there were also transnational pressures to consider as well. The CBC stopped importing the *Reichs-Rundfunk-Gesellschaft* (RRG) programmes in April 1939.<sup>171</sup> Nevertheless, Canadian listeners were able, still, to pick up short-wave broadcasts from German radio designed specifically for North American audiences. As Canada's chief censor, Wilfrid Eggleston, commented in 1941, "Lord Haw-Haw and other Nazi propagandists can be brought in by the twist of a dial in thousands of Canadian homes, and no proposal to make it an offence to do so is likely to win favour in this country."<sup>172</sup>

Even if Canadians chose not to or could not tune into German radio they could still hear Nazi propaganda circulated by American sources. The United States, up until December 1941, remained neutral, and its neutrality proved a great problem for filtering information about the war in Canada. According to Eggleston, the United States was giving "free play to certain types of material which our own authorities forbid or at least frown heavily upon." The Canadian-American border allowed for a near continuous flow of newspapers, magazines, and tourists. Along with the flow of culture and people, came a circulation of information that was not always favourable to Britain and Canada's war effort. "United States' appraisals of the course of the war are naturally more objective than ours," Eggleston argued, "and may at times become what we should regard as defeatist." Thus, various groups in the United States were capable of voicing their opinions against the war in ways that would not have been acceptable under Canadian censorship laws. Eggleston continued:

The clash between the interventionists and the non-interventionists produces much material strongly isolationist and sometimes violently anti-British. Appeals to North America to stay out of Europe's eternal rows have an inherent application to those of us

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<sup>171</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 526 - Annual Programme Reports. 1937-41. "Annual Report Programme Statistics April 1, 1939 – March 31, 1940," v.

<sup>172</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 435 - CBC Overseas News Service and censorship. 27-4-2 (pt 6) – Censorship. Speech, Wilfrid Eggleston, "Press Censorship," 23 May 1941.

who live north of the border. Then there is pacifist and anti-war material on religious or philosophical grounds.<sup>173</sup>

By the time the United States entered into the war, Canada had already banned approximately 125 American publications.<sup>174</sup> Yet such measures were relatively ineffective in frustrating the overall accessibility of American opinions that ran counter to the Anglo-Canadian war effort.

A looming issue when it came to regulating the spread of isolationist opinions from the United States was the advent of radio. The forty-ninth parallel proved no barrier to the new medium. American radio stations in such cities as Seattle, Spokane, Detroit, Buffalo, and Minneapolis reached deep into Canadian territory and covered most of Canada's largest population centres.<sup>175</sup> With nearly 90% of Canadians living near the border and within range of American stations, a problem was unavoidable.<sup>176</sup> Mary Vipond has argued that the indomitable reach of American radio was a primary motivator for the creation of the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission (which transformed into the CBC in 1936) as a national broadcasting institution in 1932 to protect "the nation's interests."<sup>177</sup> This issue persisted into the early war years as a thorn for Canadian censorship authorities.

American radio newscasters frequently broadcast information that was censored in Canada. One such issue was German prisoners of war who escaped incarceration on Canadian soil and made their way south of the border. As Richard S. Malone, the Canadian military's chief public relations officer, recalled, "after each escape, frantic efforts [in Canada] would be made to

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> William F. Swindler, "Wartime News Control in Canada," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 6.3 (Autumn 1942), 448.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 448.

<sup>176</sup> Robert S. Fortner, *Radio, morality, and culture: Britain, Canada, and the United States, 1919-1945* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005), 156.

<sup>177</sup> Mary Vipond, *Listening In: The First Decade of Canadian Broadcasting, 1922-1932* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 283-286.

hide it from the newspapers.”<sup>178</sup> And yet, on several occasions the prisoners would reach out to American radio stations and provide interviews about their incarceration and escape. Such stories tended to perpetuate Nazi propaganda stories about mistreated German prisoners of war and prove the fragility of Canadian security. Because of the frequency of such incidents, the House of Commons at least once debated the question: “Why do Canadians have to listen to American radio stations to learn what is going on in their own country?”<sup>179</sup>

As the war took a darker tone in the spring of 1940, the reality of such holes in Canada’s domestic censorship machinery became more evident. In the words of Canada’s first director of censorship, Walter S. Thompson, “maintaining strict censorship in Canada was like trying to heat a house with only three walls.”<sup>180</sup> Jamming American radio altogether was certainly not an option. As a 1940 study on the issue noted, such a drastic act would interfere “with domestic aural services and would probably bring swift retaliation from abroad.”<sup>181</sup> Furthermore, cutting off American radio altogether would be an unpopular decision in regards to Canadian public opinion. Murray knew such a desperate step would be unwise. On 29 August 1939 he advised C. D. Howe, Canada’s minister of Munitions and Supply at the time, that deleting American newscasts could “create suspicion on the part of Canadian listeners,” and inadvertently even “increase the tendency of Canadian listeners [to tune into] American stations.”<sup>182</sup> By the outbreak of the war, several American newscasts had become popular staples for countless Canadians. W. J. Harper, a member of the CBC’s Western Regional Advisory Council, noted to

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<sup>178</sup> Richard S. Malone, *A Portrait of War, 1939–1943* (Toronto: Collins, 1983), 86-88.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. Board of governors 1940 - correspondence... etc. “Memorandum submitted to the Chairman and Board of Governors of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation,” 8 May 1940.

<sup>181</sup> O. W. Riegel, “Press, Radio, Films: A Quarterly Survey of International Communications,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 4.1 (March 1940), 140.

<sup>182</sup> Quoted in Albota, 65. Letter, C. D. Howe to W. G. Murray, “News - Broadcasts in Event of War,” 29 August 1939 [NAC, RG 41, vol. 435, file 27-4-1.]

Murray in a letter on 10 July 1940 that 'Texaco' had "become an institution in this province, particularly amongst the farmers, whom it was designed primarily to serve." Cancelling the programme of the MacColl-Frontenac Oil Company' would be a "disservice" to Canadian farmers. Instead, Harper suggested that the CBC's "best way to keep Canadians from listening to this undesirable propaganda" of American stations was "to give them a better news service from our Canadian stations."<sup>183</sup> Harper was not alone in this belief, and it became increasingly common for CBC representatives to suggest counteracting the influence of propaganda over the air sympathetic to the Nazis by improving the efficiency of its own news collection and distribution apparatus.

The use of German sources in American newscasts was also an important issue. In a letter to the editor of the *Globe and Mail* dated 25 April 1940, one writer commented on the "failure by some American and even Canadian broadcasters" to intelligently filter unreliable Nazi sources from their news. "Many of our broadcasters have little knowledge of the matters they deal with," he said, "and simply repeat like parrots what they hear from American stations." The writer was referring to the Narvik raid, which German propaganda promoted "as an unsuccessful attempt to take the town" by the Allies rather than the minor skirmish that it was. The writer continued, "the practice of repeating without competent examination news from American sources which is frequently partly based on German propaganda, is bad enough at any time, but is certainly inexcusable in war time." The writer suggested not

that the news should be distorted in favour of our own side; but to repeat without intelligent consideration enemy propaganda inadequately filtered through American sources is doing a poor service to Canada, and if the Canadian Broadcasting Commission

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<sup>183</sup> Quoted in Albota, 85-86. Letter, W. J. Harper to Murray, 10 July 1940.

has any control over such matters, it should insist that Canadian newscasts be done with some intelligence.<sup>184</sup>

The problematic nature of American newscasts became an increasing concern for CBC representatives. Instructed to study the prevalence of American radio reception in Vancouver, R. H. Wright, the programme director of British Columbia for the CBC, compiled a report on 12 August 1940. He found that seven out of ten Canadians in Vancouver “regularly listened” to three popular American newscasts: ‘Paul Sullivan Reviews the News’, ‘CBS’s ‘The World Today’, and ‘The Richfield Reporter’. The remainder claimed to have heard, at some time throughout the day, American newscasts on various networks. “Germany still considers it of primary importance to maintain a steady flow of propaganda into the United States,” Wright argued, “[and] it is of no question to what extent this propaganda is accepted... it does unquestionably colour and influence the majority of news reporters and commentators.” In his report, he provided a personal example for his case:

Yesterday, Sunday, brought news of the war’s greatest air battle. IN the course of preparing this letter to you, I made a point of listening wherever possible, to all newscasts and news commentaries through the day. I, and doubtless hundreds of other Vancouver citizens, heard the official German version of the battle given by no less than three prominent American news commentators, and given as a news item such as ‘The Official German News Agency reported today that their planes had carried out a successful raid etc. etc.’. Canadian Press News releases carried a totally different story, of course, but I heard nothing indicative of an explanation of the difference between the two official stories... in fact, Mr. William Shirer, reporting from Berlin on ‘The World Today’ said ‘I expect you’ll hear a different story from London’ which, when you come to study it, does have quite a double meaning.<sup>185</sup>

Wright concluded his findings by suggesting the CBC begin monitoring, editing, and even collecting some of its own news. “Vancouver, with at least six high powered American stations

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<sup>184</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 435 - CBC Overseas News Service and censorship. 27-4-2 (pt.1). Letter, letter to the Editor (*Globe & Mail*, Toronto, Ont.), 25 April 1940.

<sup>185</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 435 - CBC Overseas News Service and censorship. 27-4-2 (pt.1). Letter, R. H. Wright to H.N. Stovin, 12 August 1940. Emphasis in the original.

heard day and night, needs a little more scope in the matter of handling news commentary.” He recommended that the CBC take greater responsibility in providing “a daily news ‘scrutiny’ and an interpretation of [its own] in terms that are readily understandable.” This would have to be one efficient enough that it could compete with the popularity of American stations. “In pointing this out,” he followed, “I am well aware that our problems are strictly Canadian, but it must be remembered that a great many people do have the idea that American stations manage to get better news service than we do and are prone to accept them verbatim.”<sup>186</sup>

The necessity for the CBC to take greater charge of Canadian news was apparent by the summer of 1940. Certainly Bushnell’s suggestion made to Murray, upon his return from the United Kingdom in early May, that McArthur assume a new position in charge of CBC news was evidence that a significant change in the Corporation’s attitude to wartime information had taken place. McArthur, like Bushnell, wanted to shift the responsibility for gathering radio news away from sponsored news agencies and more towards a national policy. By June 1940, only the CP was allowed to continue its news gathering for broadcasting while its competitors had to prove in “good faith” that their news came from reliable sources removed from any Nazi manipulation – usually the BUP or CP. Moreover, the CBC began to assume more responsibility for its broadcasts by editing news copy rather than reading them directly as they were received.<sup>187</sup>

The government was also pushing the CBC towards assuming a greater responsibility in handling the news. C. D. Howe, on 27 June 1940, instructed Walter S. Thompson to study the means by which the CBC could create a “satisfactory radio news service in Canada.” Personally

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Swindler, 449.

believing in the importance of radio during war-time, Thompson jumped at the opportunity, confessing to Howe on 12 July 1940 that “since the first day of the war, I have given a great deal of thought and attention to this problem – especially while occupying the position of Director of Censorship for the Dominion of Canada.” To this end, he proposed that the CBC, “as part of the war-time duty of that corporation, as a public service... provide all Canadian listeners, wherever they may be situated and to whatever stations they may be listening, with a complete and free news service.”<sup>188</sup>

Confirming his opinion and findings to Howe, Thompson declared “that every effort must be made to make Canadian radio news service so up to date and interesting that listeners are not likely to go to foreign or enemy stations for their news.”<sup>189</sup> The establishment of such a news organization, Thompson noted, would be subject to a number of principles based on his discussions with representatives of Canadian broadcasters. Most important among these conditions was that the radio news agency would maintain its freedom of the press and right to free speech. The conditions on the letter read, that

the very nature of broadcasting makes it an invaluable asset to the nation, particularly in times of stress, and that no part of this asset should be dissipated through loss of faith on the part of listeners either because of obvious suppression or limitation of news.<sup>190</sup>

The intention here was to remove any chance that such a national service could be accused of being a propaganda puppet of the government, for if that were to happen, it would lose credibility among its listeners.

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<sup>188</sup> LAC. Powley Papers, vol. 2. Board of governors 1940 - correspondence... etc. Letter, W. S. Thompson to C.D. Howe, 12 July 1940.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

As a result of the deliberations between Thompson, radio broadcasting representatives and Howe, the CBC Board of Governors appointed a special committee “to study and draw up a plan under which the CBC would prepare and edit a unified national broadcasts news service” in Ottawa on July 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> 1940. According to McArthur, the committee was given these explicit instructions to confirm the seriousness of the CBC’s responsibility: “That in view of the urgency of the problem from the national interest there should be no avoidable delay in preparing this report and presenting it to the Board.”<sup>191</sup> Consequently, the committee reported that “the CBC, having in view the interest of the Canadian public, has decided to assume the responsibility of broadcasting news bulletins of regional, national, international, and to some extent local interest.” The committee proposed 1 January 1941 as the start-up date for the new system.<sup>192</sup>

Ottawa expressed its overwhelming approval. McArthur met with G. H. Lash, the director of the Bureau of Public Information, his staff and public relations officers of the three armed services. While repeating that the CBC news service wished to maintain its integrity and reputation as a responsible and objective news service, McArthur assured the Bureau of Public Information “that the CBC News Service, in conformity with CBC war-time policy in general, did not lack a sense of its responsibility in furthering the country’s war effort and in co-operating with war service departments, in every practical way within the limits of its special function.” Lash only suggested that the news service set up a representative at Ottawa “who would maintain

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<sup>191</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol.2. The CBC News Service - The Formative Years - Completed copy, extras. D. C. McArthur.

<sup>192</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. Board of governors 1940 - correspondence... etc. A. G. Frigon, “Notes and Recommendations on the Establishment of a CBC News Bulletin Service Across Canada,” 17-18 July 1940.

first-hand, continuous contact with the war service departments and who would attend any special meetings, including those of a confidential nature.”<sup>193</sup>

The CBC National News Service was designed to provide an enticing news alternative for Canadian listeners. The bureau intended to strike a balance between the exciting broadcasting of American commercial stations with the drier – but more informative – public broadcasting in the United Kingdom. As the CBC board committee said in its report: the “main purpose” of the Corporation’s news service was to prepare newscasts that were “as veracious, attractive and effective as possible, and free of the more or less sensational stylizing which is characteristic of news broadcasts done with an exaggerated desire for showmanship often typical of commercial efforts.”<sup>194</sup> The chief news editor would be McArthur, who would be responsible to the general supervisor of programmes, Bushnell. Bushnell, in turn, would report directly to Murray, the general manager. Peter Ayles would act as the CBC’s liaison in Ottawa, and he would relay national publicity matters on to McArthur and Bushnell.

Even though the news service championed itself as a proponent of the free press, the CBC did not disguise its commitment to supporting the war effort. Mirroring the actions of its National Programme Office, the CBC National News Service also sought close partnership with their Canadian armed forces. Ayles was already set up in Ottawa to notify the news service of anything to promote the military. He would frequently send publicity requests on behalf of the government and the armed services to the CBC news staff. For instance, on 5 May 1941 Ayles cabled McArthur, “are you making plans to cover actuality on first Canadian made tank. Great

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<sup>193</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol.2. The CBC News Service - The Formative Years - Completed copy, extras. D. C. McArthur.

<sup>194</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. Board of governors 1940 - correspondence... etc. A. G. Frigon, “Notes and Recommendations on the Establishment of a CBC News Bulletin Service Across Canada,” 17-18 July 1940.

interest in this here and would appreciate knowing your plans.”<sup>195</sup> McArthur would answer Aylen’s messages, often asking for additional information in preparation for the broadcasts: “Discussed this with Rielle Thompson last week and he is to advise when date of demonstration has been set. Suggested short actuality for use in national news that night.”<sup>196</sup> The usefulness of the CBC news service in promoting the Canadian war effort was evident to Ottawa and the armed services from the start. In fact, in an attempt to hurry their stories many CBC news editors and public relations offices of the armed forces bypassed Aylen and went to McArthur directly.<sup>197</sup> Regional news editors too made their “willingness and readiness to cooperate with” the armed forces “in any way possible” known. In a memorandum sent on 21 May 1940, J. N. Crandall of Victoria assured McArthur that “we have been promised full co-operation from all of them.” He added that “the army, probably because of the present recruiting campaign, was the one most willing to co-operate,” and he was since showered with advanced invitations to various military events and ceremonies.<sup>198</sup>

The creation of the national news service in 1941 marked a significant means through which the CBC continued to inspire patriotic enthusiasm and combat war complacency. In response to the CBC’s coverage of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941, Murray championed the CBC’s measured and comprehensive coverage of the event that they offered for Canadian listeners. “I feel quite certain, that if the CBC News had not given Canadian listeners the type of bulletin service that it did last Sunday, most of our listeners would have

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<sup>195</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 174. 11-17-4-2 - News Features. Cable, Peter Aylen to D. C. McArthur, 5 May 1941.

<sup>196</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 174. 11-17-4-2 - News Features. Cable, D. C. McArthur to Peter Aylen, 5 May 1941.

<sup>197</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. The CBC News Service - The Formative Years - Completed copy, extras. D. C. McArthur.

<sup>198</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 174. 11-17-4-2 - News Features. Memorandum, J.N. Crandall to D. C. McArthur. 21 May 1941.

di[a]led to United States stations,” Murray said in a letter to the *Ottawa Journal*. The CBC’s coverage of the attack, he continued, “does seem to have resulted, overnight, in a greatly heightened sense of participation in the war, a feeling of the threat that is being offered to our liberties, and a realisation that all our capacities must be dedicated to the prosecution of the war.”<sup>199</sup> From the beginning of the war, the senior administrators of the CBC set the Corporation on a course fully committed to promoting the national war effort. Already by May 1940, Bushnell commented on the CBC’s success in the war so far: “We can now detect signs of the infiltration of the desire for a renewed vigour in the conduct of the war [and] that, I think, can be considered to our credit.”<sup>200</sup> The usefulness of radio as a means to support public morale, prevent the spread of dangerous rumours, publicize the armed services, and keep up the public confidence during the war was well understood by the staff of the CBC. The senior administrators understood that mobilizing the organization’s programmes for the national cause was an indispensable means of accomplishing those tasks.

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<sup>199</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC News Policy, File C - War-time Directives, Post-War Directives re Returned men and terrorists 1941-46. Letter, W. G. Murray to *Ottawa Journal*, December 1941.

<sup>200</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 1. CBC Correspondence and memoranda 1940 – 13. “Minutes of the 25th meeting of the members of the National Programme Office, Wednesday, 22nd May 1940 at 10.00am.”

## Chapter 3

### Editing the War

Canada's domestic censorship was 'voluntary' throughout the Second World War. This meant that the government relied primarily on the loyalty and good judgement of Canadian news agencies to censor the news rather than create its own censorship bureaucracy powerful enough to control the dissemination of information from a national level. The reason for this was because civil servants and representatives of the press believed that it would be more beneficial to the overall war effort to keep the public adequately informed rather than subject to ignorance, doubt, and rampant rumours. Thus, instituting draconian control over the dissemination of news – similar to that imposed in totalitarian nations – was not pursued in Canada.<sup>201</sup> Domestically, Canada's official censors periodically released a list of information that they prohibited – such as news that could be useful to the enemy, that undermined morale, and that threatened relations with allies of the United Nations. But official press censors did not need to censor Canadian news itself.<sup>202</sup> As Mark Bourrie explains, the "pathetic" few government censors and resources dedicated to censoring the press in Canada, from the beginning, constituted a bureaucracy that was far from intimidating or omnipotent.<sup>203</sup> Instead, the employees of Canadian news agencies were largely responsible for what information they released to the public.<sup>204</sup> Failing to follow restrictions set by official censors, in accordance with the *Defense of Canada Regulations* of the *War Measures Act*, could result in serious political or legal repercussions. That does not mean

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<sup>201</sup> Mark Bourrie, *The Fog of War: Censorship of Canada's Media in World War Two* (Madeira Park: Perseus Books Group, 2011), 11.

<sup>202</sup> William F. Swindler, "Wartime News Control in Canada," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 6.3 (Autumn 1942), 447; Bourrie, 50.

<sup>203</sup> Bourrie, 32, 45. Bourrie makes this in comparison to the magnitude of the postal censorship infrastructure in Canada, which by 1944 grew to over 1,000 employees.

<sup>204</sup> Library Archives Canada Ottawa, Ontario [hereafter, LAC]. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 435 - CBC Overseas News Service and censorship. 27-4-2 (pt 6) – Censorship. Speech, Wilfred Eggleston, "Press Censorship," 23 May 1941.

that new agencies were unwilling to censor the news. As Bourrie asserts, “reporters and editors, who usually talk a good fight about censorship, were actually quite willing – sometimes even eager – to be guided by the strong hand of government.”<sup>205</sup> Indeed, in 1946 Wilfred Eggleston, Canada’s chief press censor during the war, wrote to the general manager of the *Canadian Press* and told him that the entire Canadian press was not rebellious against wartime censorship. “In its anxiety to cooperate to the fullest extent in the successful prosecution of the war,” he said, “the press of Canada as a whole leaned backward in carrying out censorship directives and in ‘suffering in silence’ government policies of secrecy in military matters.”<sup>206</sup> For the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), the bulk of its censorship responsibilities fell upon its news staff. CBC news editors therefore abided by official censorship regulations. Appreciating that they possessed a responsibility as a result of their authority over radio news in Canada, they wanted to aid the national war effort, not compromise it. It was through this sense of patriotic duty that the CBC news editors developed their own standards of wartime radio censorship.

William Gladstone Murray, as the general manager of the CBC, was adamant from the beginning of the war that his staff would need to rise to their increasing responsibility to filter the war. He told Transport Minister C. D. Howe on 28 August 1939 that if the government did not take charge of wartime censorship the CBC would take “special... measures” itself. If anything, the peculiar nature and influence of radio broadcasting made controlling the news all the more important.<sup>207</sup> Although the Board of Censors (the Office of the Director of Censorship, after its

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<sup>205</sup> Bourrie, 9.

<sup>206</sup> Quoted in Daniel German, “Press censorship and the Terrace Mutiny: a case study in Second World War information management,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 31.4 (Winter 1996–7), 124–142. Letter, W. Eggleston to Gill Purcell, 11 April 1946.

<sup>207</sup> Quoted in Robert J. F. Albota, “Dan McArthur's concept of objectivity and his struggle to defend the integrity of the CBC News Service, 1940-1945,” Carleton University Master’s Dissertation (1988), 62-63. Letter, W. G. Murray to C. D. Howe, 28 August 1939.

reorganization in 1942) had the final word when it came to official censorship regulations, the onus for censoring the war for the CBC largely fell to its employees.

The general supervisor of programmes, Ernest Bushnell, anticipated this important task that his colleagues were to undertake. At the National Programme Committee meeting on 22 May 1940, Bushnell impressed upon his colleagues the nature of their mission. “You have the means at your command to do it and I cannot impress upon you too strongly the responsibilities that are yours.” He asked them to stay vigilant in their new role. “Think before you act – but then act quickly, forcibly and fearlessly.” Above all, Bushnell reminded them that they had to support the morale of the nation, especially during the darkest hours of the war ahead:

The question I put to you today is – are you prepared, through the facilities at your command, to render some measure of comfort to those who have been confronted with the dreadful fact that a loved one will not return? As I see it that is found to become an increasingly important part of your task. Someone must provide a great mass of sorrowing people with new strength, new courage, new confidence and indeed it may well be a new faith. I realize that this responsibility is not yours alone – but I am convinced that through you there can be implanted in our nation a spirit of endurance that will withstand the cruelest blow.<sup>208</sup>

In attendance during Bushnell’s galvanizing speech was Dan McArthur. Bushnell and Murray had recently recruited McArthur into a full-time position for the CBC to supervise the development of its budding news service.<sup>209</sup> McArthur, in this new position, was able to assemble the CBC’s team of editors and writers in preparation for the launch of the CBC National News Service on 1 January 1941.<sup>210</sup> In essence, McArthur and his news team assumed the responsibility for broadcasting the larger picture of the war on behalf of the CBC.

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<sup>208</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 1. CBC Correspondence and memoranda 1940 – 13. “Minutes of the 25th meeting of the members of the National Programme Office, Wednesday, 22nd May 1940 at 10.00am,” E. L. Bushnell (Chairman), C. R. Delafield (Secretary).

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Albota, ii.

