

William Burns:

Peter Stursberg Biography:

Transcript:

This is the story of Peter Stursberg, A Canadian War correspondent of the Second World War.

-Arthur Lewis Peter Stursberg was born on Aug. 31, 1913, in Chefoo, China

- When he was only 11, he moved to Great Britain, where he attended a boarding school

Several years later, he moved to Canada with his parents, where he graduated from West Hill High School in Montreal.

-He entered McGill University in 1930 and studied science while working for the McGill Daily newspaper

- Peter Sursbeg landed his first newspaper job with the Victoria Daily Times in 1934, as agricultural editor.

In 1938, he traveled throughout Europe, as he was interested in the turmoil and conflicts. He Visited France, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and the Soviet Union.

While in Moscow, Russia, he witnessed a parade in Red Square. The Soviet leader Joseph Stalin was present at the event.

After the outbreak of the Second World War, Stursberg returned to Canada and was hired almost instantaneously by the CBC News in Vancouver.

The reporter's first wartime assignment was to cover the building of the Alcan Highway, which would bring weapons and manpower from the continental United States, through Canada, then into Alaska. This would serve to protect the territory from Japan.

Peter Stursberg was then chosen as one of six Canadian reporters to go overseas and cover the War from the frontlines.

His first assignment was to cover the movement of the Canadian forces in North Africa. There were connected to the UK forces

He then began his coverage of the Italian Campaign, in this photo, the reporter sits on a jeep while in Italy.

Stursberg saw action in Sicily as he stood with the Canadian forces while they were under fire. In this next clip you will hear original work of Peter Stursberg as he narrates a battle in Italy. The full broadcast is available on the CBC website. This is just a clip of approximately 50 seconds.

In this photo, Canadian forces march past the historical Roman Coliseum.

I recently had a chance to see this ancient structure as well while on a school trip during the March Break with the EF tours group.

My great uncle Eugene Leslie McKinnon served through the Italian Campaign with the 8th New Brunswick Hussars. He visited Rome as well. He survived the Italian Campaign and the War.

With the liberation of Italy, it was time to move on to Belgium, Holland, then finally, into Germany.

Two of my Great Uncles aided in the liberation of Belgium and Holland, they were Donald McKinnon and Leslie McKinnon.

After the Liberation of Holland, Dutch citizens surrounded the Canadian forces in celebration. Some even climbed on Peter Stursberg's jeep.

He in his work commemorated the Canadian Forces and their commander general Foulkes for their liberation efforts and for their negotiations to help feed the starving Dutch people.

Only once the War had ended did the reporter have the chance to visit Berlin, Germany

Stursberg was guided by the Soviet Army through Hitler's private Bunker. Quoting "I thought I might as well take something" the reporter took a spoon and fork with the initials AH on one of them. He kept the two souvenirs and later displayed by him on a television broadcast.

His next job was to work as the CBC News's correspondent with the United Nations

Once finished with the UN, he became an editor for the Toronto Star

Stursburg then became a founder of CJOH News, which is now owned by CTV. His investment kept him financially stable for the rest of his life.

Peter Stursberg wrote 14 novels in his lifetime. Including *The Sound Of War: The Memoires of a CBC Correspondent*, *No Foreign Bones in China* and *Dieffenbaker: Leadership Gained: 1956-62*.

Once retired, he taught Canadian Studies at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver from 1982-1988.

Peter Stursberg received the honor of being named a member of the Order of Canada in 1996.

The accomplished author, professor and journalist died last year at the age of 101 on his birthday. He was the last living Canadian war correspondent from the 2nd World War.

While in Ottawa participating in Forum For Young Canadians, I briefly toured the Canadian War Museum and was astonished by it. I will without a doubt return to properly visit the entire exhibition. Thank you for viewing my presentation.