Under McArthur's leadership, the CBC news editors developed a strong sense of responsibility for preparing and presenting radio news. Because the CBC "was defined as one of the 'essential services'" at the beginning of the war, McArthur told his news staff, "we should look upon our work and our personal responsibility toward our work, in the same way as those who – at a personal risk which we are not sharing – are in the armed services." McArthur entreated them to recognize the importance of the task at hand. "We are, without question, the most important medium of news dissemination in the Dominion, with an audience that includes the great majority of Canadian homes." As he explained:

This is by way of re-emphasizing the high dress of responsibility devolving on every member of our news staff, both in regard to the editing and writing of the news, and in the alertness and intelligence which must be brought to bear on every situation as it develops.<sup>211</sup>

To that end, he expected his radio news staff to function "on a basis of emergency operation," requesting them to remain alert when on duty and always "on call... if circumstances required."<sup>212</sup> Part of our work, McArthur said, "like the CBC as a whole, has an important function in wartime as in peace, to help Canadians achieve mutual tolerance and understanding in the interest of national unity." Extra care was necessary when presenting radio news as well and to avoid inciting antagonisms which might "impair our war effort and even threaten our future as a nation."<sup>213</sup> In McArthur's mind, the CBC news service had assumed the major wartime role of keeping the Canadian population united and actively engaged for the rest of the war.

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<sup>211</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC News Policy, File C - War-time Directives, Post-War Directives re Returned men and terrorists 1941-46. Memorandum, D. McArthur to Senior Editors, "War-time Responsibility," 27 October 1941.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC News Policy, File B - McArthur memos, bulletins, Government News, content 1941-51 and quality. Memorandum, D.C. McArthur to Senior Editors, "Handling News That Might Cause Internal Friction," 5 May 1941.

One of the first tasks of the national news service was to ensure stricter monitoring against unfavourable war-time propaganda. Following a directive of the press censors, the editors attempted to crackdown on news that originated from enemy territory. “The Authorities are relying upon the good judgement and loyalty of Canadian broadcasters everywhere to edit such material so as to offset any propaganda intent,” the official order read, and “the great contribution made to Canadian morale in these trying times by broadcasters in the Dominion is very generally recognized and appreciated by the Authorities at Ottawa.”<sup>214</sup> In addition, the CBC’s small army of news editors provided the confidence and machinery to begin cutting potentially harmful exchange programs. By April 1941 the CBC news service stopped importing American newscasts and commentaries, because the United States was still neutral at the time, and all foreign programmes were carefully monitored.<sup>215</sup> Even the trustworthiness of American journalists was to be more carefully scrutinized, as McArthur warned his staff:

American foreign correspondents in writing of enemy successes (such as the recent advance through Libya) have a natural tendency to add colour to their dispatches by the use of descriptive adjectives and phrases such as ‘the formidable strength of the German armoured divisions’ or ‘the shattering impact of the German drive,’ etc., etc.<sup>216</sup>

McArthur argued that such dangerous embellishments of enemy successes were unnecessary and, at the same time, potentially harmful to morale. They were to be avoided.

CBC editors and supervisors had to keep vigilant when it came to censoring war news. According to the CBC’s *Guide for News Editors*, released on the inauguration of its news service, “the radio editor should study and keep-up-to-date on the directives issued by the

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<sup>214</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 435 - CBC Overseas News Service and censorship. 27-4-2 (pt. 6) – Censorship. Circular, H. N. Stovin to all broadcasting stations, “C-74,” 30 May 1940.

<sup>215</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC National News - general policy statements n.d., 1941-52. Memorandum, Marion Grange to D. C. McArthur, “CBC News,” 6 May 1946.

<sup>216</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. The CBC News Service - The Formative Years - Completed copy, extras. “April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941,” 13.

censors.” It continued: “He should be particularly vigilant regarding those directives that deal with broadcast news which, occasionally, are different from those covering newspaper publication.”<sup>217</sup> If a news editor was ever in doubt about the release of any information, he was responsible for contacting official censors before releasing potentially harmful news. Failing to do so resulted in repercussions. Penalties and fines were given for most violations. Serious cases might tarnish the reputation and news priority of the CBC. Grave infractions had the potential to result in legal persecution for treason or sedition under the *War Measures Act*.<sup>218</sup>

The aftermath of one particular programme from the ‘Carry on Canada’ series reminded CBC editors to how severe these punishments could be. On 23 November 1941 a recording of a speech by Brigadier-General E. W. Sansom, commander of the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Armoured Division, and the departure of his transport ship was broadcast by the CBC prior to the ship’s landing in England and before censorship restrictions had been lifted. Official censors contacted McArthur at the Central news room in Toronto “immediately following the broadcast.” Bushnell brought the error to the attention of the Maritime news office, which had delivered the broadcast. Explaining what had occurred on his end, J. Frank Willis, the supervisor in Halifax, told McArthur and Bushnell that he had underestimated the potential danger of airing the recording – as he believed it mostly concerned recruiting. He also mistakenly believed that censors had already cleared it for broadcast. Willis assured them that his staff was aware of the gravity of their mistake and they would work more cautiously to avoid future transgressions.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC News Policy, File A – Basic Policy 1940-52. CBC, “CBC News Bureau: Guide for News Editors, 1 January 1941.

<sup>218</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC National News - general policy statements n.d., 1941-52. Memorandum, Marion Grange to D. C. McArthur, 6 May 1946.

<sup>219</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41 vol. 435 - CBC Overseas News Service and censorship. 27-4-2 (pt.1). Cable, J. Frank Willis to E. L. Bushnell, “Address by Major General E. W. Sansom in ‘Carry on Canad[a]’, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1941,” 24 Nov 1941. As Willis reported in his cable to Bushnell, “I am deeply conscious of the g[r]avity of our error and can assure you of my anxiety that no such mishap should occur in the future.”

Military authorities reacted sternly to the leaked recording. Murray cabled Bushnell on November 29, saying that “a very serious view is taken at military headquarters and we are certain to suffer from new restrictions.” He promised those in Ottawa “that the seriousness of the situation will be properly emphasized to all those concerned and cast iron machinery established to prevent any recurrence.” His efforts to dampen the flames in Ottawa had limited success. His “pledge” of “cast iron machinery” exercised his political ability to sell such grandiose assurances, as the CBC’s reliance on its programme supervisors and news editors as a means to prevent breaches in censorship remained unchanged. Instead, Murray requested Bushnell to compose a letter to all CBC news editors to impress upon them again the seriousness of their wartime responsibilities.<sup>220</sup> Accordingly, on December 4 Bushnell told his entire editorial staff that, concerning the unlawful broadcast in late November,

The repercussions have been serious and may be more so, to the extent that the Corporation might suffer new and stringent restrictions in the co-operation it is extended, and the information it is given, in broadcasts connected with the armed forces or the war on the home front.

Bushnell admitted that he saw no way in which “any completely fool-proof machinery [could] be established.” Instead, he re-emphasized that “the human element” was the “important factor” in the CBC’s censorship approach. Perhaps it was such a proverbial ‘near-death experience’ which was needed to awaken editors to the necessity of their vigilance. To that end, Bushnell reminded the news staff to be increasingly careful in their role as censors. He told them that “they must develop a keen and constant awareness of the material with which they may be dealing so that they will learn to recognize quickly material, the broadcasting of which might have dangerous

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<sup>220</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 435 - CBC Overseas News Service and censorship. 27-4-2 (pt.1). Cable, W. G. Murray to E. L. Bushnell, 29 November 1941.

consequences.”<sup>221</sup> The news editors evidentially acknowledged Bushnell’s memorandum. For the remainder of the war, the CBC news service allowed no further infractions as serious as the lapse that had occurred in November 1941.

Official censors, military authorities, and civil servants did not request Canadian news agencies to hide war losses altogether. Indeed, it was believed that such strict control of war news would undermine, rather than support, national morale. Addressing the Canadian Political Science Association in May 1941, Wilfred Eggleston said that attempting to hide bad news from the public could harm morale and hamper recruiting. As he went on to explain,

... At times, [news editors] may have presented the news more favourably than the facts warranted. Some editors deliberately ‘play down’ unfavourable news and ‘play up’ favourable news. This is a policy which in the long run may do the dis-service of lulling the readers to a state of complacency, a practice quite as dangerous or even more dangerous than the over-emphasis of bad news, the effect of which is not easy to forecast.<sup>222</sup>

Censors believed it was wise to keep Canadians adequately informed about war setbacks.

Disregarding the seriousness of the task at hand, they feared, or presenting the national war effort as an entirely successful endeavour – thereby creating “a fool’s paradise,” as Eggleston called it – could impel Canadians to become overconfident and likely less enthusiastic about contributing to the war effort.<sup>223</sup> CBC news editors agreed that it was folly to hide unfortunate war news from the public. In doing so, they would betray the public’s trust. Editors were reminded to remain neutral, preserve their journalistic integrity and present the news as truthfully as possible without excessively distressing the public. According to an internal CBC handbook about its policy,

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<sup>221</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 435 - CBC Overseas News Service and censorship. 27-4-2 (pt.1). Memorandum, E. L. Bushnell to CBC news staff, “Broadcasts containing information about, or concerned with the activities of, Canada’s Armed Forces or the War Effort generally,” 4 December 1941.

<sup>222</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 435 - CBC Overseas News Service and censorship. 27-4-2 (pt. 6) – Censorship. Speech, Wilfred Eggleston, “Press Censorship,” 23 May 1941.

<sup>223</sup> Bourrie, 11-12.

Apart, however, from any question of censorship, the CBC news editors have a serious task in presenting war news to the listener. For instance, when war news happens to be unfavourable, should it be presented factually, or with extenuating comment? Intelligent listeners realize that reverses must be experienced from time to time; therefore, extenuating comment, instead of being reassuring, may have an opposite effect. In cases of doubt, it has been found better to avoid 'seeing things through rose-coloured glasses' – better to err on the side of under-statement until clear-cut information is forthcoming. On the other hand, enemy claims so often prove false, that great care has to be observed in handling those claims, or giving them any prominence, unless they are supported by a British announcement.<sup>224</sup>

The wording here accepts that CBC news editors should not attempt to extenuate or downplay the seriousness of an unfavourable war event. It would prove a disaster to the trust which lay at the foundation of the CBC's relationship with its listeners if the Corporation was exposed as having deliberately lied to its audience. Yet at the same time, the wording suggests that it would be wise to reassure the listener. A loss may be serious but it was not in the interest of the CBC, nor for the country's morale, if its programmes left their listeners overly upset about the news.

The institutional emphasis that 'great care' was needed when handling news from enemy sources provided for an ambiguity in caution that fell to the discretion of CBC news editor. In fact, CBC news policy guided its editors to exercise "the greatest care and skepticism... in handling... statements and other reports from enemy sources."<sup>225</sup> The extent to which this made CBC editors subjective in their presentation of the news is evident in the way they presented enemy claims. Using the word 'censorship' was recommended when referring to information blackouts imposed by enemies, but news regarding information censored by Canadian or Allied military authorities would be attributed to and phrased around 'reasons of security'.<sup>226</sup> In the

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<sup>224</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 1. CBC, Five Years of Achievement 1941 – 12. "Handling the War News."

<sup>225</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 2. CBC Correspondence and memoranda relating to programming...1944. Memorandum, D. C. McArthur to E. L. Bushnell, "Confidential," 21 August 1944.

<sup>226</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC News Policy, File C - War-time Directives, Post-War Directives re Returned men and terrorists 1941-46. "Conference of Editors CBC National News Service September 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 1942," 7.

same vein, ‘announced’ was suggested when referring to British statements, whereas ‘claimed’ or ‘admitted’ was advised for enemy reports.<sup>227</sup> “It must be kept in mind at all times that every story released from enemy sources is done so for a purpose,” McArthur told his staff. For each of his newsrooms, he ordered a copy of Matthew Gordon’s *News as a Weapon* (1942).<sup>228</sup> Gordon’s book permeated with distrust of enemy sources. It championed the need for “civilian defense... as much in the mental as in the physical field.”<sup>229</sup> McArthur requested that all of his staff familiarize themselves with Gordon’s analysis, saying that “we must be continually vigilant not to do the enemy’s job for him in the war of nerves which has been carefully planned and skilfully developed by Axis news propagandists.”<sup>230</sup> To that extent, McArthur reported in August 1944 that “the policy under which [the CBC] has operated up to the present, and which our editors have been led to believe was basic,” was, in part, that CBC editors were required to appreciate an additional sense of responsibility when reporting bad news. According to the internal rules and regulations of the CBC news service:

CBC editors should not be asked to apply any special censorship – in the form of the modification or suppression of any of the essential facts of a news story – that is not applied equally to all other media of news dissemination through the official censorship channels. At the same time it is understood that in line with established policy in handling news that is controversial or which might inflame public feeling in a manner not in the general interest, CBC editors must exercise sound judgment, impartiality and restraint in presenting the essential facts of such news in CBC Bulletins.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. CBC News Policy, File A - Basic Policy 1940-52. “CBC News Bureau: Guide for News Editors,” 1 January 1941.

<sup>228</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC News Policy, File C - War-time Directives, Post-War Directives re Returned men and terrorists 1941-46. Memorandum D. C. McArthur to Senior News Editors, “Stories from Enemy Sources,” 4 January 1943. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>229</sup> Elmer Davis, “Introduction” in Matthew Gordon, *News is a Weapon* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942), vii. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>230</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC News Policy, File C - War-time Directives, Post-War Directives re Returned men and terrorists 1941-46. Memorandum D. C. McArthur to Senior News Editors, “Stories from Enemy Sources,” 4 January 1943.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

Historians have argued that McArthur was a stalwart in defending of the integrity of the national news service.<sup>232</sup> Since its beginning, the CBC National News Service, just as the CBC as a whole, had to walk a delicate line, repeatedly on the defensive, against accusations of it being a propaganda appendage of the government. Political opponents of King's Liberal government, such as the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and French-Canadian nationalists, were quick to label any perceived political leanings of the Corporation as proof of a Canadian "radio Gestapo."<sup>233</sup> As Robert J. F. Albota has shown, McArthur worked vigorously to combat this perception. He sought to preserve the impartiality of the CBC news service, and, in many instances, he disregarded or fought against government prodding. His fight was often impossible. The willingness of all three of the CBC general managers to cooperate wholeheartedly with government departments and agencies – such as the Department of National Defense and the Wartime Information Board – made resisting government intervention almost unworkable.<sup>234</sup> Augustin Frigon, the general manager of the CBC during the final two years of the war, and McArthur often squabbled over the role of the CBC in promoting the official agenda of the government and the military. Frigon, for instance, obediently accepted pressure from the minister of National War Services, General Leo R. LaFlèche, and Justice Minister Louis St. Laurent to forbid the CBC from broadcasting news about prison riots and demonstrations against conscription.<sup>235</sup> But acknowledging McArthur's efforts to maintain the independence of the national news service should not compromise the reality that he was equally dedicated to the national war cause. As his wartime instructions to his senior editors prove,

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<sup>232</sup> Albota, 198. According to Albota, "by steadfastly defending the integrity of the CBC News Service, McArthur enabled it to operate with considerable autonomy within the CBC during the war years."

<sup>233</sup> Bourrie, 138.

<sup>234</sup> Albota, 176.

<sup>235</sup> Knowlton Nash, *The Microphone Wars: A History of Triumph and Betrayal at the CBC* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1994), 196-7.; Bourrie, 247ff.; German, 124-142.

McArthur recognized the necessity of dutifully supporting the war effort. He was confident that radio news had a unique role to play in that task.

Significantly, McArthur instructed his staff to assume a greater burden of judgement and responsibility because he believed that the intimacy of radio demanded additional care during wartime. Len Kuffert argues that during the earliest years of the CBC, “radio’s perceived intimacy deeply troubled those who considered themselves responsible for the physical and cultural welfare of listeners.”<sup>236</sup> Although refraining from developing his argument much further, Kuffert suggests that this consciousness, and its resulting implications, continued to permeate CBC thinking into the war. To a smaller extent, Jeff A. Webb has also suggested that the “feelings of immediacy and intimacy” unique to radio would also continue to be part of its wartime experience.<sup>237</sup> Indeed, throughout the war, McArthur, and other members of the CBC, believed that, in handling radio news, they had to wield an extra sense of accountability in regards to the mentality of their listeners.

Murray accepted that it was crucial to understand the intimate nature of radio broadcasting in comparison to the silent print of newspaper reporting. As early as 1933, in a report on the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission (CRBC), he wrote that “the intimate character of the broadcasting medium, involving the acceptance of its message at the fireside, implies a special responsibility to avoid sensational and disturbing communications.”<sup>238</sup> He carried this belief during his time at the head of the CBC and into the war. In times of crisis, he maintained that extra measure of restraint was required when presenting unsettling news by

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<sup>236</sup> Len Kuffert, “‘What do you expect of this friend?’: Canadian radio and the intimacy of broadcasting,” *Media History* 15.3 (August 2009), 303.

<sup>237</sup> Jeff A. Webb, “Canada’s Moose River mine disaster (1936): radio-newspaper competition in the business of news,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 16.3 (August 1996), 365-376.

<sup>238</sup> Quoted in Kuffert, 307-308.

voice. As he told his listeners in a broadcast commemorating the inauguration of the CBC

National News Service:

Radio, of course, is an intimate medium, its message penetrates to the fireside. Its audience comprises the whole family. Good taste requires reasonable reserve in the handling of some news, notably that dealing with crime. Then, of course, there are the wartime censorship requirements, applying equally to newspapers and the film. CBC editors and news writers have been chosen for their experience and judgment in handling news, their enterprise, their fairness, and their feeling for radio.<sup>239</sup>

Bushnell held a similar view as Murray. In a speech to the Canadian Club, he said:

A unique characteristic of radio is that its message is received at the fireside, in the intimacy of the family circle, with an audience of all ages and both sexes. That being so, we must accept special public responsibility.<sup>240</sup>

The CBC operated under this general institutional belief in the “singular and subtle potency” of radio throughout the war. James S. Thompson, who succeeded Murray as general manager, reminded the entire CBC news staff on 29 June 1943 of their unique responsibility in preparation for the upcoming continental invasion. Radio “combines the emotional power of the living voice with the intimacy of a personal address from one individual to another,” he said, “[and] I need hardly say that this places a very great responsibility on all who use the medium of radio particularly in matters of such vital importance as an exposition of the war events.” He then went on to assert that:

There is no change in our policy, but in view of a growing intensity in the war struggle, involving political as well as military issues, I would ask all our commentators to prepare their material, if possible with an added sense of responsibility. If the Canadian overseas army becomes involved in operations, the pent-up interest of our people will be very great with a new sensitiveness about any opinions that may be expressed about the Canadian troops. It may well be that there will be heavy casualties. No suggestion is advanced that there should be any distortion of actual events – either by over-indulgence

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<sup>239</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2 CBC National News - general policy statements n.d., 1941-52. Broadcast transcript, G. Murray, “About the CBC Overseas, News, and Plays,” CBC, 1 January 1941.

<sup>240</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 1. CBC Correspondence and memoranda... 1942 – 17. Speech, E. L. Bushnell, “Broadcasting – Everybody’s Business” 14 January 1942.

in praise or over-bluntness in truth, I simply counsel not only an objectivity of mind in analysis, but also a sympathetic understanding of the public mood in presentation.<sup>241</sup>

At the start of the war the CBC already had censoring practices specific to its medium.

Violent murders and crimes, as well as some instances of divorce and suicide, were either tempered in their delivery or shunned from CBC radio news altogether.<sup>242</sup> Editing the appropriateness of programmes for radio increased as a result of the demands of the war. For the sake of wartime morale, the difference between propaganda, censorship, and editorial practices directed by the intimate needs of radio became blurred. “When the news is particularly grave, care should be taken to handle it in a way that will not unnecessarily alarm or depress listeners,” read the CBC’s *Guide for News Editors*, “editors should keep in mind that during wartime a state of nervous and emotional tension exists that must always be taken into account.”<sup>243</sup> “Jittery news” or anything that was “unnecessarily alarming to the listener” was a constant concern. Harsh criticism was directed towards the CBC in March 1941 after one news broadcast calculated “the amount of damage that a land mine would cause in a residential area.” In response, McArthur told his senior editors that:

People can read news of this sort with greater equanimity than they can hear it on the air. I think a great deal of discretion should be used in items of this sort, unless they have a very definite news significance; and even then they should be presented in a way that will not be needlessly alarming.<sup>244</sup>

The careful handling of stories about war crimes required careful attention as well. In regards to atrocities committed by the enemy, McArthur advised his news staff that “they should be

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<sup>241</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 435. CBC Overseas News Service and censorship. 27-4-2 (pt 6) – Censorship. Memorandum, J. S. Frigon to News Commentators, “News Commentaries,” 29 June 1943.

<sup>242</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 1. Correspondence, Clippings. 1942. *CBC Programme Schedule*, “American Radio Experts Praise CBC News Service,” 26 July 1942.

<sup>243</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. CBC News Policy, File A - Basic Policy 1940-52. “CBC News Bureau: Guide for News Editors,” 1 January 1941.

<sup>244</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 174. 11-17-4-1 CBC National News Service News Stylizing. Memorandum, D. C. McArthur to Senior Editors, “‘Jittery’ Items,” 25 March 1941.

handled with great care, and with some feeling of sensitivity, with regard to listeners – particularly with regard to listeners who may have relatives or friends involved.” He reminded them that they needed to exert special caution when presenting such delicate topics by radio: “These stories are disturbing enough in print, but the effect is much harsher when they are heard for the first time, on the air.”<sup>245</sup>

The CBC news staff understood that radio had to concern itself with the resilience of a much larger audience. Word choice and phrasing, then, required particular attentiveness. As McArthur wrote in a memo to his news staff:

It is not suggested that any attempt should be made to prettify the unpretty business of war in our bulletins; in fact, it is probably desirable that civilian listeners should understand what this war means and exactly what we are facing. At the same time, considering that our bulletins do go into homes where people have not yet become entirely hardened – including children who hear the bulletins – some discretion might be used in the choice of phrases.<sup>246</sup>

He advised his staff to replace such morbid sounding words as “butchered” with “shot down” or say the phrase “attacked... with knives” rather than the more graphic “slit their throats” in their news reports. “Let me repeat that we should not attempt to sugarcoat what is essentially an ugly and brutal business,” he concluded, “but good judgment and good taste can be exercised without any loss of descriptive force and effectiveness.”<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC News Policy, File C - War-time Directives, Post-War Directives re Returned men and terrorists 1941-46. Memorandum, D. C. McArthur to Senior Editors, “Atrocity Stories,” 31 March 1942.

<sup>246</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC News Policy, File C - War-time Directives, Post-War Directives re Returned men and terrorists 1941-46. Memorandum, D. C. McArthur to Senior Editors, “War News,” 6 June 1941.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

The CBC meant to present war news in an appropriate tone as well. “We should never allow ourselves to handle news in an off-hand or casual manner that may jar the sensibilities of the public,” McArthur counseled his staff, adding,

it is very easy, in handling war news from one day to another, to become – not callous in any conscious sense – but perhaps less aware than we should be of the reaction upon listeners, of the war in which such news is handled.

Serious situations involving casualties should not be presented in a “blithe style” similar to “that of describing a picnic. To thousand [sic] of Canadian families,” McArthur argued,

whose hearts would be filled with anxiety because of the heavy loss of Canadian planes, such an inept inclusion could be irritating in the extreme. In a newspaper, such individual comment would be, as a rule, run in a separate story. We have to summarize everything in a comparatively short item and any such inclusion, beyond the basic facts of the story, should be chosen with the greatest care and good judgement.<sup>248</sup>

Even the strategic placement of news was something to consider. “Grave or disturbing news must sometimes be used as a lead item because of its importance,” advised the *Guide for News Editors*, “[and] if more cheerful or encouraging war news is available, use it in the next item.”<sup>249</sup> In such a manner, CBC editors were directed to balance out the emotional impact bad news had on their listeners by leaving them on a more encouraging note.

One of the CBC’s most important tasks in handling war news was its coverage of Canadian casualties. Releasing news about casualties was not restricted by the director of censorship nor by military authorities. Rather, they only forbade publicizing names of casualties before the next-of-kin had been notified. The one other qualm was that such news should not undermine morale or discourage recruitment. CBC news editors followed this official policy

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<sup>248</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC News Policy, File C - War-time Directives, Post-War Directives re Returned men and terrorists 1941-46. Memorandum, D. C. McArthur to Senior Editors, “Sense of Appropriateness,” 20 April 1943.

<sup>249</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. CBC News Policy, File A - Basic Policy 1940-52. “CBC News Bureau: Guide for News Editors,” 1 January 1941.

loyally. Though the CBC was allowed to broadcast news about Canadian casualties, in some instances CBC editors down-played or even removed any mention of them altogether. McArthur attempted to put an end to this. He believed that it was not in the best interest of the CBC to hide this information from the public. For one, it would leave the Corporation's credibility open for attack. As McArthur told Thompson in a memorandum on 25 March 1943,

If we undertake to modify the news for CBC bulletins alone, and people then discover that more specific information – even though it may be of a disturbing nature – is being given in other news bulletins, and in the newspapers, we will be open to the old criticism that ‘the CBC censors the news’. Listeners will feel that they do not get a full or true story from our bulletins.

Furthermore, McArthur was well aware, just as the military authorities were, that Canadians were going to find out about their losses. Consequently, if the CBC shied away from broadcasting news about Canadian casualties its news broadcasts would become untrustworthy and unintentionally undermine the public's confidence in the war effort:

I do not think that the majority of people who have sons, brothers, husbands and so on overseas, under-estimate the possibility of casualties, particularly in the Air Force. If we tried to smooth the news over by simply indicating that Canadian flyers took part in a raid, without mentioning that any planes were lost, people would soon discover (by checking with the papers) that such a statement was no indication that all our planes had returned safely. As a result, their imaginations would run away with them every time we presented the news in this way, and in my view a still greater degree of uncertainty and anguish would result.<sup>250</sup>

Hiding unfortunate war facts from the listeners could not only lure listeners into a false sense of security and, perhaps, even complacency towards the war. If and when such a fragile bubble would burst, listeners could hold the CBC accountable for betraying their trust. Canadians may then perceive the CBC as the villain, rather than the real enemies abroad.

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<sup>250</sup> LAC. Powley MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC News Policy, File B - McArthur memos, bulletins, Government News, content 1941-51 and quality. Memorandum, D. C. McArthur to J. S. Thompson, “Losses in Air Raids,” 25 March 1943.

While not hiding the reality of losses, CBC news editors believed that the unique nature of radio demanded they take additional measures to comfort their listeners. McArthur advised his staff when “dealing with the hardships and persecutions suffered by prisoners of war, the feelings of their relatives should always be taken into account.” He said that “such stories should [not] be repressed but that they should be handled without going into unnecessarily harrowing detail.”<sup>251</sup> Similarly, while the press was allowed to release names of casualties after the next-of-kin had been notified, CBC editors chose not to list casualties over the air. “Many Canadians today have friends and relatives with our navy, army and air force,” Bushnell said during a public speech in May 1941, “[and] we do not wish them to feel that news of the loss of a loved one might come to them, with blunt directness, over the air.” To emphasize his point, he stressed again that “it is straight listings of casualties that we feel have no place in our news bulletins and are better left to the printed word.”<sup>252</sup> When Canadian casualties were involved, CBC editors thought it best to remain vague rather than risk distressing Canadian listeners. “The only exception” to this institutional policy, in the words of McArthur, was “when a man loses his life in an exploit of exceptional valour, in which case his name is integral to the story.”<sup>253</sup> Because of this reasoning, war reports that simply cited the name of a unit which had suffered casualties were subject to CBC editorial censorship. As McArthur wrote to Albert Powley, the senior news editor of the Overseas Unit, in regards to one of Matthew Halton’s war reports in 1945:

By the way, I decided against using the Halton 15-minuter [sic] that came yesterday... because [sic] I felt that it would be too distressing to anyone who had relatives or friends in the units named... Even if next of kin of casualties had been notified, those who had

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<sup>251</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC News Policy, File C - War-time Directives, Post-War Directives re Returned men and terrorists 1941-46. Memorandum, D. C. McArthur to Senior Editors, “Prisoner of War Stories,” 17 April 1945.

<sup>252</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 4. Bushnell, E.L. - Personal typed record of speeches.... 1941 – 57. Speech, E. L. Bushnell, “The Role Of Radio in Wartime – Canada,” May 1941.

<sup>253</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC News Policy, File C - War-time Directives, Post-War Directives re Returned men and terrorists 1941-46. Memorandum, D. C. McArthur to Senior Editors, 17 April 1945.

not been so notified would be all of a dither... One doesn't like to withhold credit by making stories too anonymous... but radio is such an intimate and first-hand sort of medium, that an account from overseas can pack a terrific wallop... and we have had some criticism on this score... I have agreed with critics of Matt who felt that he painted too grim a picture... I think people here should know the sort of job the Canadians have been doing, and under what circumstances... but when something pretty grim is tied to a named unit, it tears people apart pretty badly in the homes affected.<sup>254</sup>

Radio formed an intimate relationship between the speaker's voice and listeners. Since its launch, the policy of the CBC National News Service emphasized the "lively personal style" of radio news which was "conversational and direct."<sup>255</sup> This created the greatest difference between radio news and printed news – broadcast journalists *read* information over the radio to its audience. One of the most underappreciated wartime changes adapted by the news service on its inauguration was the requirement of broadcasters to state their names during the broadcast. Prior to this, Canadian broadcasting modelled itself off of the BBC which did not have its broadcasters introduce themselves on air.<sup>256</sup> Although listeners could possibly discern who the reporter was based on the sound and manner of his voice, Canadian and British broadcasters did not want the identity of the reporter to take away from the importance of a story. In the United States it was different. American stations wanted to encourage radio celebrities by having their reporters introduce themselves in order to advertise their personalities. The BBC adopted this practice on 13 July 1940, because BBC officials believed that having clearly identified newscasters was a necessary means to prevent Nazi agents from spreading lies over the radio.<sup>257</sup> The CBC National News Service, following suit, adopted this measure. In Canada, the

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<sup>254</sup> Powley, vol. 1. McArthur, Dan (Toronto) and A.E. Powley (London, End.) - correspondence 1945. Letter, D. C. McArthur to A. Powley, 16 March 1945.

<sup>255</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC National News - general policy statements n.d., 1941-52. "CBC National News Service: Statement of General Policy," 9 August 1941.

<sup>256</sup> Mary Vipond, "The Royal Tour of 1939 as a Media Event," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 35.1 (January 2010), 164.

<sup>257</sup> Siân Nicholas, *The Echo of War: Home Front Propaganda and Wartime BBC, 1939-45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 197.

Corporation came to believe that identifying news commentators would better acquaint listeners to their voice and reinforce the authoritativeness of their commentary.<sup>258</sup> Consequently, the CBC grew ever more conscious that news commentary required reporters with an aptitude for narrating the news. They had to form a rapport with their listeners.

Lorne Greene, who served as the chief CBC newscaster from 1941 until 1943, possessed a gripping and eloquent delivery with his sonorous commentary on the war that listeners praised. But as the war dragged on and he announced little more than a succession of Allied setbacks, Canadians began to grow irritated by his baritone voice and dramatic manner of speaking. The backlash to his newscasts granted him the unflattering nickname ‘The Voice of Doom.’ As Peter Stursberg recalled, “the uproar over the portentous way that he read the news and his deep sonorous voice made [Bushnell] realize what a sensitive and intimate instrument radio was.” Stursberg added that “the very quality of his voice began to grate on the nerves of many people who listened to him night after night describe one Allied disaster after another.” Consequently, Bushnell and the news staff concluded that it necessary to replace Greene with someone “whose tones and overtones were not quite so disturbing in periods of anxiety.”<sup>259</sup>

The importance of voice, accordingly, was a growing concern in CBC news rooms. Senior editors pressured their reporters to be mindful of their verbal commentary abilities – such as pronunciation, expression, and inflection – during broadcasts. The news office in England and its war correspondents fell under particular scrutiny from news editors. Editors expected war correspondents to polish their speaking skills because the transmission range across the Atlantic

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<sup>258</sup> George H. Allen, “Wartime Changes in English and Canadian Radio,” *Journal of Marketing* 7.3 (1943), 221.

<sup>259</sup> Peter Stursberg, *Mister Broadcasting: the Ernie Bushnell Story* (Toronto: Martin Associates, 1971), 109.; Nash, 207. According to Nash, CBC supervisors once reprimanded Greene for expressing a defeatist attitude towards the news. Before reporting on several Allied victories in Africa, Greene opened his comments: “There’s lots of news tonight and, for a change, most of it is good.”

often distorted the signal of their broadcasts. Jean St. George, from the Montreal news office, wrote a letter to Powley on 19 October 1943 saying “please tell everybody also to speak slowly. The short-wave reception isn’t always very good,” he added, “but if they’re speaking slowly we’re always bound to understand them.”<sup>260</sup> News editors sent the war correspondents an onslaught of tips to improve their talks. The administrative head of the Overseas Unit, John Kannawin, instructed the war correspondents to rehearse before recording their broadcasts.<sup>261</sup> Proper pronunciation became synonymous with their authority, and editors cautioned all reporters to avoid upsetting listeners by mispronouncing names or hometowns of Canadian soldiers.<sup>262</sup> Editors asked reporters to control their breathing and hide any colds as best they could.<sup>263</sup> CBC employees feared that inconsistencies or errors in oral presentation would undermine the weight of important war news. Radio war reporting was as much a performance art as it was a news medium.

Swearing also became a hot-button issue for the CBC news service. Official censorship authorities, of course, did not restrict profanity. But because radio tended not to limit itself to a single adult listener within a household CBC editors and programme supervisors needed to remain cautious that children may be listening in at any time. Radio commentators had to be far more conscious about this than their newspaper colleagues. CBC war correspondents certainly knew that editors could deem the presence of profanity in their broadcasts as cause to censor

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<sup>260</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Powley, Overseas Unit – correspondence Oct. 1943. Letter, Jean St. George to A. Powley, 19 October 1943.

<sup>261</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Powley, Overseas Unit – correspondence Sept. 1944. Letter, J. Kannawin to A. Powley, 21 September 1944.

<sup>262</sup> Warner Troyer, *The Sound & The Fury: An Anecdotal History of Canadian Broadcasting* (Toronto: Personal Library, 1982), 90-91.

<sup>263</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Powley, Overseas Unit – correspondence Oct. 1943. Letter, Matt Smith to A. Powley, 26 October 1943.

their dispatches. This might potentially cost a great story or a hard day's work, as one of Halton's personal letters to his wife Jean attests:

But the hard work! Having breakfast before dawn, spen[d]ing most of the day in the battle, and then writing the script and then spending half the night in the van making the program. Sometimes the strain becomes almost unbearable. We do say a fifteen minute program, dubbing in sound effects here and there. The first four and a half minute disc goes well. I get two thirds through the second when a flaw develops in the record, or some soldier passing by uses an [sic] four letter word that the mike picks up, and I have to do the record again – this after a day of battle, horror and exhaustion and then writing my deathless prose (Gordon [Sinclair] calls it my deathless horseshit – I love that guy). Or I muff a word or phrase so badly, and go white with strain and anger and shout a four letter word into the microphone knowing I have to make the disc again. Sometimes three or four times. The golden voice of radio is sometimes pretty apoplectic and Gordon says 'now keep cool, Ill [sic] get you a cigarette and a mug of vino.'<sup>264</sup>

Halton's efforts to avoid swearing in his broadcasts and his fears over CBC censorship were not unfounded. On at least one occasion, McArthur reminded Halton to avoid letting curse words slip into his broadcasts:

Sorry that I had to relay a gripe via Bert [Powley] on the matter of cussing in commentaries. The CBC has during the last few weeks had a heavy complaint mail from our sensitive listeners, and also been attacked in the godfearing press, because in a recent CBC drama production, a tough soldier cut loose with a goddam or two... In the middle of this great schemozzle, along came a 12-minute piece of yours, on a patrol action, with a Hell, a Damn, a God, and Dastards... All of this business, as you may imagine, gives me a severe pain in the arse; but the Canadian public being what it is on such matters – or at least, a very vocal part of it – we are put on the spot; altho[ugh] I think that the odd hell or damn in an overseas commentary is likely to get by without causing an uproar.<sup>265</sup>

CBC news editors were also required to consider whether or not war news was interesting enough for broadcast. As with any news agency, the compelling nature of a story was paramount. Attracting and holding the interest of listeners became vital for the CBC to keep its audience tuning into its programmes rather than those of its competitors. During the spring of 1940, prior

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<sup>264</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Personal - From Matthew Halton to Jean Halton – 1944. Letter, Mathew Halton to Jean Halton, 1 January 1944.

<sup>265</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Miscellaneous 1945-1949. Letter, D. C. McArthur to M. Halton, 30 January 1945.

to the expansion of the CBC's Overseas Unit, Bushnell traveled to London to first determine and report

whether or not enough programme material of a sufficiently high standard could be found, not only from among the Canadian Forces, but also from Canadians in England whose experiences both in civilian and military life would be of interest to listeners in Canada.<sup>266</sup>

War news and the reports coming from the CBC Overseas Unit certainly tended to garner lots of attention in the wake of important war events. "We have been using CBC correspondents at every opportunity," assured V. F., the senior editor of the Halifax newsroom, to McArthur on 24 July 1943, "Stursberg's eye-witness stories have been especially interesting and we have been using most of them whenever possible."<sup>267</sup> McArthur accepted that war news and, specifically, the reports of war correspondents at the frontlines tended to rank highest among the general interest of the public. "It is our experience that a good front-line recording," he wrote to the editorial vice president of *Time* magazine in February 1944, "with or without battle sounds, is much more interesting to the listener than a live voiced job done back at base where shortwave transmission facilities may be available."<sup>268</sup> But he did not believe that the CBC should use such material regardless of content. "There has perhaps been a tendency to relegate Canadian and Provincial news to a secondary place since the outbreak of war, because the war has a first claim on public interest," he told the CBC senior news editors, "that should not mean, however, that international news that may not be particularly new or significant, should by force of habit be

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<sup>266</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Bushnell, E.L., Report of General Supervisor of Programmes on his visit to UK and France, Feb. 1940-May 1940. E.L. Bushnell to the General Manager (CBC), "Report of the General Supervisor of Programmes on his visit to the United Kingdom and France, February 23, 1940, to May 12, 1940."

<sup>267</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Overseas Unit – Copies of telegrams, memos etc. regarding production and largely generated by Dan McArthur 1943. Cable, V. F. Segee to D. C. McArthur, 24 July 1943.

<sup>268</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC National News - general policy statements n.d., 1941-52. D. C. McArthur, "Statement on CBC News Service," 1944.

given better position and more emphasis in our bulletins, than Canadian items.”<sup>269</sup> Indeed, Frigon, at the time CBC’s assistant general manager, agreed and he sent a memorandum on this issue to the news staff on 29 September 1943:

People who have heard war news continuously for more than four years, may have built up an immunity to anything that is not sensationally new and interesting. This does not necessarily mean any flagging of interest in the war effort but rather indicates that people now take it so much for granted that any news about the war has to be very unusual to hold their attention. This reaction may not hold to quite the same extent in reading a newspaper. When a person sits down to read a paper, he can either read a story in full or as much of it as interests him; the selection is of his own choice. But when he hears a bulletin on the air, he must listen to someone else’s choice of news, and it may be interesting or it may be boring, depending on the mood of the listener.

Frigon continued:

There are many times when the whole war situation could be effectively covered in a single item in which the different fronts could be mentioned in sharp outline only. That is what a listener expects to hear from the radio most of the time – it should keep him up to date without befogging him with too much detail.<sup>270</sup>

There was, consequently, never any assurance that the CBC editors would use the reports of their war correspondents after they had passed official censorship. Editors had to surmise whether or not the stories were interesting enough to hold the attention of listeners. As a result, many correspondents remained in the dark about how often the CBC used their broadcasts. One CBC war correspondent, William Herbert, attempted to offset this by writing as much material as he could in the hopes that some of it would be news worthy. As he wrote to Powley on 22 January 1945,

I had better hurry up and explain that you perhaps have found out a long long [sic] time ago, that Willie isn’t a good writer, only a fast one. That accounts for the mass production of bumph that I dream your way... it seems that the stuff is there; it might possibly be of

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<sup>269</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC News Policy, File B - McArthur memos, bulletins, Government News, content 1941-51 and quality. Memorandum, D. C. McArthur to Senior Editors, “News Presentation,” 21 April 1944.

<sup>270</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC News Policy, File B - McArthur memos, bulletins, Government News, content 1941-51 and quality. Memorandum, A. Frigon, “Brighter News Bulletins,” 29 September 1943.

some interest, so the only thing to do is to write the story, toss it over BBC to you in London and then hope that you find it interesting enough to bang out to Toronto, where in turn I hope that the guy who runs things back there, (and in this case I'm sure its [sic] not the same guy who invented rain or mud) likes it enough to use it too. That's the only reason for mass production.<sup>271</sup>

As Herbert's letter suggests, war correspondents could be almost as afraid that their own editors would discard their war reports as they could be in regards to military censors. The CBC editors decided what war news was compelling and what was uninteresting. Their judgement dictated what news about the war listeners heard and did not hear over Canadian radio.

CBC news editors instructed war correspondents to keep their broadcasts short and simple as well. Powley reminded the CBC war correspondents of their need to keep their reports concise, because they had to hold the listener's attention for the duration. As he told Herbert on 16 January 1944, "I think everyone who writes for the radio ought to give himself a renewed reminder at least once a week that he's TALKING to people."<sup>272</sup> Stursberg also recalled that on several occasions he had to trim down his stories in order to make them more appropriate for broadcasting.<sup>273</sup> By doing so, radio editorial practice forced him to sacrifice a lot of details in his account, and abide by the CBC's editorial censorship.

The CBC news editors acted as censors during the war. McArthur reminded his staff that although stories submitted by reliable news sources – such as the Canadian Press, the British United Press, or the CBC Overseas Unit – “ordinarily” conformed to Censorship regulations,

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<sup>271</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Powley, Overseas Unit – correspondence Jan. 1945. Letter, W. Herbert to A. Powley, 22 January 1945.

<sup>272</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Powley, Overseas Unit – correspondence Jan. 1945. Letter, A. Powley to W. Herbert, 16 January 1944. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>273</sup> Peter Stursberg, *The Sound of War: Memoirs of a CBC Correspondent* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 101.

“none the less responsibility for what goes into our bulletins devolves on our own editors.”<sup>274</sup> On V-J Day, in August 1945, the chief censors sent out a letter of appreciation to all Canadian broadcasting stations and news agencies to acknowledge their service for the war effort:

... We are requested also to pass on to you the thanks of the Director of Censorship and the Armed Services for the vital contribution that has been made to the war effort through voluntary self-censorship in Canada during the past six years.<sup>275</sup>

CBC editors remained true to their commitment to censor the war. Their patriotism and conviction about the evils of Nazism motivated them to act in what they deemed the best interests of the national war enterprise. Beyond the official censorship regulations, they developed and operated under a unique sense of editorial responsibility grounded upon the intimate nature of radio.

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<sup>274</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC News Policy, File C - War-time Directives, Post-War Directives re Returned men and terrorists 1941-46. Memorandum, D. McArthur to Senior News Editors, “Radio Censorship,” 19 May 1941.

<sup>275</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 435 - CBC Overseas News Service and censorship. 27-4-2 (pt. 6) – Censorship. Chief Censors of Publications to Newspapers, News Associations, Special Correspondents and Radio Broadcasting Stations, “V-J Day, 1945.”

## Chapter 4

### Reporting the War

Historians and journalists have charged war correspondents of the Second World War with being little more than cheerleaders for the war effort. “It was propaganda,” Charles Lynch reflected in his memoirs, “everything done by all of us was propaganda, though we might not have admitted it or even realized it at the time.”<sup>276</sup> Undoubtedly, Canadian war correspondents wanted the Allied Powers to win the war. Those who defend the journalistic integrity of the war correspondents claim that they had little power to express their true opinions of the war because of official censorship. As CBC Producer Ken Pagniez asserted:

There’s no doubt that correspondents were putting the Allied effort in the best possible light and extoling the virtues of the Allied soldier but it must be remembered that there was pretty heavy censorship of what they were allowed to send home.<sup>277</sup>

Both sides argue, correctly, that Canadian war correspondents did not report the war objectively. Upon further investigation, it is evident that the external pressure imposed by military censors did not entirely supersede the authority CBC war correspondents and their editors had over their reports; nor did it replace their innate moral obligation to propagandize the national enterprise.

CBC war correspondents assumed the guise of their profession’s credibility. As journalists not formally associated with the army, their reports did not share the miasma of dubiousness attached to the official communiqués of the military. Moreover, because war correspondents reported the frontlines first-hand and shared many of the same dangers as soldiers, the Canadian public tended to trust them much more than radio commentators stationed

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<sup>276</sup> Charles Lynch, *You Can’t Print That: Memoirs of a Political Voyeur* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1983), 60.

<sup>277</sup> Library Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario [hereafter, LAC]. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 6. Interviews Research Files - Pagniez, Ken 1979. Interview Transcript, “Ken Pagniez, CBC Producer, Ottawa, (Current Affairs),” 8 February 1979.

in Canada. Indeed, the intimate and authoritative way in which war correspondents reported the frontlines produced an intense trust with their listeners. One writer to the *Ottawa Journal* in June 1944 assailed studio newscasters for being “dogmatic, infallible gentlemen who, hundreds or thousands of miles from the scene of action, deluge us with strategy and tactics and prophecy and conjecture, and even criticism, [and] it might be as well to distrust them entirely.”<sup>278</sup> In comparison, the writer hailed war correspondents for attempting “to report what they see accurately and objectively” although he also conceded that a “single correspondent can see only details of what transpires about him.”<sup>279</sup> In a response to the previous writer, another reader of the *Ottawa Journal* agreed wholeheartedly that war correspondents were far more reliable. He wrote:

Is not the time long past when we should be regaled by home-located commentators on a war situation which it is hardly within the bounds of common sense that they can say much about worth listening to. Overseas, right in the front line and behind it, are able, experienced newspaper and radio men giving us as much and as intelligent news as they are allowed to do. They are risking their lives to get that news. Even though the range of their knowledge must necessarily be limited, they at least know something which is worth reading and listening to.<sup>280</sup>

The war correspondents, in fact, positioned themselves as characters within their accounts of the war. They frequently set the scene by including a description of their observation post from where they viewed the battles, as Matthew Halton did in a broadcast from Normandy:

At dawn today we stood in our observation posts on the west bank of the Orne river, looking at the loveliest morning we’ve had since we came to France. The air was soft, the dappled clouds were coloured in the most delicate pastel shade of pink against a pastel

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<sup>278</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 438. 27-9-6 (pt. 3) CBC War Correspondents. *Ottawa Journal*, “Field Day for Radio Voices,” 7 June 1944.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>280</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 438. 27-9-6 (pt. 3) CBC War Correspondents. *Ottawa Journal*, “Those ‘Radio Voices’,” 9 June 1944.

blue sky. The world was hushed as if it were waiting for the morning to break into music. But suddenly that world erupted under the greatest bombardment of all time.<sup>281</sup>

By doing this, they helped to establish their credibility to their listeners. Mary Vipond for instance, in her analysis of the CBC radio coverage of the 1939 Royal Tour, argues that “the authority of the announcers is enhanced not only by the power of their narratives but also by the way they self-referentially position themselves.”<sup>282</sup>

Regardless of the image of credibility that they presented to the public, the work of war correspondents was still subject to meticulous military censorship. CBC radio war correspondents had to submit their broadcasts to field censors – either the original transcript or the recording – or, otherwise, send their finished programme to London for the BBC and military authorities to censor them there. Censors would then block any information that could be useful for the enemy, such as troop training, movement or equipment, and anything that could undermine morale.<sup>283</sup> The ambiguity of these restrictions subjugated much of the truth in war reporting to the discretion of military censors.

The amount of control that censors possessed caused considerable frustration for journalists. Many war correspondents found that the systematic cutting of details in their stories spoiled many a great scoop as well as much of the candour in their reports. Andrew Cowan recalled “agonizing memories,” battling to have a political story published about Yugoslavia,

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<sup>281</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Jul.-Aug. 1944. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, July 18, 1944.

<sup>282</sup> Mary Vipond, “The Royal Tour of 1939 as a Media Event,” *Canadian Journal of Communication* 35.1 (January 2010), 161-2.

<sup>283</sup> Timothy Balzer, *The Information Front: The Canadian Army and News Management during the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 169.

Poland, and Greece, all for naught. He confessed that he “fought a bloody battle with the censors over that piece, and the best part of a hard day’s work was filleted from the script.”<sup>284</sup>

Strict censorship could at times cover-up, at least temporarily, significant events from public knowledge. The unsuccessful raid on Dieppe has been a particularly well studied example, but there are several more cases in which Canadian war correspondents, specifically those of the CBC, were forced to hide or alter significant events of the war in their reports. For instance, censors removed an atrocity story about the shooting of unarmed Canadian soldiers in one of Marcel Ouimet’s broadcasts. The censored paragraph from his 17 June 1944 broadcast read as follows:

Dans le village d’Audrieu, on a trouvé les cadavres de soldats canadiens que les allemands avaient assassinés de sang froid. Les uns avaient été fusillés après qu’on leur eut lié les mains derrière le dos. D’autres avaient été blessés puis abattus de la même façon par une balle dans la nuque ou en plein Coeur. L’incident a été porté à la connaissance des autorités par l’aumonier et le commandant en second d’un régiment britannique.<sup>285</sup>

Because military authorities feared that “premature revelation of this act of atrocity might lead the enemy to retaliate by ill-treating our prisoners in Germany,” Ouimet’s story could only make a vague reference to the massacre by suggesting that Canadians troops had become hardened against the abhorrent acts of the Nazis.<sup>286</sup> It took nearly two months for the military court of inquiry to investigate and confirm the story. Subsequently, Halton was finally able to report the

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<sup>284</sup> LAC. Cowan Papers MG30-E298, Volume 16 - C.B.C. Overseas Unit and C.B.C. International Service (1943-1954). Personal Correspondence Overseas Unit, 1943-45. Letter, A. Cowan to F. Harold Martin, 12 January 1944.

<sup>285</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Overseas Unit – correspondence between Bob Bowman, Andrew Cowan, Peter Stursberg, Eugene Hollman, M. Ouimet. Letter, M. Ouimet to A. E. Powley, 17 April 1969. [Translation: “In the village of Audrieu, the corpses of Canadian soldiers that the Germans had killed in cold-blood were found. Some had been shot after they had their hands tied behind their back. Others had been wounded and killed in the same fashion, by a bullet in the neck or in the heart. The incident was brought to the attention of authorities by the chaplain and the second-in-command of a British regiment.”]

<sup>286</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Overseas Unit – correspondence between Bob Bowman, Andrew Cowan, Peter Stursberg, Eugene Hollman, M. Ouimet. Letter, M. Ouimet to A.E. Powley, 17 April 1969. [Translation: “Since, our soldiers have fought against the most fanatical troops, against veterans of Russia and Africa, against armoured grenadiers and the twelfth division of the Hitler Youth, whose most abhorrent acts can only serve to incite our soldiers’ anger.”]

killing, saying that it had “been burning us up for weeks” not being able to tell the story to the public. Still vague, he summarized the incident in his broadcast:

No other details of the murder can be given now, except that the victims, members of a great Western Canadian regiment, were all shot through the head – not in the heat of battle, but well behind the front. Murdered.<sup>287</sup>

Like Ouimet, Halton stressed the need for Canadians to refrain from retaliating for the German war crime: “The universal and natural determination of Canadian soldiers to avenge the death of our comrades must not under any circumstances take the form of retaliation in kind.”<sup>288</sup>

CBC war correspondents, in the words of Albert Powley, “had to play their part in the secrecy and deception” of military blackouts as well. This often meant that correspondents were not allowed to report anything about the movement of troops from one battlefield to another. When 60, 000 soldiers of the First Canadian Corps began leaving Italy to join the First Canadian Army in northwestern Europe in February 1945, censors prevented Canadian war correspondents from announcing their relocation. Authorities delayed William Herbert’s broadcast of the last battle of the Canadians in Italy on 24 February until near the end of April.<sup>289</sup> Unable to broadcast for the duration of the movement, Herbert claimed to have received these instructions: “Tell them you’re on your holidays. Tell them you’ve been transferred to another theatre. Tell them you’re on a facility visit to the western front. In fact, tell them anything but what’s really going on.”<sup>290</sup> CBC correspondents in Holland were unable to discuss the movement as well. “Of course we knew about the regrouping of the Allied forces in Italy,” Stursberg later recalled about the transfer, “but in our reports we could only hint at ‘the offensive that was bound to come in the

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<sup>287</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Jul.-Aug. 1944. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 1 August 1944.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>289</sup> A. E. Powley, *Broadcast from the Front: Canadian Overseas Radio in the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 164-5

<sup>290</sup> Powley, 164-5.

spring,’ and even talking about it was discouraged: ‘Walls Have Ears’ and ‘Every Eyete is a Spy’.”<sup>291</sup> When units of the First Canadian Corps began arriving in Holland at the start of April, censors prevented Halton, Stursberg, and Ouimet from mentioning their arrival for several weeks. This, according to military authorities, was to ensure “the utmost precaution... to prevent disclosure of the move of any single group or unit until we are satisfied ‘that the enemy himself has obtained this identification’.”<sup>292</sup> Canadian war correspondents continued to ask “for permission to announce the transfer,” only to have General Eisenhower, on April 16, release a letter expressing his “sympathy with Canada’s desire, but emphasized that paramount operational requirements [called] for continued secrecy.”<sup>293</sup> Censors did not lift the blackout on the transfer until April 23. On that day, military authorities sent the following memorandum to the Canadian armed forces and news agencies:

This operation presented an extremely difficult security problem for both war correspondents and press censors. However, it was essential that the Germans be kept in the dark, not only so that he would not know how our forces in Holland were being strengthened, but also so that he would not know that the Canadians had left Italy and have the opportunity to shift his troops correspondingly... In fact, several Canadian war correspondents played a vital part in the operation. Throughout, the entire operation and up until the enemy had identified the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps troops in Holland, these correspondents, who had become very closely associated with that Corps in Italy, were deprived of the opportunity to write for their papers and agencies, since their very presence and dateline anywhere outside Italy would have tipped off the move to the Germans.<sup>294</sup>

Historians who defend the work of the war correspondents tend to cite some of the dispatches as evidence that they were still able to report on many of the darker aspects of war.

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<sup>291</sup> Peter Stursberg, *The Sound of War: Memoirs of a CBC Correspondent* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 155.

<sup>292</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 435 - CBC Overseas News Service and censorship. 27-4-2 (pt 6) – Censorship. Memorandum, Chief Censors of Publications to Newspapers, News Associations, Special Correspondents, and Radio Broadcasting Stations, 2 April 1945.

<sup>293</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 435 - CBC Overseas News Service and censorship. 27-4-2 (pt 6) – Censorship. Memorandum, Chief Censors of Publications to Newspapers, News Associations, Special Correspondents, and Radio Broadcasting Stations, 18 April 1945.

<sup>294</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 435 - CBC Overseas News Service and censorship. 27-4-2 (pt 6) – Censorship. Letter, F. A. Allen, Jr. to Col. W. Abel, 23 April 1945.

“These journalists were as brave as the soldiers they covered,” argues Mark Bourrie, “and their reporting, though stilted toward the Allies, captures the brutality of war, the struggles of the soldiers against both the Germans and the bone-weariness that quickly set in as Canadian troops slogged through Italy and northwest Europe.”<sup>295</sup> David Halton, in the biography of his father, similarly suggests that Matthew Halton was capable of broadcasting vivid depictions of death and the darkness of war that could, at times, be unsettling for listeners. Matthew Halton, for instance, resented complaints that he “was undermining morale.” In an article of the army newspaper *The Maple Leaf*, he mocked his critics and expressed his frustration about such oversensitivity:

Too grim, eh? You want fine heroic stories without any mud or blood or losses on our side. You don't want to be disturbed as you sit beside your radio... Well, that's too bad. And then I'd tell them about the Black Watch... Your fathers and mothers and sisters and wives didn't want any high-powered pablum. Comfort, if possible. But above all they wanted the truth.<sup>296</sup>

Again, in another broadcast, Halton reminded his audience that war was grim and no-laughing-matter:

... About half of them are gone, though, many wounded, some killed, some wounded and captured. It had looked worse at first but a lot of the missing had come back. Good C[ana]d[i]ans who had slipped away in the dark or fought their way out... Your heart sank to see them because they were so few... The regiment had come out of the line and I thought of all the people who don't know and never will know what battle means. It's nobody's fault, I suppose. You have to be there to understand. But perhaps this talk is at least an answer to the letter I got the other day asking me why I didn't tell more of the funny things that happened in the field.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> Mark Bourrie, *Fighting words: Canada's best war reporting* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2012), 14.

<sup>296</sup> David Halton, *Dispatches from the Front: Matthew Halton, Canada's voice at war* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2014), 217-8.

<sup>297</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Jan. - Apr. 1945. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 25 February 1945.

Evidentially becoming irritated about nonchalant attitudes towards the conflict, Halton wanted to impress upon his listeners that there was little humour found in war.

Halton and his colleagues were able to report fairly graphic accounts of Canadian casualties because military censors and CBC editors believed that it was unwise to withhold that information from the public.<sup>298</sup> Granted, military and editorial censors would have stopped a story that they believed could have been unnecessarily alarming. Nevertheless, war correspondents were generally permitted to publicize news suggesting heavy casualties. The amount of detail varied from story to story and correspondent to correspondent. Andrew Cowan mentioned, “there were some serious casualties” in his broadcast on D-Day.<sup>299</sup> Whereas, Robert T. Bowman disclosed, in his broadcast about the Dieppe raid, “I can see casualties – men are in the water.”<sup>300</sup> During the most violent battles that the Canadians fought, authorities enabled war correspondents to suggest the heavy cost in Canadian life. At Ortona, Halton’s broadcasts made it obvious to his listeners that many Canadian soldiers were dying in battle. In one of these broadcasts, he said:

We went forward along a muddy path, through an orchard where there had been olives but now only death. All round us, one of the bloodiest actions of this war was being fought. Often we were lying in the mud. We passed 2 men carrying a wounded man....<sup>301</sup>

At Monte Cassino, Peter Stursberg also delivered some of the darkest accounts of Canadian casualties. “I can still see the strained look on the face of the men who had come out of those

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<sup>298</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC News Policy, File B - MacArthur memos, bulletins, Government News, content 1941-51 and quality. Memorandum, D. C. McArthur to J. S. Thompson, “Losses in Air Raids,” 25 March 1943.

<sup>299</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1 Andrew Cowan, Overseas Unit, Reporting on NW Europe Campaign from Britain (London) 1944. Broadcast Transcript, A. Cowan, 7 June 1944.

<sup>300</sup> CBC Digital Archives. Robert T. Bowman [Radio Broadcast], “Carnages on the beaches of Dieppe,” Robert Bowman Reports, CBC, 20 August 1942. <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/1942-carnage-on-the-beaches-of-dieppe>.

<sup>301</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 3. CBC Broadcasts 1940-1943. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 20 December 1943 (originally 13 December).

hills of hell behind that Satanic Monastery,” Stursberg recounted, “for these slopes had been fought over many times and there were many bodies of the dead that could not be removed – German dead and our dead.”<sup>302</sup> In another broadcast, he reported the capture of Hill 593:

All the way up – I had to keep on stepping aside to allow soldiers carrying their dead comrades to pass. Sometimes the bodies were on stretchers and sometimes in a blanket slung between two rifles... The dead of earlier offensives lay in shallow graves just off the path. Often there was only a mouldering blanket covering their remains. We stepped over a dead mule which I thought was a skin. I have never seen such a grisly sight as I saw on the top of Hill 593. There were the dead that had stormed and taken this fortress only yesterday – and there were the dead that had tried to take it months ago – I almost stumbled over a head that had almost mummified... The horrible thing about these battlefields above Cassino was that the men who fought lived with the dead around them.<sup>303</sup>

Although they could depict some of the horrors of war, war correspondents generally understood that they could not describe it in its absolute, grimmest detail. Halton vented his inability to do so in his intimate letters to his wife, Jean. “It seems now like a nightmare that cant [sic] have been true,” he admitted. “You just cant [sic] tell the story. The filth and the death. The mortars come over and you throw yourself into a ditch and theres [sic] a dead man there and a baby with its head blown off. War!”<sup>304</sup> In another letter, he said that

No matter how much is written the public will never understand what the fighting men have to do. Even in the army itself the four out of five men who don’t actually have to fight don’t fully appreciate what the infantry have to do. And one can never describe a battle as it actually is with all its horror.<sup>305</sup>

Halton was aware that it had become impossible to describe an entirely accurate picture of the war. “My God, what experiences weve [sic] had in the last ten days! Only two percent of it can

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<sup>302</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1944). (4 of 5). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 14 May 1944.

<sup>303</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). (4 of 5). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 19 May 1944.

<sup>304</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Personal - From Matthew Halton to Jean Halton – 1945. Letter, Matthew Halton to Jean Halton, 18 March 1945.

<sup>305</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Personal - From Matthew Halton to Jean Halton – 1943. Letter, M. Halton to J. Halton, 22 November 1943.

be told. You'll have heard my broadcast of a funeral service at the front: someday remind me to tell you the real story."<sup>306</sup> He mocked the lack of detail that he was able to put in his broadcasts: "Did you hear my broadcast on the crossing of the Volturno River at Capua? Then you heard one twentieth of the story. This is Matthew Halton of the CBC speaking one twentieth of the story from Italy."<sup>307</sup>

Halton directed much of his frustration towards military censors. Like many war correspondents, he was critical of them. In letters written to his wife, Halton often grumbled over how censors eliminated a lot of detail from his stories. "For every good story I can tell," he said, "there are six or seven which cant [sic] be published." "You cant [sic] imagine how many interesting little points there are in wartime which sound harmless but which might help the enemy someday," Halton continued, "Everything has to be painted vague."<sup>308</sup> Some censorship rules particularly bothered Halton, such as those that temporarily restricted any mention of prisoners of war. He confessed to his wife,

As you know I used not to grouch about censorship but I do now. It is absolutely insufferable and completely stupid and ruins almost every story. I cant [sic] even mention that I LOOKED at some German prisoners, let alone talked to them. Why, I wonder, are we being so considerate of the Germans? Whats [sic] cooking?<sup>309</sup>

Yet Halton warily accepted military censorship for the sake of winning the war. Although he became upset over the loss of several stories and details, he believed that the system was both reasonable and necessary. As he confessed to Jean,

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<sup>306</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Personal - From Matthew Halton to Jean Halton - 1943. Letter, M. Halton to J. Halton, 29 October 1943.

<sup>307</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Personal - From Matthew Halton to Jean Halton - 1943. Letter, M. Halton to J. Halton, 11 October 1943.

<sup>308</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Personal - From Matthew Halton to Jean Halton - 1940-1941. Letter, M. Halton to J. Halton, 21 August 1941.

<sup>309</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Personal - From Matthew Halton to Jean Halton - 1943. Letter, M. Halton to J. Halton, December 1943. Emphasis in the original.

I have quite a tough time with the censorship. Many of the nice little details which give a story life and color are cut out, though always for some pretty good reason. I'm fed up with the American correspondents, with whom the Savoy is full, always beefing about the censorship. They cant [sic] quite see that the war is hardly being waged for the benefit of the American papers. Not that the censorship cant [sic] be... bloody awful. But there's generally a pretty good reason for everything.<sup>310</sup>

Indeed, in a broadcast on the day after the Sicilian invasion, Halton defended the need for continued secrecy over military secrets:

... But, for the best of reasons, almost none of our plans can be revealed. If there is a fog of war over Sicily, we have to remember that the enemy above all is groping in this fog, desperately anxious for information regarding our formation and our order of battle and our plan of campaign.<sup>311</sup>

In the same vein, Stursberg justified censorship in his 1944 memoir, writing, "of course, censorship is an easy thing to pick on, although I think that all of us agree with censorship in wartime as long as it is necessary."<sup>312</sup> He explained, in one of his broadcasts, the usefulness of strict censorship in order to prevent the enemy from discovering their attacks in advance:

From the correspondents' point of view – this has been a campaign in reverse. It wasn't till the Canadians had broken the Gothic Line that we were able to say that anything unusual was happening on the Adriatic Sector of the front... The secrecy that surrounded this attack of the Eighth Army paid off. There is no doubt that we caught the Germans by surprise.<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Personal - From Matthew Halton to Jean Halton - 1940-1941. Letter, M. Halton to J. Halton, 30 March 1941.

<sup>311</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 3. CBC Broadcasts 1940-1943. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 11 July 1943.; Eric Thompson, "Canadian Warcoros in World War II: Professionalism, Patriotism and Propaganda," *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 23.3 (1990), 69. CBC war correspondents did not hide the reality of censorship from their audience. They would often mention, in their broadcasts, when censors restricted information. Nevertheless, as Thompson asserts, "it does not seem likely that most Canadians tended to mistrust what they read and heard in the media." Again, because CBC war correspondents reported from the frontlines, facing many of the same dangers as the Canadian soldiers, and their transmitted voice fostered a much more intimate relationship with their listeners than newspaper reporters could, Canadians at home tended to have considerable confidence in their eyewitness testimonies.

<sup>312</sup> Peter Stursberg, *Journey into Victory: Up the Alaska Highway and to Sicily and Italy* (London: George G. Harrap, 1944), 37.

<sup>313</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 5 September 1944.

Donald Fairbairn, shortly after the war, similarly recalled that correspondents understood the importance of military censorship – as a result, their sense of duty to the Allied cause compelled them to obey the rules:

The movements of correspondents were always of great interest to the enemy, and so employers were asked to limit discussion about where any member of their staff was going or was coming from, even in their own offices... In fact the mystery and the confusion became so great that half the time the correspondents themselves didn't know whether their next stop would be France or Piccadilly Tube Station... Looking back on it now, it's amusing to think of the casual conversations about nothing in the pubs... At the time it wasn't very funny, because everyone realised the stakes.<sup>314</sup>

War correspondents accepted the importance of protecting military secrets. Rather than fight censorship, they pre-empted it by censoring their own stories. Ross Munro reflected after the war, “as journalists, we'd have a pretty clear idea of what we could talk about and what we couldn't. We knew the security.”<sup>315</sup> Having a solid understanding of what authorities would allow through censorship and what they forbade was particularly important in regards to radio reporting. The portable, albeit heavy, audio recording equipment available to the CBC radio correspondents, by today's standards, was, in the words of Ouimet, “primitive and cumbersome.” This meant that “editing was so laborious” and, frequently at the frontlines, next to impossible.<sup>316</sup> The result led to several clashes wherein CBC war correspondents argued with censors because “substitutions are impossible on discs” and cuts could have “seriously interfered with [their] meaning.”<sup>317</sup> Anticipating censorship thus became an indispensable skill for CBC war

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<sup>314</sup> LAC. Fairbairn Papers MG30-E334. London, D. Fairbairn of the CBC reporting from, (re press censorship) Sept.5, 1945. Broadcast Transcript, D. Fairbairn, “The Secret is Out,” 5 September 1945.

<sup>315</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 6. Interviews Research Files - Munro, Ross 1979-1980. Interview Transcript, Ross Munro, 22 March 1980.

<sup>316</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 436. 27-5 (pt.1) Book Review, Marcel Ouimet, *Closed Circuit*, “A.E. Powley's ‘Broadcast from the Front,’” 15 May 1975.

<sup>317</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Powley, Overseas Unit – correspondence July 1944. Letter, A. Powley to Major Payne, 5 July 1944.

correspondents. Stursberg acquired his competence for this as a result of his experience at the front, as he reminded Powley:

I realize that I'm one of the few CBC correspondents that knows the ropes as far as war is actually concerned. I'm not patting myself on the back. It's just a matter of experience and I've had more front line experience with radio than any one else – almost eight months now... I know how to make records without the censors massacring it and that is an art in itself as you'll agree. I also know what we can do with our equipment in the way of getting actualities and what we can't do.<sup>318</sup>

Failing to get stories past censorship could result in more than the loss of a hard day's labour.

Having a censor kill a scoop was a wretched outcome for any hard-working war correspondent, especially after they had risked their lives to perform a job that their employers paid them to do.

Evidence of self-censorship is seen in the typewritten transcripts that war reporters wrote prior to their broadcasts. Whereas censors used blue pens to mark official changes to a transcript, CBC war correspondents scribbled through their dispatches with pencils or used their typewriters to type over sections in order to edit their writing or anticipate the censor. In one of Fairbairn's broadcasts, he crossed off a large section at the end of one of his paragraphs:

Today I visited the most advanced airfield of 2<sup>nd</sup> TAF... I can't tell you where it is or what planes are operating from there because the enemy doesn't know yet himself. [Here, a large section of his transcript is crossed out and has been made illegible by Fairbairn's typewriter]

Presumably accepting that he could say very little about the story, he continued his writing in a new paragraph:

In fact for security reasons I can't tell you anything about this airfield or about what the air force is doing to keep up with the army but they are doing something and they have advanced airfields that enable them to give close support to the army. And there my story must end.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. War Correspondent - Italy, CBC Messages. Letter, P. Stursberg to A. Powley, 13 June 1944.

<sup>319</sup> LAC. Fairbairn Papers MG30-E334. Germany, D. Fairbairn of the RCAF reporting to CBC from, March April May, 1945 (mainly from 2nd Br. army front). Broadcast Transcript, 8 April 1945.

Fairbairn's account was entirely vague; his report mentioned nothing other than the fact that there was military secrecy. He likely wanted to write more detail, but he thought better of it.

A war correspondent was wholly dependent on the chain of supply, and when censors were not nearby, prior to recording a broadcast, war correspondents would often believe it wiser to play it safe by saying less than risk having their broadcasts become censorable by saying too much.<sup>320</sup> In one of Halton's broadcasts, he confessed to his listeners that he did not wish to take the gamble:

... Speaking here now, far from a censor, I don't know how much I can say and how much is still secret. The safest thing is to say nothing of the actual manoeuvres near Paris. It's enough at the moment to say that there before us stands Chartres Cathedral, once more in the hands of free men. And that everywhere around us the German army is being destroyed. And that before us lies Paris.<sup>321</sup>

Halton, Stursberg, and Fairbairn, like their colleagues, adapted to military censorship and, attempted to pre-empt military censors from destroying their stories by self-censoring their own work. It was a skill, surely, refined after arduous trial and error. "Generally the experienced war correspondent knows what he can and cannot say from a battle," Halton wrote in his memoirs, "but sometimes censorship is capricious and unpredictable."<sup>322</sup> Because of the unpredictability of some censorship, any excess amount of caution that a correspondent may have had while self-censoring his work may have resulted in the omission of a story altogether. For instance, censors allowed the mentioning of "isolated" instances of looting and friendly fire, but war correspondents could often be too intimidated to write about them at all. For example, instances of Allied cruelty disgusted Halton, and yet he said next to nothing about them in his

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<sup>320</sup> Bourrie, *Fog of War*, 212. Even when censors were nearby, war correspondents were always cautious about what they did and did not write. The actions of censors were fickle. As Ralph Allen attested, "... I attempted to govern my actions by the conviction that all censors are maniacs, a hypothesis that has stood the test of time faithfully and well."

<sup>321</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Jul.-Aug. 1944. Broadcast Transcript, 19 August 1944.

<sup>322</sup> Matthew Halton, *Ten years to Alamein* (Toronto: S.J. Reginald Saunders and Company Limited, 1944), 195.

broadcasts.<sup>323</sup> In his private letters to Jean, he said that he wanted “to swear and kill and cry,” and he called the Americans “monstrous. MONSTROUS. Murderously indiscriminate” for their bombings of French populations and subsequent boasting.<sup>324</sup>

Anticipating censorship was not the only way in which war correspondents filtered their war stories. Realistically choosing what stories to cover, alongside choosing how to present them, was a necessary part of their job as war journalists to avoid censorship. “Deciding what to cover and what to leave out has long been rationalized as the application of news values,” Guy Starkey and Andrew Crisell assert in their study of radio journalism, “and this is sometimes characterized as ‘gatekeeping’.”<sup>325</sup> Thus, as ‘gatekeepers’ war correspondents had immediate power over the dissemination of news based upon their immediate responsibility “for selection, evaluation and relative emphasis.”<sup>326</sup> This process of selection inherently affected the objectivity of their accounts. War correspondents had to decide what things to observe and what to take notes on during battle. They then had to decide what to talk about in their broadcasts. “I made notes,” Halton told his listeners, “and now, hours later, I wonder why I chose these details to mention instead of a hundred others that could be told.”<sup>327</sup> The constant selection of details for radio programmes had additional importance because radio dispatches needed to be shorter and

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<sup>323</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Personal - From Matthew Halton to Jean Halton – 1945. Letter, M. Halton to J. Halton, 1 March 1945.

<sup>324</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Personal - From Matthew Halton to Jean Halton – 1944. M. Halton to J. Halton, 22 June 1944. Emphasis in the original.; Mark Bourrie, *The Fog of War: Censorship of Canada's Media in World War Two* (Madeira Park: Perseus Books Group, 2011), 158. Censors forbade publicizing stories about shackled German prisoners and those about murders committed by Canadian soldiers. As such, during the Normandy Campaign war correspondents were aware of, but did not publicize, instances wherein Canadians shot German soldiers rather than accept their surrender. In the words of Bourrie, “Canadian war correspondents knew about the Canadians’ reputation for cold-bloodedness and did not report it.”

<sup>325</sup> Guy Starkey and Andrew Crisell, *Radio Journalism* (London: Sage, 2009), 106.

<sup>326</sup> Carlton McNaught, *Canada Gets the News* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1940), 256-7.

<sup>327</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 3. CBC Broadcasts 1940-1943. Broadcast Transcript, 20 December 1943 (originally 13 December).

more concise than newspaper articles (and yet such national broadcasts usually had a much larger audience than newspapers reports). As Halton informed Jean,

Writing for radio is a pity in a way, because I have only so much time, so lots of the best stuff doesn't get written as it would if I were writing for the [*Toronto*] Star – lots of details and lots of good writing, which would be grand to have when next I write a book....<sup>328</sup>

Accordingly, the instinctive choices made by CBC war correspondents over which stories to broadcast demonstrates how they expressed journalistic restraint in their coverage of the war. In his memoirs, Stursberg mentioned that he once turned down an opportunity to cover an amputation at a military hospital.<sup>329</sup> Similarly, he says that the smell of the dead was a memorable horror that he chose not to talk about in his broadcasts:

The litter of war, broken boxes, tin cans, bits and pieces of equipment, was scattered cross the precipitous hillside. It was not the sight of the dead, the swollen, glaucous faces, the staring eyes, that turned our stomachs but the stench, a horror that I did not mention in my broadcast.<sup>330</sup>

Prior to joining the CBC, Halton also confessed that there were certain things that he did not want to report. As he told his wife,

... And war is far far uglier than one can dare to tell in articles. [The] Phrase 'wounded soldier' doesn't sound bad but when you've heard them screaming its [sic] different. 'Under fire' sounds commonplace but youll [sic] never understand meaning those words till you experienced it.<sup>331</sup>

Nevertheless, when Halton began work as a radio war correspondent, he did not persistently look to record sounds of screaming soldiers. Instead, he chose to record the hushed sounds of war. As he told Jean, "I want to get one now which concentrates no[t] so much on the guns and big noises

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<sup>328</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Personal - From Matthew Halton to Jean Halton – 1943. Letter, M. Halton to J. Halton, 3 November 1943.

<sup>329</sup> Stursberg, *The Sound of War*, 164-165.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>331</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Personal - From Matthew Halton to Jean Halton - 1940-1941. Letter, M. Halton to J. Halton and Eric and Inez, 12 July 1941.

as on the small noises in a front line undere [sic] enemy fire: men talking and whispering, weird silences, conversations on the radio telephones, etc.”<sup>332</sup>

In part, the motive for war correspondents to repress some of the dread in their stories was a result of their sense of responsibility and desire not to upset their listeners. On one hand, war correspondents wanted to report the war objectively. On the other hand, they did not want to frighten or depress their listeners to the extent that listeners would turn their radio off and potentially grow weary of the war. After the war, Ouimet claimed that CBC war correspondents well understood the intimate power of radio. They were aware that it would not benefit national morale to disturb their audience unnecessarily. It was “our training, a sense of responsibility,” he admitted, “what at the time was considered to be good taste or the simple desire to spare a family from further grief, when their loved ones were killed, wounded or missing in action, stopped us from insisting too much on the lurid or the gory side of war.”<sup>333</sup> Ralph Allen, war correspondent of the *Globe and Mail*, also asserted that war correspondents felt that they had this moral responsibility. In regards to the ban on mentioning names of battle casualties until the Department of National Defense notified the next-of-kin, Allen said, “no newspaper man who has served in the field would willingly give unnecessary pain or impose an unnecessary shock on the relatives of a dead or wounded soldier for the sake of a story.”<sup>334</sup> Proof that Halton expressed empathy for his radio listeners was evident in his personal desire not to scare his wife with his reports. “You will have heard my ten minute description of the night I had going across the river

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<sup>332</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Personal - From Matthew Halton to Jean Halton – 1943. Letter, M. Halton to J. Halton, 29 October 1943.

<sup>333</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 436. 27-5 (pt.1) Book Review, Marcel Ouimet, *Closed Circuit*, “A.E. Powley’s ‘Broadcast from the Front,’” 15 May 1975.

<sup>334</sup> Bourrie, *Fighting Words*, 214. Allen continued to say that, with few ways of learning when such a ban was actually over, war correspondents often avoided naming casualties altogether in order to pre-empt censors. He said, “Nevertheless, in practice the ban on mentioning names of casualties in front-line stories means that a soldier who is killed or wounded in action is often never identified by name in a newspaper story from the front.”

with the mule convoys taking ammunition to the forward troops. Or you may not have heard it, as the gear was going haywire and the recording was poor,” he wrote to Jean, “I rather hope you didn’t hear it lest it frighten you. It was one of the grimmest nights I ever had....”<sup>335</sup> Halton, also, perhaps in a moment of hesitation, suggested to his listeners in a broadcast that there might be things in war too horrible for him to share with them: “I wish you could hear everything we hear – or do I?”<sup>336</sup>

The staff of the Overseas Unit was wholeheartedly dedicated to the war effort. Many felt the same as F. Paul Johnson, who, in his application to be an engineer in the Overseas Unit, said that he “would appreciate ‘doing my bit’ by being chosen to assist the CBC in this excellent work that they are doing.”<sup>337</sup> Bowman, too, believed that while in the CBC he “should be working to help the war effort.”<sup>338</sup> CBC war correspondents were all anxious to contribute to the national enterprise by covering the front. “I continue to be up to my arm-pits in frustration with apparently no immediate prospects of getting over,” Jack Scott wrote to Bushnell, adding, “the urge to get there and do some writing is, of course still as strong as it was when we talked.”<sup>339</sup> Cowan similarly thought that he could contribute much more, as he told O. J. W. Shuff, his friend and colleague. “At times I don’t feel too happy about my own contribution to winning the war,” he said, “but I’d hate to go back to Canada just now.”<sup>340</sup> On one of his applications to

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<sup>335</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Personal - From Matthew Halton to Jean Halton – 1943. M. Halton to J. Halton, 28 November 1943.

<sup>336</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Jan. - Apr. 1945. Broadcast Transcript, 9 February 1945.

<sup>337</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 438. 27-9-6 (pt. 1) War Emergency Measures CBC War Correspondents. Letter, F. P. Johnson to R. D. Cahoon, “CBC Unit Overseas,” November 1940.

<sup>338</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 4. Bowman, Robert T. – correspondence. Letter, R. T. Bowman to E. L. Bushnell, 10 August 1942

<sup>339</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 433. 27-4 (pt. 1) CBC National News Service - Overseas News General. Letter, J. Scott to E. L. Bushnell, 13 August 1943.

<sup>340</sup> LAC. Cowan Papers MG30-E298, Volume 16 - C.B.C. Overseas Unit and C.B.C. International Service (1943-1954). CBC War Correspondent, correspondence 1943-1944. Letter, A. Cowan to O. J. W. Shugg, Esq. (CBC Farm Broadcasts ), 24 February 1944.

become a war correspondent, Stursberg admitted that during this war he did not “think that a little propaganda on our side would hurt.”<sup>341</sup> Halton also grew deeply invested in the war effort.<sup>342</sup> Having worked as a foreign correspondent in Germany before the war, he witnessed and decried the rise of Nazism first-hand. “I have been at war with the Nazis since 1933,” as he said in his memoir.<sup>343</sup> In regards to censorship, he told Jean:

In theory therefore my articles should never have to be censored, because as an experienced war correspondent who, unlike many, has been fighting Germany since 1933, I would never write anything that helped the enemy or created alarm.<sup>344</sup>

Therefore, when first given the opportunity to broadcast for the CBC about the international struggle in December 1939, he was unconcerned with expressing a neutral account. As he wrote to the CBC,

I was very pleased to be asked by you to do something for CBC. I hope you don't find the record TOO patriotic – though I imagine your fear would be that it wouldn't be patriotic enough. My hope is that you like it and want more. If you find the first one too much of a lecture let me assure you that I could do racier ones full of anecdotes and color if you wish.<sup>345</sup>

After the CBC formally enlisted him as its lead war correspondent, he reasserted his commitment to furthering the Allied cause to his wife: “I am very anxious to get writing my stories for [the] Allied [army] as I am so anxious to do well for them.”<sup>346</sup> The contributions of CBC

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<sup>341</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 1. Correspondence, Clippings 1942. Letter, P. Stursberg to Mortimer Little, Director of Public Information (Canadian Army), 22 March 1942.

<sup>342</sup> Richard S. Malone, *A World in Flames 1944–1945* (Toronto: Collins, 1984), 74-75. Although war correspondents did not carry weapons into battle, they could still encourage, or even participate in, the killing of enemies. There are several examples of war correspondents spotting enemies for the military to shoot. In Malone's memoirs, he recalled Matthew Halton having “urged” him to shoot a German soldier in civilian clothing. Halton, immediately afterwards, allegedly accosted Malone for not doing so. In such common cases, the line between journalist and soldier continued to blur.

<sup>343</sup> Halton, *Ten Years to Alamein*, 92.

<sup>344</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Personal - From Matthew Halton to Jean Halton – 1942. Letter, M. Halton to J. Halton, 27 June 1942.

<sup>345</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 204. Halton, Mathew Talks 11-18-11-47. Letter, M. Halton to Don W. Buchanan (Public Affairs Broadcasts CBC), 15 December 1939. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>346</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Personal - From Matthew Halton to Jean Halton – 1943. Letter, M. Halton to J. Halton, 12 August 1943.

correspondents to the war often went beyond writing the broadcasts that the CBC commissioned them to deliver. On their trips back to Canada they participated in many speaking tours and fundraising for victory loan campaigns.<sup>347</sup> Many war correspondents were of the opinion that they were helping the war effort by reporting and bringing it closer for those at home. Ouimet felt that at times their sense of duty and contribution made them almost indistinguishable from the soldiers. “Like them, though without weapons, we believed that the pen was mightier than the sword,” Ouimet reflected, “that words serve to express an idea and that you can’t fight an idea only with bombs or bullets.” He continued:

Those of us who were chosen to chronicle the giant struggle between the allies and the axis were indeed motivated. We never doubted the justice of our cause and we had no doubt whatsoever that the defeat of Hitler and of the forces of evil which he, Mussolini and the Japanese had let loose was a *sine qua non*. We hoped for it, we prayed for it, we wanted it, so that our families and our countries would be spared the horrors which we witnessed on a daily basis. We were not propagandists but trained newspapermen and radio newsmen....<sup>348</sup>

Their commitment to the war effort became more absolute as a result of their relationship with the military. CBC war correspondents, just as their newspaper counterparts, were embedded journalists. The military granted each war correspondent the rank of officer and briefed them before each engagement. War correspondents attached themselves closely with the military units that they covered. This close association resulted in a climate of mutual benefit, dependence, and comradery. Compared to the Great War, in the Second World War the military adopted a much more tolerant attitude to the role of the press. In the First World War, tight restrictions limited not only the number of war correspondents allowed at the front but the detail available in their reports altogether. Afterwards, the Canadian military decided that it would be in their best

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<sup>347</sup> Stursberg, *The Sound of War*, 240.

<sup>348</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG41, vol. 436. 27-5 (pt.1) Book Review, Marcel Ouimet, *Closed Circuit*, “A.E. Powley’s ‘Broadcast from the Front,’” 15 May 1975.

interest to cooperate with the war correspondents to better support national morale. Early in the conflict, the Canadian army encouraged cooperation with the CBC and its correspondents. By 1942, Major W. G. Abel, a public relations officer at the Canadian military headquarters in England, noted radio broadcasting as an “effective [publicity tool for creating] a direct link between the men here and their families back home.”<sup>349</sup> In January 1943, Joseph Clark, the head of Canadian military public relations, reported the necessity of the military to cooperate with the press:

Public relations is an integral part of a modern fighting force. Publicity is a weapon, just as potent in sustaining the morale of fighting men and the civilian public back of them as efficient fire power is in defeating the enemy on the field of battle... Present-day instantaneous means of communication makes it imperative that every facility be provided to help speed the transmission of news to the information media... The people depend on the news made readily available to them to guide their wartime thinking, to activate them, to stimulate patriotism, to stir war fervor, to induce them to join up or buy bonds.<sup>350</sup>

Accordingly, on 24 February 1943, Abel wrote to John Kannawin of the CBC Overseas Unit, promising the CBC their full support. He said:

It will be a vital factor in Canadian morale maintenance when the Canadian Army is in action to be kept fully informed by the C.B.C. correspondents and recordings... The more you can hasten and increase the facilities at your disposal for covering the Canadian Army, the more pleased we shall be; and I feel too, I must put on record our appreciation of the energetic measures you have already taken to be better protected against emergencies and eventualities.<sup>351</sup>

For the duration of the war, the military provided CBC war correspondents with transportation, lodging at the front, and kept them reasonably informed about military operations. Public relations officers always accompanied war correspondents in theatres, which allowed them to

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<sup>349</sup> Quoted in Balzer, 33.

<sup>350</sup> Gene Allen, *Making National News: A History of Canadian Press* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 147.

<sup>351</sup> LAC. Department of National Defense Papers RG24, vol. 12432, 4 War Corres [sic] Equip 1. Letter, W.G. Abel Major (P.R.O. Canadian Military Headquarters) to J. Kannawin, 24 February 1943.

traverse battlefields and stay reasonably informed about censorship policies and military operations.<sup>352</sup> The relationship contributed to the war correspondents' capability to anticipate battles and collect sound recordings of battle. Unlike in any other conflict, war correspondents were briefed by the military prior to when an engagement or a barrage was about to take place. This allowed them to scout out an observation post ahead of time to set up their equipment.<sup>353</sup>

Every accredited war correspondent became tightly knit into the fabric of the military. The fact that they wore military uniforms exemplifies the extent at which they identified with the army. According to Courtney Stewart's analysis of the CBC war correspondents' uniform, wearing military attire provided "the implicit value" that "it was as important to relate the news on the front back home, as it was to actually be serving one's country in the military." Moreover, the psychological effect of sharing the same clothing as the soldiers made journalists see themselves as 'one of the team.' She continues:

Uniforms are designed to function in this way – to be an instantly decipherable symbol for something larger than the individual, such as an organization, a team, an occupation, etc. In addition to identifying the wearer with a larger idea, shared value or goal, uniforms also successfully displace the individual, replacing the character with an ideology or association. In the case of this military uniform, it represents a nationality, loyalty and political statement.<sup>354</sup>

Vincent Massey, Canada's high commissioner to the United Kingdom, commented on this reaction during the war: "Once you put people into the same uniform a national type emerges from what were formerly distinct and different individuals."<sup>355</sup> Because war correspondents

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<sup>352</sup> Balzer, 31.

<sup>353</sup> LAC. Halton Papers, vol. 5. Interviews Research Files - Holmes, Art 1979. Interview Transcript, "Art Holmes, CBC Engineer," 20 February 1979.

<sup>354</sup> Courtney Stewart, "Unraveling the Story: Art Holmes' War Correspondent Uniform" *Textile Society of America Symposium* (2006), 362-3.

<sup>355</sup> LAC. Cowan Papers MG30-E298, vol. 16. C.B.C. Overseas Unit and C.B.C. International Service (1943-1954). CBC War Correspondent, Scripts, Press releases n.d., 1943-44." Broadcast Transcript, "Radio Address by Vincent Massey," CBC, 15 December 1943.

began to link their identity to that of the Canadian army, they increasingly related the army's cause to that of their own. As Richard S. Malone, the head of press relations for the Canadian army, stated in his memoirs, "in time a correspondent would come to realize his responsibilities and understand that he was himself part of the show."<sup>356</sup> For instance, Cowan was, at first, hesitant to believe that his new clothing would have a significant impact, as he told a friend at the CBC office in Vancouver,

... although I have don[e] very little to date. I have just been rigged out in my uniforms (yes plural, one for Sunday and one for weekdays) made from the very best material that Burberrys have to offer. Thank God I'm not paying for it. But if, to quote William of Wykeham "clothes maketh man", then I should be a first rate correspondent. Personally I don't subscribe to the theory.<sup>357</sup>

Nevertheless, Cowan recognized the moment he received his uniform as one worthy of mention. He made light of the idea that his new uniform would soon change him in some way. It is difficult to gauge the psychological affects that wearing a uniform may have had on each individual, but it is likely that, like his colleagues, Cowan did come to associate himself with Canadian soldiers who dressed the same way he did.

Canadian war correspondents developed kinship with the Canadian soldiers; this is evident from the language used in their broadcasts. While referring to themselves and the Canadian army, they used the pronouns 'we,' 'us,' and 'our' commonly throughout their dispatches. The frequency at which they made a matter-of-fact association with the troops by using these words – such as Stursberg saying "... we're fighting one of the fiercest battles that we've ever fought in Italy" – suggests that they subconsciously saw their identity and mission as

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<sup>356</sup> Richard S. Malone, *Missing from the Record* (Toronto: Collins, 1946), 164.

<sup>357</sup> LAC. Cowan Papers MG30-E298, vol. 16. C.B.C. Overseas Unit and C.B.C. International Service (1943-1954). Personal Correspondence Overseas Unit, 1943-45. Letter, A. Cowan to Kenneth Caple (CBC, Vancouver), 26 April 1943.

one.<sup>358</sup> Eric Thompson, in his examination of the work of Canadian war correspondents, explored the significance of Halton's use of 'we' in Halton's broadcast of the Canadian assault on Carpiquet. Thompson asserted that by saying "we,"

Halton situates us in the bleachers, setting the stage for the battle about to begin. We are the spectators with him, waiting anxiously, in suspense, for the crash of the guns, with the radio being used in this way to heighten the awareness of conflict for listeners back home.<sup>359</sup>

However, Thompson misinterprets the true significance of the word. Within the context of the broadcast, the 'we' Halton is referring to is himself and the Canadian soldiers. As he says in his broadcast, "I am in a stone barn with a company of western Canadian machine gunners who are going to be in battle soon. We can see Germans moving from time to time in the half light..."<sup>360</sup> Thus, Halton saw himself as a member of the Canadian army; he was not a bystander. He was a participant in their experience, a 'fighter' in their battles, and a part of their victories and defeats. When Halton recalled French civilians celebrating at the sight of their uniforms, by using 'our,' Halton affiliated himself with a group of Canadian soldiers: "They'd see our uniforms and shout – 'Des Anglais, des Anglais.' Englishmen! Then they'd see the flash of our shoulders, with the word 'Canada', and once they saw that, we wouldn't get away."<sup>361</sup>

In addition, the possessive use of 'our' in the broadcasts of the CBC war correspondents was a commonality across their broadcasts. In this sense, correspondents referred to the Canadian soldiers as belonging to them and their listeners – the Canadian people. "Yes, for the first time in Canada's history the Canadians, with trained British Army formations, are operating

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<sup>358</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 23 September 1944.

<sup>359</sup> Thompson, 61.

<sup>360</sup> Powley, 98-99.

<sup>361</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Jul.-Aug. 1944. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 19 August 1944.

as a Canadian Army,” Ouimet reported, “[and] our troops [sic] tonight are going up to the attack with full confidence.”<sup>362</sup> In such a manner, a sense of familial ownership of the troops and their cause was enshrined upon Canadian radio listeners. “We killed and wounded many G[er]m[an]s,” Halton said in a broadcast, “the G[er]m[an]s aren’t a match for our troops.”<sup>363</sup> ‘Those were our boys fighting over there’ was the message. ‘These were *our* boys dying for *our* cause’. “Our fine troops, our excellent men, burning for victory and full of pride in themselves,” Halton said in another broadcast.<sup>364</sup> As the sense of pride and victory belonged to the entire nation, all shared loss as well. When referring to the massacre of Canadian troops by Nazi soldiers, Halton said, “this is the story of a case of murder... but perhaps the latest murder will help to bring it home to us, because these nineteen were ours.”<sup>365</sup> And, when referring to the fallen on D-Day, “I saw them [French civilians] crown our dead C[ana]d[ia]ns with roses.”<sup>366</sup>

Through their radio broadcasts, CBC war correspondents connected their listeners and Canadian soldiers into a shared national identity. In fact, this process was a wartime development, institutionally, within the CBC. During the North African Desert Campaign in January 1941, long before Canadian soldiers entered a theatre of battle, the CBC news commentators commonly used ‘we’ and ‘our’ in reference to any forces of the British Commonwealth. This quickly developed into a unique problem for CBC’s budding national

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<sup>362</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Marcel Ouimet, Overseas Unit – Reports from France, Italy, Holland (transcripts) 1943-1945. Broadcast Transcript, M. Ouimet, 8 August 1944.

<sup>363</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 3. CBC Broadcasts 1940-1943. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 19 October 1943.

<sup>364</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Jan.-July 1944. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 4 January 1944.

<sup>365</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Jul.-Aug. 1944. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 1 August 1944.

<sup>366</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Jul.-Aug. 1944. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, “Documentary feature,” 18 August 1944.

news service. William H. Metcalfe, the news editor of the news office in Winnipeg, revealed the issue to Dan McArthur in a letter:

When we are talking about flying operations and say “our” fliers, there is a reasonable possibility some Canadian fliers can be among the group. But the land fighting in Africa, where there are no Canadian troops, it seems that the use of “our” gives the wrong impression. Several people have commented on this, all agreeing that it sounds as if Canadian troops are fighting in Africa. This is pretty well my reaction too. It probably seems perfectly natural for Stave, for instance, to say “our” troops in Africa, because he is English and there are English troops there. But to us dam[ned] isolated western Canadians, it sounds odd. I think the use of “our” and “we” is a good thing where it doesn’t create this wrong impression, and there are many places it can be used in a manner that will impress on Canadians the fact that we, too, are in this war, as well as Britain... However, I must admit that I am not using ‘our’ for British or Australian troops in Africa to any great extent. I am using “our” in reference to our planes in Africa. Perhaps I’m screwy on this thing but listeners here (if they are Canadians, not English) feel the same way....<sup>367</sup>

As Metcalfe argued, fewer and fewer Canadians in Western Canada could claim British descent, as many immigrated from other areas of the world. Thus, the ‘Old Country’, which had traditionally meant Britain in most of Canada, had lost much of its meaning. Even the sizable French population in Saskatchewan usually meant Quebec, rather than France, when referring to the ‘Old Country’. Metcalfe continued:

It’s all right for British people here or for Canadians of British descent to use the expression but, in this region particularly, there are several hundred thousand listeners to whom the expression doesn’t mean Britain, but Germany, Norway, Sweden, the Ukraine or what have you, depending on what country is their old country. Perhaps, again, I’m being isolationist and insular. Perhaps I’m just being a Canadian. What do you think?<sup>368</sup>

McArthur, himself of Scottish heritage, originally defended the current policy: “I do not feel that it is unreasonable to think of these troops, or British troops, or even Indian troops, as ‘our’ troops

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<sup>367</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 174. 11-17-4-1 CBC National News Service News Stylizing. Memorandum, Wm. H. Metcalfe Winnipeg (senior editor prairie region) to D. C. MacArthur, “Use of ‘We’ and ‘Our’ and ‘Old Country’,” 23 January 1941.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

in a general sense. We are not a group of allied countries, but all part of one Commonwealth.”<sup>369</sup> Nevertheless, he conceded that the matter would from then on fall into the discretion of senior editors.<sup>370</sup> This open policy, which allowed national news broadcasts to use ‘our’ and ‘we’ to refer to the soldiers and pilots of other Commonwealth nations, was contested repeatedly; CBC editors formally challenged it at the CBC National News Service Conference of Editors in September 1942.<sup>371</sup> The practice, nevertheless, lasted until early 1943 when the likelihood of the Canadian army taking part in a continental invasion of Europe was at its highest. By this time, the CBC realized that it needed to cover the Canadian effort from a Canadian perspective. It wanted to keep all Canadians, regardless of their heritage, invested in the war effort. Thus, in tandem with the arming of the CBC Overseas Unit to cover the war, McArthur sent out a directive ordering “that ‘our’ must refer only to Canadian troops.”<sup>372</sup>

CBC news editors understood that covering the experience of Canadian soldiers for those at home was essential for Canadian morale. G. R. Benoît, editor from the Montreal newsroom, wrote to Augustin Frigon, the assistant general manager, on 29 March 1943, stressing the need to cover the French-Canadian soldiers.

Il est de la plus haute importance, à mon avis, que les dispositions les plus adéquates soient prises pour que la population de langue française du Canada soit tenue au courant rapidement et efficacement de tous les développements des combats auxquels participeront les soldats de langue française. Ces reportages auront une influence profonde sur le moral des civils.<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>369</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 174. 11-17-4-1 CBC National News Service News Stylizing. Letter, D. C. McArthur to Wm. H. Metcalfe, 27 January 1941.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid.

<sup>371</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC News Policy, File D - Editors' Conferences and Special Reports, 1940-50. “Conference of Editors CBC National News Service,” September 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 1942.

<sup>372</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC National News - general policy statements n.d., 1941-52, Memorandum, Marion Grange to D. C. McArthur, “CBC News,” 6 May 1946, “CBC News and The War Effort,” page 19.

<sup>373</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 438. 27-9-6 (pt. 3) CBC War Correspondents. Letter, G. R. Benoît to M. A. Frigon, 29 March 1943. [Translation: “It is of the utmost importance, in my opinion, that the most adequate provisions be made for the French speaking population of Canada to keep them quickly and efficiently informed

From the Halifax newsroom, V. F. Segee told McArthur on 18 June 1943 that he wanted reports focused on the Canadian soldiers, because, he believed, that human-interest stories were what people wanted to hear. In his letter he said,

I would like to hear more significant and general reports on the problems, thoughts, feelings and actions of the men overseas – how they are facing the prospects of action, their plans for the post-war period, what’s being done to combat the Piccadilly Commandos, etc. I would like to hear reports from our own men on international problems affecting Canada.

I believe that the people back home would like to hear how the men are actually behaving overseas, what they are seeing, whether or not and how they are improving their minds for post-war jobs, what they really expect from the people back home (not the usual keep-the-cigarettes-coming-mon [sic] stuff), what they hope to come back to, what they are doing (if anything) about it).

Are they thinking for themselves or taking a lead from their officers and auxiliary services? Certain types of young men were content before the war to hang around the corner drug store. Has their attitude been changed by the impact of war?

How are they getting along with the British, the Americans, other United Nations forces? Are Canadians becoming broader through such contacts? Are they doing a good-will job for Canada?

Are they thinking seriously of domestic and international problems, or are they becoming mentally lazy?

I believe that these and hundreds of other significant questions still remain to be answered, objectively and truthfully, without expressing too much of the reporters own preconceived ideas.

In the answering, I believe that we could do a big public service from overseas, and add dignity and increased interest to our features on the National News Bulletin at the same time.<sup>374</sup>

The suggestions certainly stuck; as McArthur went on to instruct CBC war correspondents to focus their reporting on the Canadian soldiers. Referring to Stursberg in a letter to Powley, McArthur explained what he wanted CBC war correspondents to do: “When he gets to Italy, I hope he will follow Halton’s lead and give listeners here the feeling that he is interpreting the life

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about all combat developments which involve French-speaking soldiers. These broadcasts have a profound effect on civilian morale.”]

<sup>374</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Powley, Overseas Unit – Correspondence June 1943. Letter, V.F. Segee to Dan McArthur, 18 June 1943.

of the fighting troops, including other ranks.”<sup>375</sup> To portray the war effort as a national enterprise, war correspondents also stressed that the soldiers came from all across Canada. “These are men from all over Canada,” Fairbairn said in a broadcast, “almost any place you’d care to name.”<sup>376</sup>

Reporting on the experience of Canadians overseas was the main priority for the Overseas Unit; CBC executives instructed their war correspondents to stay with the Canadians. When Benoît Lafleur attempted to cover other armies in other theatres of war, executives contested his requests. Frigon wrote to McArthur: Lafleur, he said,

should know that the main purpose of his being a CBC war correspondent is to keep Canadian listeners in touch with the Canadian army. I would not mind him taking short trips to Casa Blanca [sic] and Brazzaville, etc., but the bulk of his work should be connected with our own armed forces.<sup>377</sup>

The rare occasions wherein the war correspondents were able to leave the Canadian troops to cover an important event, such as the liberation of Paris, resulted in emotional episodes in their broadcasts of solemn goodbyes. As Halton reported when he left the Canadian Army to join the American entry into Paris: “A Canadian brigadier said, ‘You’re leaving us now?’. And certainly it was hard to leave the Canadians even for a few days. Those great soldiers who are entering into the victory after a long gruelling ordeal. But Paris was calling.”<sup>378</sup> Indeed, in his broadcast about the entry into Paris, Halton gave his listeners a somber reminder that the Canadian army was not there:

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<sup>375</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. McArthur, Dan (Toronto) and A.E. Powley (London, Eng.) – personal correspondence – 1944. Letter, D. C. McArthur to A. Powley, 12 January 1944.

<sup>376</sup> LAC. Fairbairn Papers MG30-E334. Berlin, D. Fairbairn reporting to CBC from, July 1 - Aug. 2, 1945. Broadcast Transcript, D. Fairbairn, 14 July 1945.

<sup>377</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Overseas Unit, Notes on CBC National News Service 1943-44. “October 23rd,” Teletype Frigon to McArthur [23 October 1944].

<sup>378</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Jul.-Aug. 1944. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 19 August 1944.

The only sad thing, it seemed to me, was that British and Canadian troops, who have done so much and suffered so much, were not taking part with their American and French comrades in the entry into Paris. They should have taken part in this glory – the most glorious thing I’ve ever seen. For years we have dreamed of this day, and tried to imagine what it would be like; and the reality is more wonderful than I’d ever expected.<sup>379</sup>

Halton was likely being earnest in expressing his devotion to the Canadian troops.<sup>380</sup> Many years later, Ouimet reflected about Halton: “he had come – while hating war – to love those units and the men that he wrote about and talked about.”<sup>381</sup> Ouimet, in his V-E Day broadcast, also implied that the saddest part of the war ending was that he would have to say goodbye to the very men he accompanied throughout North-West Europe. Ouimet ended his broadcast by recounting a Canadian colonel having stopped him from leaving the camp:

“You’re staying with us,” he [the colonel] said. “You claim the war will be over tonight. We sincerely doubt it. We believe we’ll be attacking in a few hours and I’d like you to wait until tomorrow before returning. If we attack, you come in with us. If it’s victory, we’ll have a drink together. Either way you’ll be with the same unit as on D Day.”<sup>382</sup>

Undoubtedly, the war correspondents were deeply embedded into the military, which ultimately prevented them from reporting the grimmest accounts of the war. Even then, it would be imprudent to deny their own agency. War correspondents were partial in the war. Gregory Clark, one of Canada’s most famous war correspondents for the *Toronto Star*, commented on their commitment to the Allied Cause:

In fact, there was little manipulating one way or the other. You were a Canadian, you were at war – there was no doubt about the justice or obligation to fight this war – and

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<sup>379</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Aug. - Sept. 1944. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 26 August 1944.

<sup>380</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Aug. - Sept. 1944. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 17 September 1944. Returning to Canada to deliver speeches for the national victory loan campaign, Halton delivered a broadcast wherein he described a fresh appreciation for what it meant to be Canadian after seeing the troops in action. “But now, this time,” he said, “I have seen Canadian soldiers in action; and having seen them, I have become a Canadian as I never was before.”

<sup>381</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 6. Interviews Research Files - Ouimet, Marcel 1978-1980. Letter, M. Ouimet to Miss Gail Beer, 26 February 1959.

<sup>382</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Marcel Ouimet, Overseas Unit – Reports from France, Italy, Holland (transcripts) 1943-1945. Broadcast Transcript, M. Ouimet, 5 May 1945.

you felt lucky to be performing the task you were best suited to do. This was the assignment of a lifetime....<sup>383</sup>

Moreover, they came to identify with the Canadian soldiers they covered. Their camaraderie with the soldiers, coupled with their desire to promote the war effort, helps to explain why their dispatches were crowded with heroic tales of Canadian deeds and appraisals. In the words of Timothy Balzer, “seeing themselves as part of an organization would discourage correspondents from writing negatively about it.”<sup>384</sup> Their duty as ‘soldiers’ clouded their responsibility as impartial journalists. Criticizing the national cause and reporting the grimmest realities of war, they knew, would have clashed with their patriotic convictions.

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<sup>383</sup> Gerald Clark, *No Mud on the Back Seat: Memoirs of a Reporter* (Montreal: Studio 9 Books & Music, 1993), 56.

<sup>384</sup> Balzer, 31.

## Chapter 5

### Broadcasting Home

The CBC confronted the remoteness of the Second World War. With the small exceptions of submarine attacks off the Canadian coasts and scattered Japanese balloon bombs drifting over western Canada, the physical consequences of war never reached the Canadian homeland.<sup>385</sup> Most Canadians did not travel to a theatre of war; fewer fought in or witnessed a battle. Veterans of the First World War could write appreciative letters to the CBC and relate that they “understand all” the “trials and tribulations” of the conflict.<sup>386</sup> But war was all but foreign for the majority of Canadians. As a result, Canadians on the homefront ran the risk of becoming blasé to their country’s war. If Canadians were going to stay invested in the war effort – accepting rationing, buying victory bonds, refusing to strike, and so forth – they needed to stay intimately connected to, and concerned about, the conflict overseas. As Albert Powley said to William Herbert in a letter, “Italy seems far enough from here [London]; at home, it’s even easier to forget, I suppose. And we need a live correspondent or two like you to bring the war there back to reality for the home folks.”<sup>387</sup> Through its radio coverage of the war, the CBC attempted to provide listeners with the vital link necessary to prevent them from becoming disinterested.

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<sup>385</sup> Mark Bourrie, *The Fog of War: Censorship of Canada’s Media in World War Two* (Madeira Park: Perseus Books Group, 2011), 15.

<sup>386</sup> Library Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada [hereafter, LAC]. Matthew Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Miscellaneous 1938-1944. Letter, the Secretary of the Canadian Legion to M. Halton, 14 September 1944.

<sup>387</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Powley, Overseas Unit – correspondence Jan. 1945. Letter, A. Powley to W. Herbert, 16 January 1944.

Reporting the war by radio opened a window through which Canadians were able to peer at distant lands. According to Ken Luffert's study on radio prior to World War Two,

Radio helped Canadian listeners to live vicariously by introducing them to personalities and places often well outside their usual ambit. The 'magic carpet' called radio worked because it allowed listeners to be introduced to these foreign voices and places on what seemed like their own terms, in their own homes.<sup>388</sup>

It was a novel idea to use radio to cover the frontlines of the war. But the intimate and dramatic capability of the medium proved ideal. "It was a thrill to listen to someone who was actually there," Peter Stursberg wrote about listening to radio from overseas, "it made you feel much closer to events in Europe than reading about them in the papers. That was the appeal of radio: its immediacy and the way it made you feel involved."<sup>389</sup> Indeed, through its combination of sound, intimacy, and imagination radio's influence could transport much more of the weight of the distant conflict directly into the Canadian home and consciousness.

Inherently, radio listeners were blind to the events that the medium broadcast. They had to compensate for their lack of visual stimulation by exploring the sounds they hear in their own mind. In the words of radio theorists Guy Starkey and Andrew Crisell, "what cannot be seen must be imagined."<sup>390</sup> 'Imagining from sound' was already a technique listeners were accustomed to as result of their experience with popular radio dramas. CBC war correspondents, too, encouraged their listeners to engage their imagination by inviting them to 'hear' or 'listen'. Moreover, noise in the recordings – whether a result of battle sounds, poor transmission quality, or the temperamental sound equipment – better enhanced the importance of the correspondents' invitation to their listeners. In order for listeners to make out the narrative that the war

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<sup>388</sup> Len Kuffert, "'What do you expect of this friend?': Canadian radio and the intimacy of broadcasting" *Media History* 15.3 (August 2009), 313.

<sup>389</sup> Peter Stursberg, *The Sound of War: Memoirs of a CBC Correspondent* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 17.

<sup>390</sup> Guy Starkey and Andrew Crisell, *Radio Journalism* (London: Sage, 2009), 103-4.

correspondents described, they often had to lean in and focus specifically on the audio when it was difficult to understand past the static. For instance, Stursberg would describe the battle around him by saying "... if you listen carefully you'll hear the whoosh of their shells going over our heads – and guns to the side of us...."<sup>391</sup> Such was a common mode of delivery for the radio war correspondents. "Now listen and you'll hear him call the plane," Halton similarly instructed his listeners to hear a regimental signal officer order an air strike, "[and] you'll hear the order given over the wireless and the sound of one gun firing."<sup>392</sup> According to Gerd Horten, visualizing the activity "made listeners feel as if they were partaking in the action." By addressing the audience with the personal pronoun 'you', the war correspondents summoned listeners to witness the events alongside them. Horten continues:

This technique was ideal for broadcasting, since it played on listeners' imaginations and pulled them out of their armchairs and into the cockpit of a fighter plane, onto the deck of a destroyer, or into a ditch on the front line. The 'you' used in radio was a powerful technique, especially since it was a human voice that addressed each listener as an individual.<sup>393</sup>

Thus, by coordinating their use of sound and voice to describe a scene of the conflict radio war correspondents stimulated the imagination of their listeners.

Broadcasting recorded sounds of the war was a particularly effective means utilized by the CBC to engross Canadians into the conflict overseas. Frontline recordings of explosions, ad-libbed narrations, and interviews dubbed into the broadcasts provided a greater sense of realism to activate the imagination of listeners. Ernest Bushnell, CBC's general supervisor of programmes, was a staunch advocate for using live recordings in CBC programming. In 1938,

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<sup>391</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 12 May 1944.

<sup>392</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 9 March 1944.

<sup>393</sup> Gerd Horten, *Radio Goes to War: The Cultural Politics of Propaganda during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 52-3.

after visiting London during the Sudetenland Crisis, Bushnell wrote a report recommending that the CBC improve its presentation of the news by broadcasting recorded material of actual events.

Providing a speech by the British Prime Minister as an example, he said:

As an example I recall the morning the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain flew to Munich. He was not only met at the flying field by newspaper reporters but by the BBC with its microphones and recording equipment. That night in the news broadcasts when referring to the departure of the Prime Minister the technique used was something like this. 'This morning the Prime Minister left for Munich. Before getting into the special aeroplane which was to take him to the important conference he said' – and here a record of the Prime Minister's statement in his own voice was cut in. Probably that same statement had been carried in millions of copies of newspapers during the day but I believe that it had a much greater effect given to the people by the voice, or a reproduction of the voice, of the man who made it.<sup>394</sup>

Hearing the actual sounds of a news event could provide a more effective sense of immediacy for their listeners than simply re-narrating it.

The marvel of broadcasting sounds of war back into Canadian homes became a cornerstone of the CBC's efforts to make Canadians more engaged in the international conflict. "Almost any sort of a live recording goes over big here," Robert S. Bryden of the CBC newsroom in Toronto said in a letter to Powley later in the war, "anything as lets lugs like me get an earful of what is actually going on."<sup>395</sup> Frontline recordings were able to deliver explosions, gunfire, and other sounds of the war into Canadian living rooms. In a newspaper article of the *Calgary Herald* on 22 July 1944, a writer offered "long-overdue applause to the [CBC's] staff of overseas reporters," saying,

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<sup>394</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 14. CBC - News and Programme Orientation - memoranda 1938 - Chapter 10. E. L. Bushnell, "Canadian Press News," 1938, 1-2.

<sup>395</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Powley, Overseas Unit – correspondence March 1944. Letter, R. S. Bryden (CBC newsroom, Toronto) to A. Powley, 23 March 1944.

More effective than the commentators themselves are the sound effects which emphasize their actual reports. The pounding of an artillery barrage, the clatter of machine guns and the roar of airplanes provide a punch unequalled by any other means.<sup>396</sup>

Indeed, CBC war correspondents often used recorded sounds to tell the story for their listeners.

Powley described Ouimet's use of this broadcasting technique:

He had the wit to be silent – it was a novel idea in those days, when the average special events broadcaster seemed bent on a perpetual contest between his voice and the surrounding effects – and let the sound tell its story.<sup>397</sup>

It became a common practice for the war correspondents to let the sounds of battle, rather than words, engage the imagination of their listeners. To stress the importance of sound, they repeatedly said in their broadcasts that words would not suffice. “I cannot describe it to you properly but I can give you a sound picture so that you can imagine yourself on this rocky hilltop,” Stursberg said in one instance before introducing a recording, “[and] this is a recording we made there...”<sup>398</sup> “It’s an amazing and terrifying sight and yet thrilling,” he said in another broadcast.<sup>399</sup> “I don’t know how to describe it properly in words and I think it’s easier for you to picture it by listening...”<sup>400</sup> Similarly, Donald Fairbairn, from the cockpit of a plane, stressed how hearing the sounds of rockets could supply much more than any of his words could offer:

... To see and hear these rockets whistling through the air is something which no-one could ever forget. As a matter of fact you can hardly see them but you certainly can hear them and a more terrifying sound I can't imagine especially after you've seen what damage they can do. Rockets and the aircraft that carry them are truly amongst our most important weapons of war today.<sup>401</sup>

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<sup>396</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 434. 27-4 (pt. 1) CBC National News Service - Overseas News General. *Calgary Herald*, “Western Airwaves,” 22 July 1944.

<sup>397</sup> A. E. Powley, *Broadcast from the Front: Canadian Overseas Radio in the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 57.

<sup>398</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 8 April 1944.

<sup>399</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 12 May 1944.

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>401</sup> LAC. Fairbairn Papers MG30-E334. Brussels, D. Fairbairn of the RCAF reporting to the CBC from, September 8 - October 3, 1944. Broadcast Transcript, D. Fairbairn, 16 September 1944.

Halton made use of the same technique in plenty of his broadcasts as well. “We had the CBC microphones with us and you will hear sounds that speak louder, in more ways, than any commentary,” he told his listeners in one of his broadcasts.<sup>402</sup> “A bombardment like that can’t be wrapped up and brought home to you in words,” Halton said during another before he played a recording.<sup>403</sup>

The strategic placement of war recordings within the radio broadcasts provided an immersive experience for civilians unheard of in previous wars. In Robert T. Bowman’s broadcast on 15 June 1941 for the CBC’s programme ‘We Have Been There’ he inserted sounds of bombings captured in London to provide his listeners with a greater sense of what the Blitz was like. Bowman relayed the Blitz back into the safety of Canadian homes by presenting his audience with an imaginative scenario as if they too were part of a war-zone:

You’re listening to me tonight in the comfort of your own home. Your lights are full on and your curtains are drawn and if an aeroplane flies overhead it might just as well be a mosquito for all it will worry you. Well, how would you like to experience four minutes of blitz. How would you like to draw your curtains and imagine yourself let’s say in London. I’m going to give you four minutes of actual blitz conditions. I’m going to have German planes flying over your house, the A.A. guns going for them and I’m going to have some bombs come mighty close to you. This isn’t a fake. This blitz you’re going to experience in the next four minutes is an actual sound recording made in London. You will hear the air raid sirens announcing the approach of German planes and you will hear the guns starting to go for them. And don’t forget if you are in London right now you would probably do the same thing. You’d sit right in your living room and take it.

Immediately following this, Bowman played a recording of bombings captured by the Overseas Unit in London. He proceeded to give Canadians another, rather playful, scenario by inviting them to participate in an imaginary bombing right in their living room:

I can prove to you that you can hear a bomb for nine seconds. You listen to this big fellow coming down and I’ll tell you when you can start to hear it. Just glance at your

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<sup>402</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 3. CBC Broadcasts 1940-1943. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 27 Oct 1943.

<sup>403</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Jul.-Aug. 1944. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 18 July 1944.

watch and you'll see that it's nine seconds before it exploded. If you want to play a little game too, pick out a place in your room where you will be safe from flying glass if your windows are blown in and dive for it. See if you can get there on time before the explosion. All right? Got your spot picked out? On with the blitz – [what followed was a recording of a bomb falling then exploding]<sup>404</sup>

Engaging to the war by listening to the radio was not a unique experience in Canada. In her history of the BBC's propaganda efforts during the war, Siân Nicolas asserted that "war features helped listeners to feel, however, vicariously, that even in their homes they were part of the struggle."<sup>405</sup> For the CBC it was critical to remind Canadians that they were still involved in the war. It was also important to reassure them that the war effort required their continued contribution. CBC war correspondents, as such, used their reports to put the war shortages in Canada into perspective. "So, at last you can see the absolute proof of the reasons why you haven't much gas to drive your cars," Fairbairn said in one broadcast, "that gas is driving your armies and air forces through Germany today. It's going a long way toward tipping the scales in our favour and the swing of the scales is increasing every minute."<sup>406</sup> Justifying the need to coordinate resources for the war effort was made a lot easier when war correspondents were able to tell Canadians what their contributions meant from the frontlines. They often went about explaining this in terms that their listeners would understand. In another broadcast, Fairbairn explained the difficulties of mobilizing a modern army in Europe by comparing it to a hypothetical scenario in Canada:

... Food and petrol are somewhat bulky and they can't carry large quantities and neither of those items last very long!! When you hear about long supply lines you probably think, 'Yes, that does present some difficulties,' but have you stopped to translate that difficulty

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<sup>404</sup> R. T. Bowman, "Broadcast June 15, 1941" in *We Have Been There. Authoritative reports by qualified observers who have returned from the war zones, as presented over the CBC National Network* (Toronto: CBC Publications, 1941), 42-43.

<sup>405</sup> Siân Nicholas, *The Echo of War: home front propaganda and wartime BBC, 1939-45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 220.

<sup>406</sup> LAC. Fairbairn Papers MG30-E334. Germany, D. Fairbairn of the RCAF reporting to CBC from, March April May, 1945 (mainly from 2nd Br. army front). Broadcast Transcript, D. Fairbairn, 2 April 1945.

into practical terms? Think of moving a city like Toronto or Montreal twenty or thirty miles in a day!! Not the buildings but just the people and their immediate necessities... it's bad enough trying to get out of one of those cities for a week-end... at least, it used to be... but try moving the whole works and not using the railways either, just the roads and the roads here aren't like our highways. Some of them were but a few bomb or shell craters make a big difference....<sup>407</sup>

Similarly, in another broadcast, Fairbairn described the effects of the Allied bombings on the German railroad system by comparing it to railroads in Canada:

... You can imagine what would happen to ordinary peace-time freight if the line from Toronto to Montreal were cut... think of the stuff that would pile up. Then take out the lines through Peterboro[ugh], Smith Falls and Ottawa so there would be little or no communication and you have some idea of what's going on here....<sup>408</sup>

And, in yet another broadcast, Fairbairn illustrated the destruction of Germany caused by war for his listeners by suggesting that they imagine what the devastation of war would look like on the Canadian homeland:

What would be left of Canada if we went systematically from east to west... from Fredericton to Victoria and blew up and burned every town that had a railway or a factory? There would be a few places left and the country would be there but what would be left of Canada?... The life and spirit of it? Yes, I'll admit that the spirit would be there... you couldn't break that but add to all that destruction the armies of the free world standing well inside the border at Montreal in the east and Winnipeg in the west and then you may see why Germany today is a crushed and broken nation.<sup>409</sup>

Such examples evoked an inward-looking pathos to get Canadians more involved with the overseas conflict.

A premeditated consequence of the CBC war broadcasts was to stimulate the war effort at home. J. Greenblat, an editor of the *Swift Current Sun* in Saskatchewan, lauded the broadcasts as “a great tonic for anyone inspired to complacency in this war.” Speaking on behalf of the

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<sup>407</sup> LAC. Fairbairn Papers MG30-E334. France, D. Fairbairn of the RCAF reporting to CBC from September 1-6, 1944. Broadcast Transcript, D. Fairbairn, 6 September 1944.

<sup>408</sup> LAC. Fairbairn Papers MG30-E334. Holland, D. Fairbairn of the RCAF reporting to CBC from, October 4-5, 1944. Broadcast Transcript, D. Fairbairn, 5 October 1944.

<sup>409</sup> LAC. Fairbairn Papers MG30-E334. Germany, D. Fairbairn of the RCAF reporting to CBC from, March April May, 1945 (mainly from 2nd Br. army front). Broadcast Transcript, D. Fairbairn, 7 April 1945.

newspaper, Greenblat said that they hoped that by listening to the broadcasts “civilians get a more intimate understanding of just what our boys are going through” at the frontlines, “because in war everyone should be at war, whether here or over there.” He implored the usefulness of the broadcasts for the war effort:

The broadcasts should be monitored in war plants where strike organizers work; they should be made compulsory listening for people who spread unrest and disquiet for political advantage. They give people something to think about. It’s really too bad, but only those who went through it in the last war can really listen and get a ‘true’ appreciation of what each boom and bang means. Just the same men like Matthew Halton are heroes of this war in every sense and doing a grand job.<sup>410</sup>

Broadcasting the recorded sounds of war granted listeners a greater sense of what the war was like. This effect was repurposed by the CBC to provide motivation for workers in war industries. The CBC was certainly concerned about waning morale in Canadian factories. At the National Programme Office in April 1943, the committee found that, of Canadians, only “30% felt that they were doing important war jobs.”<sup>411</sup> To alleviate the humdrum feeling of labourers, the CBC attempted to provide workers with audio evidence of their hard-work from the front. CBC editors asked the war correspondents to accompany their live recordings by referencing Canadian war industries. For instance, “... that was the sound of a Canadian-made tank churning through the soil of England,” Bryden suggested to Powley as a possibility, “a tank soon to be digging up the dirt in France.”<sup>412</sup> To this end, the war correspondents attempted to revitalize the

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<sup>410</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 438. 27-9-6 (pt. 3) CBC War Correspondents. Newspaper Excerpt, *Sun*, J. Greenblat, “Sound Picture of Battle,” 9 February 1944.

<sup>411</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 4. CBC - National Programme Conferences, N.D., and 1942 - 1947 – minutes. “Minutes of the National Programme Conference April 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, 1943,” “Trends in Canadian Public Opinion,” 5-8 April 1943, page 3; William R. Young, “Academics and Social Scientists versus the Press - the Policies of the Bureau of Public Information and the Wartime Information Board, 1939 to 1945,” *Historical Papers* 13.1 (1978), 239. Statistics, such as these, were available to CBC staff as a result of its membership on the Wartime Administrative Board (WIB). William R. Young argues that the academics and social scientists of the WIB increasingly saw the benefits of utilizing such statistical data to guide the country’s publicity campaigns.

<sup>412</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Powley, Overseas Unit – correspondence March 1944. Letter, R. S. Bryden to A. Powley, 23 March 1944.

war effort in Canada, as Ouimet did, by combining war recordings with such annotations as “the shells that have just whistled by are Canadian shells and they are being fired by Canadian guns.”<sup>413</sup> In a similar way, Peter Stursberg at least once reported on the use of “Canadian-built vehicles” from General Motors in Oshawa, such as “our old trustworthy ‘Chevvy’ [sic]” in Italy “doing their part in the fight for freedom.” He added,

If the fellows back home who sweated to turn out these countless cars moving forward into tough engagements could only see the splendid product of their toil and skill fighting against rough conditions, they’d be just as proud as the lads who are in this scrap.<sup>414</sup>

Accordingly, General Motors published Stursberg’s report, sharing it amongst its workers. “Men and women in the plants of General Motors of Canada feel a flow of pride as they hear of and see the results of their labour,” General Motors advertised to its employees, “[and] from thousands of work benches here at General Motors comes assurance that they will be kept rolling – ‘till Victory comes’.”<sup>415</sup> In another case, the Industrial Information Division of the Wartime Information Board (WIB) requested Halton to do a broadcast on artillery and shells. This was part of his subsequent broadcast:

This is a talk about the guns. Gun, guns, guns. All day and all night, the incessant thudding and pounding of the guns. All day and all night the rolling thunder of the guns and the screaming tempest of steel... Helping to win this close, bloody and ferocious battle in Normandy. Making the face of France a pitted and hideous thing, yet helping to shorten the war. Saving lives and fair cities even as they destroy lives and cities. Listen – always the guns [Halton placed a recording of gun fire here]. Always the guns and yet never enough guns.<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>413</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Marcel Ouimet, Overseas Unit – Reports from France, Italy, Holland (transcripts) 1943-1945. Broadcast Transcript, M. Ouimet, 24 October 1943.

<sup>414</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 1. Correspondence, Clippings. 1943. Cable Excerpt in *The Daily Colonist*, P. Stursberg, “Power Drive Through Italy!,” 15 December 1943.

<sup>415</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 1. Correspondence, Clippings. 1943. Magazine Article in *The Daily Colonist*, General Motors, “Power Drive Through Italy!,” 15 December 1943.

<sup>416</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Jul.-Aug. 1944. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 22 July 1944.

The recordings of artillery fire in Halton's broadcasts provided listeners with auditory evidence of their hard work; he also used it to show how frequently shells were fired at the front, thereby better explaining the continuous need for more to win the war. "So you see, we need all the shells you can send," he beseeched his listeners with another recording, "monstrous that sounds like that should ever be heard. But give us still more shells, make it still more monstrous, and the thing will end."<sup>417</sup> The response to Halton's broadcast was gratuitous. The WIB said that they planned "to make extensive use of it in the shell plants, both by transcription and through the use of the material in the broadcast."<sup>418</sup> Upon a handful of requests, the scripts of Halton's broadcast were circulated to workers under the title "The Shells You Make." At the same time, Ouimet made broadcasts in French for factories in Quebec.<sup>419</sup> Such coordination between the CBC Overseas Unit and Canadian war industries became a norm throughout the war. In another broadcast, Halton accompanied the recording of a "really big barrage from 2, 400 guns" by adding "you fellows in Sorel who manufacture these twenty-five pounders, listen to them in anger." The owners of the Sorel plant wrote to Halton shortly after, writing "we have played your recording in the factory. You have no idea of what it has done to boost morale." They added, later in person to Ouimet:

You don't know what the broadcast meant to us. Our people were wondering what was happening to those guns. They didn't realize until then that most of Montgomery's barrages were mounted with twenty-five pounders from Sorel.<sup>420</sup>

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<sup>417</sup> Ibid.

<sup>418</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Overseas Unit, Notes on CBC National News Service 1943-44. Letter Excerpt, David Petegorsky (Director, Industrial Information Division, WIB) to D. C. McArthur, 26 July 1944, page 42.

<sup>419</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 433. 27-4 (pt. 1) CBC National News Service - Overseas News General. Letter, D. Petegorsky to D. C. McArthur, 16 August 1944.

<sup>420</sup> Powley, 58.

Requests for different sounds from the front which could be repurposed to inspire Canadian workers were frequent. Some sounds were easier for the correspondents to capture than others. In response to a request from Dan McArthur to record a broadcast about the tire shortage in Canada and abroad, Halton wrote to Powley:

Now, MacArthur asks through you for a fourteen and a half minute one on tyres [sic]. I feel that this is a long time in which to talk on tires, urgent need for. The one on guns was easy. Guns go bang and kill chaps, often, but tires do that only when they burst at 70 m.p.g. So the most I can promise is a four and a half minuter – which might become nine minutes if on investigation the subject reveals now-unsuspected mines of interest...<sup>421</sup>

Showing Canadians how their contributions at home impacted the front was crucial for victory loan campaigns and the Red Cross. In cooperation with the Canadian Red Cross Society, John Kannawin and the Overseas Unit received requests to report on the efforts of the Canadian Blood Donors Service and the Red Cross at the front. The goal for such broadcasts was “to bring home to the Canadian public the value of the donations they are making.”<sup>422</sup> Accordingly, war correspondents sent out to report gripping anecdotes about the lengths to which military hospital doctors had to go and sacrifices nurses had to make in order to put the contributions of individual Canadians into perspective. “I would like you to imagine what it means to some sick Canadian to be given a pair of flannel pyjamas and a warm dressing gown,” Fairbairn reported in one broadcast, “‘with the compliments of the Canadian Red Cross’.” He told his listeners that each donation made to the Red Cross was indispensable for those at the front: “More important still, are the pneumonia jackets which are also supplied by you folks back home... Every day in the field, we have occasion to be grateful for Red Cross help. All the way up from Normandy we have used the bandages you send us.” Even more significant, was the need for a steady supply

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<sup>421</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Powley, Overseas Unit – correspondence Jan. 1945. Letter, M. Halton to A. Powley, 6 January 1945.

<sup>422</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Powley, Overseas Unit – correspondence Nov-Dec. 1944...11492: Letter, C. R. Delafield (Supervisor of Institutional Broadcasts) to J. Kannawin, 21 November 1944.

“of blood and plasma from Canada.” The correspondents attempted to humanize the importance of donating blood in Canada by describing how soldiers avoided death and would return home only because of the supply of blood.<sup>423</sup>

Bringing the war home for Canadians was crucial in order to remind them why the country was at war. Reporting about Nazi atrocities and the Holocaust was geared towards this end. On 30 September 1944 Halton began his broadcast by quoting the somber thoughts of a Canadian soldier at the Breendonk concentration camp in Belgium: “once or twice in this war, when things were tough, I wondered what I was fighting for. Now I know.”<sup>424</sup> In such cases, Halton and the CBC war correspondents were fighting against the mass disbelief in North America about the rumours of unbounded Nazi savagery. This skepticism was residue remaining from the rampant spread of false gossip about German atrocities committed during the First World War.<sup>425</sup> As Halton confronted the skeptics in his Breendonk broadcast, “there are still people who ask if the cruelties of the Gestapo can be as bad as they say, and I think the concentration camp at Breendonk should be, in part, described.”<sup>426</sup> Later, Halton decided it was necessary to do another broadcast in order to remind listeners the justification of their cause. As he wrote to Powley, “yes, I should do a follow-up on Breendonk, especially as so many people at home said aren’t-these-atrocity-stories-all-propaganda.”<sup>427</sup> Powley agreed, saying that it was important to keep broadcasting “atrocity stories, in season and out.” He added, “there’s such a

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<sup>423</sup> LAC. Fairbairn Papers MG30-E334. Holland, D. Fairbairn of the RCAF reporting to CBC from, Jan. Feb. 1945. Broadcast Transcript, D. Fairbairn, 13 February 1945.

<sup>424</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Aug. – Sept. 1944. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 30 September 1944.

<sup>425</sup> Mark Bourrie, *Fighting words: Canada's best war reporting* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2012), 44.

<sup>426</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Aug. – Sept. 1944. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 30 September 1944.

<sup>427</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Powley, Overseas Unit – correspondence Jan. 1945. Letter, M. Halton to A. Powley, 6 January 1945.

mass of willful and stupid refusal to believe that the world needs some people who will come back every now and then and tell them ‘But I saw this...’.”<sup>428</sup> Subsequently, in Halton’s next broadcast on Breendonk, he dismissed the skepticism by describing the systematic and remorseless way in which the Gestapo rounded up young Belgian men and then murdered them. As he described himself looking over the bodies of murdered Belgians, he said “I thought of a man in Toronto who had come to me when I was there recently and said: ‘Most of these atrocity stories are just propaganda, aren’t they?’” He concluded his story with an argument that Canada needed to fight in order to put an end to these outrages:

In a Europe in which these incredible Nazis have piled mountains of torture upon mountains of murder, until a fog of horror and suffering rises from the unhappy continent, in such a Europe, perhaps the story of the 34 murdered young men of Bande, in the Ardennes, is not a very big thing. But it’s everything we’re fighting for. If you could only see it, instead of just hearing about it, there where such stories seem too bad to be true! If you could see the pitiful young bodies – all the young men of a murdered for fun, or spite, or caprice, or whatever it was – village – and the women coming for their loved ones – then you realize what a gang of homicidal maniacs has been let loose on Europe these last few years.<sup>429</sup>

There was little pleasure in reporting about the Holocaust. As Halton confessed to Jean, “I hate writing atrocity stories now, and especially I hate saying them on the air.” But he felt that it was his duty to send them back to those at home so that skeptics would start to believe in them and realize the justness of their cause. He continued, “because their [sic] are so many skeptics, or rather cynics, about atrocity stories, I feel I should do them occasionally when I have something that Ive [sic] seen myself and whose authenticity cannot be questioned.”<sup>430</sup> It was necessary to

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<sup>428</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Powley, Overseas Unit – correspondence Jan. 1945. Letter, A. Powley to M. Halton, 15 January 1945.

<sup>429</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Jan. - Apr. 1945. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 13 January 1945.

<sup>430</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Personal - From Matthew Halton to Jean Halton – 1945. Letter, M. Halton to J. Halton, 7 April 1945.

make Canadians understand why the cause was important to prevent them from losing interest in the war, especially when victory was in sight.

The broadcasts of the CBC war correspondents brought the war closer to Canadians.

CBC Producer Ken Pagniez recalled his conversations with one listener:

... She said it'd bring [the war] home to them, nearly 4 thousand miles away from all this and when they heard Halton reports, it sort of brought it home to them – My God, there was a fight going on over there and these guys were getting killed over there whereas when you read it in the newspapers, it's somehow remote but when you hear Halton or one of the others talking – when you hear these guns going off in the [background], it tended to bring it home to them and they felt much more involved in what was going on.<sup>431</sup>

Halton, in particular, garnered a considerable following in Canada. The collection of fan mail written to Matthew Halton testifies to the extent that the CBC war coverage was able to connect Canadians to the conflict overseas. “He did have that urgency in his delivery that demanded your attention,” Pagniez said about him,

and his marvellous ability to paint pictures with his words really brought home to the people in Canada just what these C[ana]d[ia]n soldiers were going through as they slogged thru[sic] the mud of Italy and the cornfields of Normandy.<sup>432</sup>

Nearly every Canadian could claim some connection with a person serving overseas. Thus, family, friends and relatives of servicemen grew to appreciate Halton and the other correspondents for delivering information related to their loved ones in the armed services. After hearing Halton talk about the North Shore Regiment, one listener from North Bay, Ontario whose brother died fighting with the battalion, wrote to him, saying “I would like to take this opportunity to tell you how much your broadcast... meant to my mother, sisters and myself.”<sup>433</sup>

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<sup>431</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 6. Interviews Research Files - Pagniez, Ken 1979. Interview Transcript, “Ken Pagniez, CBC Producer, Ottawa, (Current Affairs),” 8 February 1979.

<sup>432</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 6. Interviews Research Files - Pagniez, Ken 1979. Interview Transcript, “Ken Pagniez, CBC Producer, Ottawa, (Current Affairs),” 8 February 1979.

<sup>433</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Miscellaneous 1938-1944. Letter, North Bay, Ontario to M. Halton, 24 October 1944.

Listeners tuned into the CBC in hopes of bringing themselves closer to the ones they missed.

Another listener, Mrs. Grace Burt-Martin from Saanichton, British Columbia, wrote to the CBC on behalf of “we mothers & wives of Canada” to thank Halton for providing them with an opportunity to connect with their boys again. “So easy to lavish superlatives of praise for a truly outstanding job of reporting,” she wrote,

so hard to express the heart’s gratitude of watching, waiting women of whom I have been just one, who have heavy breathes on your words about our boys in the dangers & horrors you so intimately shared with them, & so brought home to us. Our hearts throbbed with the vibrant urgency of your voice spanning apace, so that whether we would or no, you compelled us for a few moments to live with our men over there even as you did. Only your own intense sincerity could accomplish that miracle.

Referencing the formulaic way in which the CBC war correspondents opened and signed-off their broadcasts, Mrs. Burt-Martin told him that ““This is Matthew Halton of the CBC’ have been comforting words to hear through these troubled years, a hallmark to the troubled.”<sup>434</sup>

Principal among the recorded material sought after by the Overseas Unit were interviews with Canadian soldiers. Bushnell believed that the CBC had a duty “to bring to those remaining at home information about, and, indeed, messages and personal greetings from those who are serving in the armed services in distant lands.”<sup>435</sup> Initially, the CBC designed the Overseas Unit largely to fulfill that task. Unlike in the Great War, journalists in the Second World War were allowed by military authorities to report the names of individual soldiers below the rank of major. This enabled the CBC to broadcast recordings of soldiers, along with their names and hometowns, over Canadian radio.<sup>436</sup> “Halton always used to try and mention names as much as

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<sup>434</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Miscellaneous 1945-1949. Letter, Mrs. Grace Burt-Martin to M. Halton, 4 June 1945.

<sup>435</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers MG30-E250, vol. 4. Bushnell, E.L. - Personal typed record of speeches.... 1941-57. Speech, E.L. Bushnell, “The Role of Radio in Wartime – Canada,” Columbus, Ohio, May 1941.

<sup>436</sup> Gene Allen, *Making National News: A History of Canadian Press* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 136.

possible,” Pagniez said, “[and when] somebody at home suddenly hears their son’s name mentioned and they know, at least at that time, anyway, that he was alive.”<sup>437</sup> Whenever workable, the CBC contacted the families of soldiers prior to the broadcast or a re-broadcasting of a recording with their loved ones. An immediate success, this initiative allowed Canadians at home to once again listen to a familiar voice stationed overseas. Regularly, requests for records or typewritten transcripts of the interviews and broadcasts bombarded CBC newsrooms. The steady stream of appreciative ‘fan mail’ written to the CBC and its war correspondents is telling of what it meant for the morale of Canadians at home. Between August 1944 and February 1945, alone, the CBC received 150 penned letters.<sup>438</sup> “Thank you very much for the trouble you have taken to let me have this report which I find very interesting indeed,” wrote one father from Alberta after Andrew Cowan mentioned his son on the HMCS Lunenburg. “We have only one boy on this, but thanks to the Censor, we get no information about the kind of work this ship has been doing.”<sup>439</sup> For many, the broadcasts were the only way in which families received any information about what their loved ones doing overseas. For instance, to thank Cowan for his broadcast on the HMCS Lunenburg, Mrs. Laydik wrote to express her “sincerest thanks for” the CBC’s “kindness in sending... the script of the broadcast.” She said,

I did enjoy reading it and the other members of the family did, too. This is about the only way we find out about any action my brother has seen or been in, as he is the type that doesn’t talk... Thanks again, for a favor which we all appreciate – more than we can say – and for the script which had made us all quite happy, and proud, too.<sup>440</sup>

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<sup>437</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 6. Interviews Research Files - Pagniez, Ken 1979. Interview Transcript, “Ken Pagniez, CBC Producer, Ottawa, (Current Affairs),” 8 February 1979.

<sup>438</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. News Roundup, Commentaries, CBC News 1941-50. Internal Memorandum, Marion Grange (Press & Information Service) to D. C. McArthur, “CBC News Round-up,” 13 March 1946, page 4.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid., page 4-5.

<sup>440</sup> LAC. Cowan Papers MG30-E298, Vol. 16 - C.B.C. Overseas Unit and C.B.C. International Service (1943-1954). Personal Correspondence Overseas Unit, 1943-45. Letter, Mrs. John Laydik to A. Cowan, 28 September 1945.

Even when the CBC war correspondents described the landscape in the theatres of war they did so by relating it back to Canada. However, some historians and journalists have lambasted the war correspondents for reporting on the small pictures of the war, especially their frequent commentary on the landscape. Ralph Allen, war correspondent for the *Globe and Mail*, said that some of his work offered little more than a “frail little travelogue.”<sup>441</sup> Certainly, the CBC war correspondents created a steady stream of broadcasts pervading with commentary about the landscape and weather of the areas they visited. In fact, the CBC’s *Guide for News Editors* advised the news staff to round “out material with authoritative background material” such as “geographical and historical aspects of a town.”<sup>442</sup> In doing so, the news commentator would add to their credibility with their knowledge. Even Fairbairn admitted his tendency to fill his broadcasts with reports about the weather during one of his broadcasts:

Tonight it’s the same old story... the weather hampered operations in the air. You must be as fed up with that refrain as we are trundling around in the rain and mud. But if you get tired of it, may I remark that we don’t like singing the damp refrain any more than you like listening to it. After sitting here for fifteen minutes trying to think of something interesting to tell you, that’s all that came to mind, so, just for fun I went back through my notes for the past month... and since the 16<sup>th</sup> of September I find that there are 17 days with reports such as this.<sup>443</sup>

But it would be wrong to dismiss the reports of the war correspondents as meaningless travelogues or weather reports. Although they may have been compensating for lack of exciting, newsworthy material, descriptively setting the scene for listeners could also allow reporters to provide the former with a greater sense of immersion into the narrative.

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<sup>441</sup> Bourrie, *Fighting words: Canada's best war reporting*, 212.

<sup>442</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. CBC News Policy, File A - Basic Policy 1940-52. “CBC News Bureau: Guide for News Editors,” 1 January 1941.

<sup>443</sup> LAC. Fairbairn Papers MG30-E334. Holland, D. Fairbairn of the RCAF reporting to CBC from, October 11-22, 1944. Broadcast Transcript, D. Fairbairn, 16 October 1944.

Vivid descriptions of battlefields served a much greater function of enlarging the Canadian perspective about the conflict and the world. They enabled listeners to better imagine the distant lands where their soldiers ventured. By educating the public about such things, far away battlefields became less foreign. CBC news editors suggested their reporters provide “interesting and informative account[s] of the weather and conditions generally on the Italian front” specifically for the school broadcasts.<sup>444</sup> Radio war correspondents thus encouraged their listeners to follow along their stories and the Allied campaign by expanding their imagination with the aid of maps. They invited listeners to actively ‘see’ where the battles were taking place around European landmarks, towns, and cities. “Now glance at your map,” Halton would say in his broadcast, “[and] one glance tells the story....”<sup>445</sup> Or “look at the map and you’ll see the German town of Emmerich, a few miles southeast of Nijmegen and Arnhem,” he said in another broadcast, “then look south. Only forty miles to the south is Essen....”<sup>446</sup> Likewise, Stursberg invited his listeners to use a map in his broadcasts,

If you look at the map you will see that there are not many roads on the Adriatic Coast. Supply is one of the worst problems in this offensive. The Canadians are using narrow country lanes and cart tracks which are now ankle deep in dust.<sup>447</sup>

As did Fairbairn,

... The front is now approaching double that length, which by looking at a map, will give you an idea of the advance so far. It’s as much as four and a half miles in places and has taken our troops into the first sight of the Siegfried Line.<sup>448</sup>

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<sup>444</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 434. 27-4 (pt. 1) CBC National News Service - Overseas News General. Internal Memorandum, W. Hogg (Senior Editor, Toronto) to Omer Renaud (CBC Montreal) and Kenneth Caple (CBC Vancouver), “Disc for Schools News,” 17 March 1944.

<sup>445</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Jul.-Aug. 1944. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 10 August 1944.

<sup>446</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Aug. - Sept. 1944. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton 22 September 1944.

<sup>447</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 2 September 1944.

<sup>448</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. D. Fairbairn, Reporting from Belgium and Holland, NW Europe Campaign (transcripts) 1944-45. Broadcast Transcript, D. Fairbairn, 9 February 1945.

CBC correspondents would frequently tell their listeners to mark off specific points on their maps, teaching them where mountains, railroads, and battles in the far off theatres of war were.<sup>449</sup> Whether reading the newspapers or listening to radio, Canadians were eager to follow along the Allied campaign with maps. “I had maps of the European theatre showing where all the armies were and I was moving them,” Norman Griesdorf from Vancouver recalled.<sup>450</sup> As the war spread into various parts of the world, Canadians were thus exposed to many unfamiliar or exotic place name or personal names. CBC news editors and reporters worked to ensure that they properly pronounced everything so as not to offend listeners or make names “unrecognizable to the ordinary listener.”<sup>451</sup> The geography lessons of the war broadcasts made it easier for Canadians to grasp a greater conception of what the entire span of the war looked like.

Predominant among the ways in which CBC war correspondents described the European landscape was by referencing it back to Canada. While stationed in England, Jack Peach covered the Canadian Forestry Corps in a broadcast for the CBC, claiming that the landscape reminded him of home: “We had to drive quite a distance into the wooden hills, away from any town,” he said, “and as our car wound up a hillside trail, I thought how much like the Eastern slopes of the Canadian Rockies this country looked....”<sup>452</sup> In their broadcasts, war correspondents used

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<sup>449</sup> LAC” Fairbairn Papers MG30-E334. Holland, D. Fairbairn of the RCAF reporting to CBC from, October 11-22, 1944. Broadcast Transcript, D. Fairbairn, 15 October 1944.

<sup>450</sup> Ted Barris, *Days of Victory: Canadians Remember, 1939–1945* (Toronto: Thomas Altenfus, 2005), 171.

<sup>451</sup> Warner Troyer, *The Sound & The Fury: An Anecdotal History of Canadian Broadcasting* (Toronto: Personal Library, 1982), 90-91. According to CBC news editor policy during the war: “The policy consistently followed by the CBC has been to consult the best available printed and personal authorities, and to pronounce foreign names with such an approximation to the correct pronunciation as will leave the announcer free from the charge either of conscious superiority or careless ignorance.”

<sup>452</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 433. 27-2 (pt. 1). Broadcast Excerpt in *Daily Herald*, J. Peach, “Jack Peach of CBC Overseas Unit Pays Visit to Canadian Forestry Corps and Finds Canadians are Doing Colossal Job,” 6 Feb 1942.

comparisons to Canada which allowed listeners to better visualize the appearance of the European landscapes.

During the Italian campaign, they continually made comparisons to home. The mountains of Italy were a particularly illustrative link. Stursberg commented in one broadcast that “the high Appenines [sic]... brings memories flooding back into the minds of the Canadians of their own valleys and peaks.”<sup>453</sup> In another broadcast, Stursberg said “... these Italian mountains that look so much like the Rockies.”<sup>454</sup> Then, broadcasting from the Chiana Valley he made a different comparison: “We might have been in the Laurentians and the soft hills rimming the valley through which the Canadians and the British of the Eighth Army have fought are very much like the hills of Quebec.”<sup>455</sup> Such variety allowed for more Canadians across Canada to fill in their imaginary knowledge of the Italian countryside by making use of their existing memories of the Canadian landscape. During the Italian campaign Stursberg once said that “great patches of red poppies... remind me of the fields of tulips back on Vancouver Island.”<sup>456</sup> And in another broadcast he commented that “the Coriano Ridge is no more than three hundred feet high – but it’s as bald as a Saskatchewan field – at least the part which the Canadians took.”<sup>457</sup> A popular tool of the war correspondents was nostalgia. Memories of home could be brought about by anything from snow at the side of the road to the feeling or appearance of a city.<sup>458</sup> In fact,

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<sup>453</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 8 April 1944 (no. 27).

<sup>454</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 8 April 1944 (no. 26).

<sup>455</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 15 July 1944.

<sup>456</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 17 May 1944.

<sup>457</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 14 September 1944.

<sup>458</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 8 March 1944.

Stursberg, in his broadcast during the liberation of Rome, said that “passing through the outer suburbs... looks just like Toronto.”<sup>459</sup> Similarly, Halton, describing the scenery upon mountaintops of Southern Italy, found that “... thick groves of elm, chestnut and olives cover the m[oun]t[ain]sides. If they were pine trees instead, well, then it would be home,” he continued, “[and] far below us are the straits of Messina and the Tyrrhenia Sea. And they look like m[oun]t[ain] lakes at home.”<sup>460</sup> Even watching a battle could be related to scenes from Canada. Arthur Holmes noted in a broadcast “as the planes got right over us, it seemed as if every plane was shooting straight at us. Looked like the fireworks at the Toronto Exhibition,” he continued, “the type that break at you as they come.”<sup>461</sup>

While describing the places where the Canadian soldiers passed through, CBC war correspondents also taught radio listeners their local histories. In doing so, they were placing the Canadian war effort within a global historical context. During a broadcast about Ortona – one of Canada’s bloodiest battles of the war – Stursberg said, “before the Canadians took it – Ortona was quite famous.” He then proceeded to narrate its “long history,” dating back to the Trojan War.<sup>462</sup> In essence, the journalists depicted Canadian troops as having marched into their place in world history. “History was alive before your eyes and you were part of it,” as Halton said in a broadcast.<sup>463</sup> Certainly there was quite a lot of wonder as Canadian listeners learned of the rich parts of the places Canadian soldiers passed. In Rome, passing the Colosseum and other

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<sup>459</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 5 June 1944.

<sup>460</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 3. CBC Broadcasts 1940-1943. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton 7 September 1943.

<sup>461</sup> LAC. Halton Papers, vol. 3. CBC Broadcasts 1943. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 1 December 1943.

<sup>462</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 17 March 1944.

<sup>463</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Jul.-Aug. 1944. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 9 August 1944.

historical landmarks, Stursberg reported “our troops are still passing through the city – wonder and delight in their eyes as they look on its treasures and monuments.”<sup>464</sup>

Parallels with the past were drawn to reconfirm Canada’s position in the continuity of the past and present. At Palermo, in Sicily, Halton designated the Canadians and their American and British allies as liberators of a historical ancestor:

Palermo is a city of historic memories. There was a time when it was the greatest city in Europe. In the stones of its great cathedral, you can see the influence of G[ree]ks, R[o]m[an]s, Moors and Normans. And in the people on the streets, you can see the facile lineaments of G[ree]ks, R[o]m[an]s, Moors, and Normans. To this old port, lying in the hot sun at the foot of its beautiful mountains, the tides of conquest and trade have come for 30 centuries. When our ancestors were cavemen in unknown forests and swamps, the Sicilian civilization was a light of the world. But now we have redressed the balance. Our armies have come here and kept their promises and made this island free. The G[er]m[an] ally was a ruthless bully who terrorized the Sicilians. The Anglo-Am[erican] enemy, to the astonishment of the people, is a friend who gives them liberty and bread.<sup>465</sup>

In Southern Italy, Halton described the Canadians as fighting in the footsteps of the ancient battles between the Greeks and Romans thousands of years ago:

... Again, the feeling of unreality comes over us: Canadians, young men from our happier land thousands of miles away, seeking battle in the Calabrian mountains where Greek and Roman fought over 2,000 years ago.<sup>466</sup>

Later, during the Italian campaign, Stursberg told Canadian listeners that their sons, fathers, and brothers were now fighting where the Punic Wars were fought:

Near where our tanks fought – the elephants of Hanibal[sic] – the armored monsters of antiquity – had trampled. For it was at Lake Trasimene that the Carthagineans[sic] had won a notable [sic] victory over the Roman legions – and we could see the blue waters of Trasimene from the hill top.<sup>467</sup>

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<sup>464</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 5 June 1944.

<sup>465</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 3. CBC Broadcasts 1940-1943. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton 20 August 1943.

<sup>466</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 3. CBC Broadcasts 1940-1943. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 5 September 1943.

<sup>467</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 24 June 1944.

Then, as Canadian troops crossed a river believed to be the Rubicon, Stursberg drew a parallel to Julius Caesar:

... I can see the clump of woods where the Canadians are crossing the Rubicon... Caesar crossed the Rubicon to march on Rome and there's no analogy between his legions fording this stream and our own troops – unless it is the Canadians are crossing the Rubicon to march on Berlin.<sup>468</sup>

During the campaign in France, the war correspondents described the modern Canadian army as becoming part of France's long, rich history. Referring to the destruction of Caen, Halton told his listeners:

This is the story of an ancient lovely town that flourished for centuries, and then was utterly destroyed, and in its destruction became part of Canadian history, and added new glory to the history of France, and croaked a terrible warning to all mankind.<sup>469</sup>

In a strikingly similar fashion to how he had talked about Palermo, Halton explained the history of Falaise in another of his broadcasts in order to place the Canadian fighting within a greater historical context of the land: "... So much for ancient history. More history is being made there today, as you listen to this. One of the great battles of history is now drawing to a close in Falaise."<sup>470</sup>

Connections to the past were particularly drawn between French-Canadian soldiers and their distant ancestors in France. In Ouimet's broadcast composed after the D-Day landings, he followed the Régiment de la Chaudière, "the only 100% French speaking [Canadian] unit on the assault," and described them as returning "to the land of [their] forefathers..."<sup>471</sup> He continued,

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<sup>468</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 26 September 1944.

<sup>469</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Jul.-Aug. 1944. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 24 July 1944.

<sup>470</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Jul.-Aug. 1944. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 16 August 1944.

<sup>471</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Marcel Ouimet, Overseas Unit – Reports from France, Italy, Holland (transcripts) 1943-1945. Broadcast Transcript, M. Ouimet, 6 June 1944.

“that’s my language they’re speaking, he thinks....” Ouimet recounted a story of the French Canadians speaking the same local colloquial expressions as the French civilians who greeted them:

... Like so many other colloquial expressions has been preserved among French speaking Canadians and which this soldier, a direct descendant of a family deprived for centuries of most of its links with France, had chosen to bring back three hundred years later to the land of his forefathers. On hearing it the Frenchman had grown more excited. “But you are not a Canadian,” he [the Frenchman] said. “You’re French – you’re a Norman like me.”

Ouimet mentioned that the familiarity also had a sense of remoteness as a result of the centuries that the Canadians were separated from this homeland. Yet at the same time, Ouimet said that the soldiers “felt at home – much closer to home... Something did tell him that in Normandy lay the foundations of his life and of his civilization.” Nevertheless, Ouimet stressed that while these soldiers were visiting part of their history they were no less Canadian:

C’est bon la France, say the soldiers of Quebec. But centuries of attachment to their soil and to their homes will bring them back no less deeply convinced Canadians, to a great and grand country, their native land.<sup>472</sup>

Broadcasts like these by the war correspondents could reconnect French-Canadians listeners to a part of their past long forgotten. As a group of French Canadians wrote in a letter to Halton and Ouimet: “Vous sâtes décrire avec émotion les sentiments réels de Français et votre voix à la radio nous afforts enfin quelque chose de chez nous.”<sup>473</sup> Similarly, Jocelyn Chapman of Toronto, “as one who has many connections in France and as a patriot,” wrote in appreciation of Halton: “He does the whole Allied cause a great service and I wish he could know how much his

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<sup>472</sup> Ibid.

<sup>473</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Miscellaneous 1938-1944. Letter, to M. Halton (signed, “Vive la Canada, Vive la France”), 22 October 1944. [Translation: “You are able to describe with feeling, the true sentiments of the French, and your voice on the radio provides us, in a word, with something of our homeland.”]

magnificent efforts are appreciated by myself and many of my French friends here in Toronto.”<sup>474</sup>

Among one of the most common connections to the past that the war correspondents made was through comparing the contemporary conflict with the First World War. At times, it was the very look of the battlefield that caused the war correspondents to relate it to the Great War. For instance, Stursberg said in one of his broadcasts from the Italian Front:

Through an opening in the tiled roof – I looked across the gully that was no [sic] Man’s land to the German lines. The desolate scene before me seemed like a picture of the last war. The mud – the water filled shell holes – the leafless twisted olive trees – the battered buildings – they had their counterpart in France a quarter of a century ago. History was repeating itself – but with a difference – there were no fixed lines of trenches – no barbed wire.<sup>475</sup>

Dates of battles or significant events during the Second World War were also contextualized in relation to memories of World War One.<sup>476</sup> As Marcel Ouimet said in a broadcast:

Yes, for the first time in Canada’s history the Canadians, with trained British Army formations, are operating as a Canadian Army. On a day which might well be one of the decisive days of this war. As the 8<sup>th</sup> August 1918, the day of the break through on the Amiens front, which was later to be called the Ludendorf [sic] “the black day of the German Army” and to decide the fate of the Kaiser’s forces. They know that we have reached a potentially decisive phase of the conflict.<sup>477</sup>

Even the Canadian soldiers, now fighting in Europe, were compared to those who had fought for Canada in the previous war. Halton said,

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<sup>474</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Miscellaneous 1938-1944. Letter, D. C. McArthur to M. Halton, 27 September 1944. McArthur’s letter forwards to Halton the excerpt from Miss Jocelyn Chapman’s ‘fan mail’.

<sup>475</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20. CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 16 March 1944.

<sup>476</sup> For a discussion on how Canada’s collective memory of the First World War became the cultural lens through which many Canadians viewed the Second World War, cf. Jonathan Vance, *Death So Noble Memory: Meaning, and the First World War* (Toronto: UBC Press, 1997).

<sup>477</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 1. Marcel Ouimet, Overseas Unit – Reports from France, Italy, Holland (transcripts) 1943-1945. Broadcast Transcript, M. Ouimet, 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> August 1944.

... In this wild, vivid country, breathing its history and legend, the young men from our far C[ana]d[ia]n towns and farms and workshops proved themselves to be sons and brothers of the men of Vimy Ridge and Passchendale [sic].<sup>478</sup>

In such ways, the conflict overseas was described as a new addition to Canada's history – a history which the war correspondents depicted in relation to the past of the world. By linking Canada's war effort to a greater historical context, the CBC helped to expel any sentiment towards isolationism that their listeners may have been harbouring.

Canada remained physically unscathed by the devastation of the war. But just as had occurred after the First World War, the loss of Canadian lives in battles overseas helped attach memories of the Second World War to a sense of Canadian identity. The Canadian "homeland is one of the few places on the face of the earth that lacks the scars of armed combat," in the words of Charles Lynch.<sup>479</sup> "Our hallowed battle places exist in other lands, on other continents, where we have fought the foe and dreamed of home and told ourselves that we were standing on guard."<sup>480</sup> Radio coverage of the war helped to better commit the war to the Canadian consciousness. Broadcasting sounds of battles provided a much clearer image of the conflict for Canadians to picture. Both literal and imaginative memorials were constructed for the overseas battles in which the Canadians fought. At Ortona, Stursberg recorded the unveiling of a wooden cross marking the site of the Canadian war cemetery to broadcast to his listeners.<sup>481</sup> Halton broadcast a story of his pilgrimage to Dieppe as "a gesture demanded by [Canadian] history."<sup>482</sup> Nearing the end of the war in Europe, Halton retold the campaigns of the First Canadian

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<sup>478</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 3. CBC Broadcasts 1940-1943. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton 12 August 1943.

<sup>479</sup> Charles Lynch, *You Can't Print That: Memoirs of a Political Voyeur* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1983), 62.

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>481</sup> LAC. Stursberg Papers MG31-D78, vol. 20, CBC War Correspondent - Scripts (1444). Broadcast Transcript, P. Stursberg, 16 April 1944.

<sup>482</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Aug. - Sept. 1944. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton 2 September 1944.

Division, saying “so now they’re here – the Pats, the Seaforths and the Edmonton’s [sic] and all the rest of that First Canadian Corps which has written the name of Canada forever into the soil of Italy....”<sup>483</sup> And to commemorate the end of the war in Europe he recounted the many battles fought by Canadian soldiers, concluding his broadcast with “the sun shines now, but remember these names, Canada. Because they’re written on your heart.”<sup>484</sup>

The war left Canadians with a broadened perspective of the world. “Windows have been opened on the world,” Vincent Massey, Canada’s high commissioner to the United Kingdom, said in a radio address over the CBC.<sup>485</sup> He gave his listeners a prediction that the war was beginning to turn Canadians away from an introverted existence. “I shall rather try to show how as an indirect result of our participation in this conflict we have entered a new chapter in the story of our existence and community,” he continued:

May I take the imaginary case of a young man – one of the three-quarters of a million in our armed forces – who were perhaps born and brought up in some isolated township in Canada, it may be a remote fishing village, a prairie farm or a mining town in the North. He now may find himself serving abroad with the Royal Canadian Air Force or among the thousands of Canadians in the R.A.F. [Royal Air Force] in any corner of the globe from Ceylon to the Aleutians. Or, if he is in the Army, he may be fighting in Italy or training in England and waiting with some impatience for the beginning of campaigns which will take him further afield. This has been a world war in truth for all of us, and this global struggle has been for many Canadians a personal lesson in geography. A young man from Canada who has been through these adventures will have a new impression of the world and will gain a new idea of his own country’s place in it.<sup>486</sup>

Just as the soldiers came back from the war with an expanded view of their place in the world, those in Canada developed one as well. For those at home, radio coverage of the war

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<sup>483</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Apr. - Dec. 1945. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton 23 April 1945.

<sup>484</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Apr. - Dec. 1945. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 6 May 1945.

<sup>485</sup> LAC. Cowan Papers MG30-E298, vol. 16. C.B.C. Overseas Unit and C.B.C. International Service (1943-1954). CBC War Correspondent, Scripts, Press releases n.d., 1943-44. Broadcast Transcript, V. Massey, “Address by the Rt. Hon. Vincent Massey, High Commissioner for Canada,” 15 December 1943, page 1-2.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid.

significantly contributed to this. Radio broadcasting, in the absence of visual stimulation, enabled CBC war correspondents to relay a greater sense of the war for listeners. As McArthur appraised Halton for his war reports, “they make people see what you describe, and feel the terrific emotional impact of great events.”<sup>487</sup> By transmitting the sounds of the war back into Canadian homes, the conflict and events overseas seemed more immediate and less foreign than they would have been without.

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<sup>487</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 1. Correspondence, Miscellaneous 1938-1944. Letter, D. C. McArthur to M. Halton, 28 August 1944. Emphasis in the original.

## Conclusion

Radio broadcasting emerged from the Second World War with more influence in Canadian society than ever before. As Ernest Bushnell, the general supervisor of programmes of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), commented at the end of the war, “today radio stands higher in the appreciation of more people than it has done at any time since it began 25 years ago.”<sup>488</sup> The anxieties of war propelled Canadians towards radio – and Canada’s national broadcaster – for information specific to Canada’s war effort or as a source of leisure to escape their daily stress. Patriotism also assisted the rise of the CBC during the war, as an institution-wide sense of duty inspired the CBC to intensify its operations in support of the national cause. According to the CBC’s National Programme Committee, “the war provided a certain impetus” and “justification” for the work of the CBC and its staff.<sup>489</sup> To help Canadians cope with the international conflict, the CBC met the demands of the war by improving its coverage and programming. Particularly with its venture into news-gathering and editing, the CBC explained the war effort in a manner that made it suitable for the peculiar nature of radio broadcasting. With regard to its frontline radio coverage of the conflict, the Corporation helped to engage its listeners in and embolden them for the war effort.

It is of little surprise that the CBC, which had a mandate to serve the Canadian people and government, supported the national cause. But by propagandizing the national effort and censoring the war, the CBC may have betrayed the journalistic responsibility for impartiality in favour of civic duty. Timothy Balzer takes issue with the cover-up of the unsuccessful Dieppe

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<sup>488</sup> Library Archives Canada [Hereafter, LAC]. Bushnell Papers, vol. 4. - Bushnell, E. L. - Personal typed record of speeches.... 1941-57. Speech Transcript, E. L. Bushnell, “The Role of Radio in Wartime,” 7 June 1945.

<sup>489</sup> LAC. Powley Papers MG30-E333, vol. 2. CBC News Policy, File B - MacArthur memos, bulletins, Government News, content 1941-51 and quality. Memorandum, D.C. McArthur to Senior Editors, “Self-Criticism,” 8 April 1946.

raid by military authorities and the Canadian media, of which the CBC was a part. “Stories of heroism, claims of success, and the lack of a timely overview of the raid obscured the reality of the disaster,” he says. “Those who had lost family, who had to suffer for months waiting to hear the fate of the missing, certainly deserved a more open and honest explanation of what had happened and why.”<sup>490</sup> Granted, in a context of total war, a reasonable amount of secrecy is necessary. It was difficult to determine exactly what information might have been useful to the enemy, and the consequences of misjudgement could be grave. Mark Bourrie disagrees with Balzer, maintaining that censorship in the Second World War was both a temporary measure and a necessity. Moreover, when it came to censoring the war, Bourrie reminds critics that the Canadian media were all too willing to comply. In regards to the blackout about the transfer of the First Canadian Corps from Italy to northwest Europe in the spring of 1945, Bourrie argues that “the troop movement would eventually be reported.” He continues:

Like Dieppe, it was too big to keep covered up forever. Censorship – both self-editing and official cuts – along with threats of discreditation, disgrace, and imprisonment kept the Canadian war correspondents in line. But so did the belief that the Nazis were going to wreck this world.<sup>491</sup>

CBC war correspondents, news editors, and senior administrators all shared the belief – and acted upon it – that they must contribute to the eradication of Nazism.

The CBC managed the release of war information to the public but its staff also worked under the belief that they did so in what they believed to be the best interest of the Canadians. Although the Corporation operated fully in support of the war effort, its policy was never meant to break its trust with their listeners. During the war, the CBC – in tandem with official censors –

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<sup>490</sup> Timothy Balzer, *The Information Front: The Canadian Army and News Management during the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 112.

<sup>491</sup> Mark Bourrie, *The Fog of War: Censorship of Canada's Media in World War Two* (Madeira Park: Perseus Books Group, 2011), 192.

felt that they should not neglect their mandate to adequately inform the public. CBC editors thus wanted to report the facts of the war, successes and setbacks alike. Yet at the same time, its employees were willing to hold back unfortunate news when ‘necessary’. The Corporation’s war correspondents also believed that they should report the realities of war as best they could. However, the demands of the war effort and the intimacy of radio ultimately made it necessary for the organization to regulate certain information. Throughout the war, CBC staff engaged in a delicate compromise between both positions.

Then again, members of the CBC believed that radio coverage of the war – despite the additional censorship measures needed for the medium – provided for a greater amount of transparency than print journalism. Frontline radio war reporting, for instance, was capable of bringing back novel aspects of the war for Canadians at home that newspaper journalism could not. Jean-Paul Moreau, an archivist for the National Sound Archives at Library Archives Canada, commented that there was a specific power in “their reports” that was able to “convey... the special atmosphere created by the bombing and gunfire.”<sup>492</sup> Indeed, speaking after the war about his experience as a war correspondent, Matthew Halton said that working with radio allowed him to bring back a greater picture of the war for Canadians at home. “Because now when I went to a battle I could not only describe it in words I could bring the actual sounds of battle to the listeners at home, thousands of miles away,” he said. “They could hear for themselves the roaring of the guns.”<sup>493</sup> Bushnell expressed a similar opinion in a speech in the summer of 1945:

For the first time in history those living in countries seemingly so far away from the actual scenes of battle had the grimness and the reality of war brought into their living

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<sup>492</sup> LAC. CBC Papers RG 41, vol. 433. 27-4 (pt 1) CBC National News Service - Overseas News General...173458: Jean-Paul Moreau, “To the Sound of Gunfire,” *the Archivist* 3.1 (January-February 1976), Public Archives Canada, 1.

<sup>493</sup> LAC. A1 2000-07-0075. 106212. Broadcast Recording, CBC National Schools Broadcast, M. Halton, “The Adventures of War Reporting,” 11 January 1946.

rooms. It was not just a matter of being told what war was like. For the first time we at home could actually hear its hideous sounds – and hear them at the very moment they occurred.<sup>494</sup>

CBC war broadcasts and the intangible sounds of war that they relayed were capable of pervading the war memories of countless Canadians. In 1976, one long-time listener, recalling his childhood during the war years, wrote to the CBC after its program ‘Morningside’ played one of Matthew Halton’s broadcasts. He said:

As I heard you saying that you’d be playing a record of M[atthew] H[alton] reporting from Europe, I felt a tremor. And at the sound of his voice, tears welled up from somewhere deep in my subconscious and I fear that I hardly heard a word that was said. This continued until several minutes after the end of the recording. I wasn’t crying in the sense that one sobs and has a hard time breathing. Just an unstoppable flow of tears. Apparently I was much, much more affected by the [war] than I’d ever realized and I’d like to thank you for the opportunity of seeing a part of myself that I hadn’t known existed.<sup>495</sup>

CBC Producer Ken Pagniez later called radio war correspondents “a unique breed” because “they were born, bred and they died in the 1940s.”<sup>496</sup> However, the success of the CBC’s overseas war reporting during the Second World War encouraged it to permanently maintain foreign correspondents as part of its international news service. During the Korean War the Corporation redeployed radio war correspondents, and it continued to expand its overseas service to provide Canadian radio (and some television) for servicemen on the frontlines.<sup>497</sup> Although there were some ventures by the Canadian media into audio-visual war reporting during the Second World War and the Korean War, the medium did not truly take-off until the mid-1950s. Thus, besides the occasional newsreel – which were heavily censored propaganda

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<sup>494</sup> LAC. Bushnell Papers, vol. 4. - Bushnell, E. L. - Personal typed record of speeches.... 1941-57. Speech Transcript, E. L. Bushnell, “The Role of Radio in Wartime,” 7 June 1945.

<sup>495</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 6. Interviews Research Files - Pagniez, Ken 1979. Interview Transcript, “Ken Pagniez, CBC Producer, Ottawa, (Current Affairs),” 8 February 1979.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid.

<sup>497</sup> Mallory Schwartz, “How the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Served the Military in Korea, 1951-1956,” *Canadian Military History* 24.2 (Summer/Autumn 2015), 158-159.

pieces produced by the National Film Board (NFB) – graphic films of the war did not penetrate Canadian society as often nor as fully as radio broadcasting during the Second World War. The Vietnam War marked the true transfer of war reporting from radio to television broadcasting. In what historians commonly refer to as the ‘first television war’, Western news agencies televised the Vietnam War to an extent that allowed the public to observe the conflict with far greater transparency than before. However, the media coverage of this war marked a dramatic departure from the Second World War in two regards. Firstly, the impact of *seeing* the live savagery of war on a consistent basis adversely effected the public’s commitment to the war effort. As Tony Maniaty explains,

In the annals of journalism, the television coverage of the Vietnam War occupies a proud place. Of course much of it was shaped by the usual handout mentality, by the mediocre efforts of crews happy to get some 'bang-bang' on film, but there was much too that was intensely and graphically observed, that did not buy the White House and the Pentagon line, that questioned harshly why America was in Vietnam, that helped to sharpen the domestic and international debate. Gradually those images began to stomp all over America's efforts in Vietnam, until it was beyond even the power of the President to reverse the reporting freedoms in place. Battlefield reverses, tactical blunders, casualties: all were screened on TV, and burned into the dispirited American soul.<sup>498</sup>

Secondly, according to Neville Peterson, the period also saw “a marked shift” in the policy of the CBC and consciousness of its journalists in which they increasingly recognized that being “impartial” could be “at variance” with “serving the national interest.”<sup>499</sup> As a result, the Canadian crown corporation’s coverage of the Vietnam War – like most American news agencies – undermined the official agenda of the Canadian and American governments.<sup>500</sup>

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<sup>498</sup> Tony Maniaty “From Vietnam to Iraq: Negative trends in television war reporting,” *Pacific Journalism Review* 14.2 (2008): 92.

<sup>499</sup> Neville Peterson, “The Coverage of the Vietnam War in an Organizational Context: The ABC and CBC Experience,” *Canadian Journal of Communication* 23.4 (1998), 1.

<sup>500</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

Although appreciative of the medium, during the Second World War Matthew Halton recognized some limitations to radio war reporting. In one broadcast, he said:

In a Europe in which these incredible Nazis have piled mountains of torture upon mountains of murder, until a fog of horror and suffering rises from the unhappy continent, in such a Europe, perhaps the story of the 34 murdered young men of Bande, in the Ardennes, is not a very big thing. But it's everything we're fighting for. *If you could only see it, instead of just hearing about it*, there where such stories seem too bad to be true! If you could *see* the pitiful young bodies – all the young men of a village murdered for fun, or spite, or caprice, or whatever it was and the women coming for their loved ones – then you realize what a gang of homicidal maniacs has been let loose on Europe these last few years.<sup>501</sup>

His comments suggest that listeners could only grasp a greater understanding of war by *seeing* its images.<sup>502</sup> Certainly, widespread knowledge about the wickedness of the Nazis and the desire to defeat the Germans was indisputable. But had televised war reporting been further advanced and capable of transmitting more details about the Second World War – and its horrors – back to the Canadian public and had the many setbacks and losses of the Allied Powers been more visible to the public eye, it is possible that the exposure to and knowledge about the war may have adversely affected the public's commitment and confidence in the war overseas. Had this been the case, the need for victory might have prompted the Canadian government and the Canadian media to consider enforcing even stricter censorship regulations. Radio war reporting, for its part, perhaps profited from leaving its listeners blind from to the full realities of the war.

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<sup>501</sup> LAC. Halton Papers R10120, vol. 4. CBC Broadcasts Jan. - Apr. 1945. Broadcast Transcript, M. Halton, 13 January 1945. Emphasis added.

<sup>502</sup> LAC. A1 2000-07-0075. 106212. Broadcast Recording, CBC National Schools Broadcast, M. Halton, "The Adventures of War Reporting," 11 January 1946. Halton was undeniably committed to defeating the Nazis. However, he and most of his colleagues never held a jingoist attitude towards war. In fact, Halton, although recognizing some of the heroics that war revealed, came to detest war and its savagery as a result of his exposure to it.

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