

# OPC Bulletin

"I am here today as a mother."—Kathy Eldon, mother of Dan, 22.

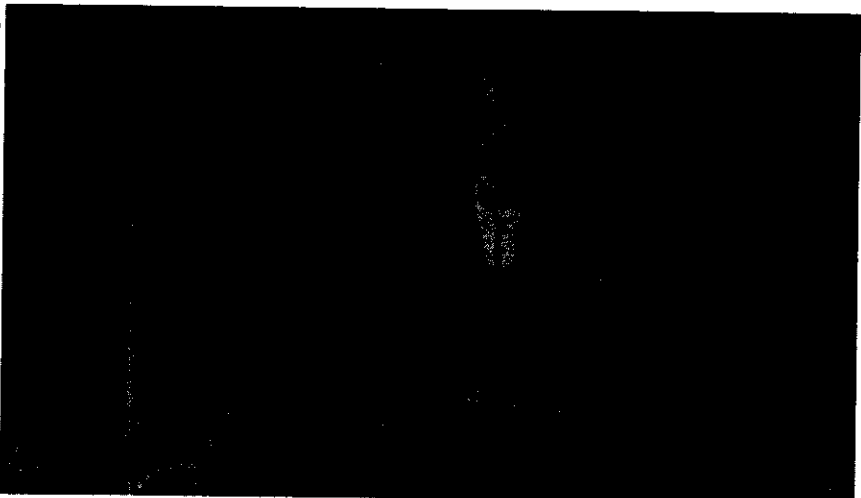
## President's Award Goes to Four

The 1994 Overseas Press Club Awards Dinner—the club's biggest and most popular annual event—entertained more than 300 in the ballroom of the Grand Hyatt in New York City on April 26. One of the evening's highlights was the acceptance of the President's Award by Kathy Eldon, the mother of Dan, who was one of four photojournalists killed in Mogadishu, Somalia, last July. The President's Award was given in memory of these four men: Hansi Krauss, AP; Hos Maina, Anthony Macharia and Dan Eldon, all of Reuters.

In addition, Norman Schorr discussed the grave violence facing journalists today.

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Lisa Benavente



Larry Smith, president of the OPC, introduces the award dinner's keynote speaker, Kathy Eldon, the mother of Dan—one of the four journalists who won the President's Award posthumously.

## Cronkite, Rooney and Walton To Remember D-Day with OPC

The OPC will mark the 50th anniversary of D-Day with some members of the press who were there, and who covered the great event back in 1944. Walter Cronkite, who was a correspondent for United Press; Andy Rooney, who reported for the *Stars & Stripes*; and Bill Walton, who parachuted in to Normandy for *Time* magazine will join the club at a luncheon at noon on May 26 at The Grand Hyatt Hotel in New York City.

Three days after the luncheon, Cronkite, Rooney and Ben Wright, a

longtime friend and colleague, will board the QE 2 and head for the big anniversary celebration in France. There, they will erect a plaque from the Overseas Press Club on the chateau that served as headquarters for the correspondents following the 1st U.S. army.

Don't miss this event. The fee for this program is \$50 for OPC members and \$60 for nonmembers. To register, please call the OPC office at (212) 983-4655 or fax this form: (212) 983-4692. Please make your check payable to the Overseas Press Club.

## May Program:

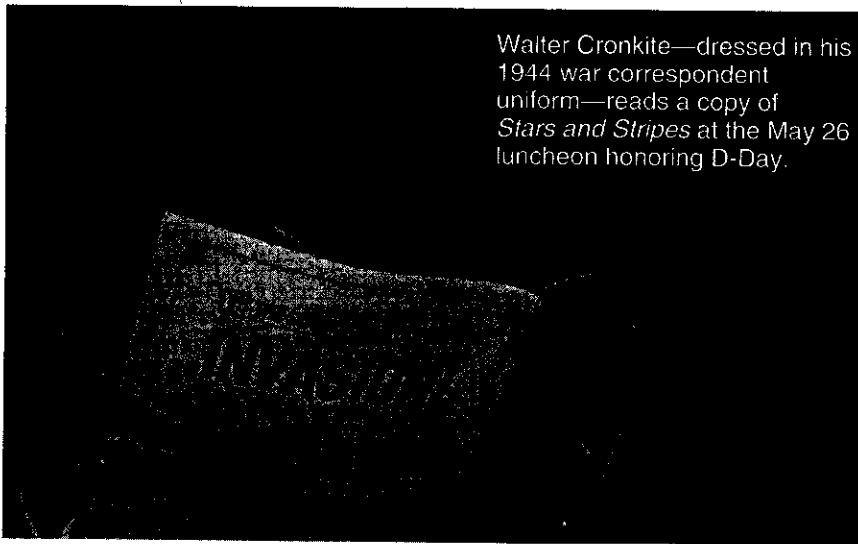
**When: Thursday, May 26**

**Where: Grand Hyatt Hotel,  
42nd Street and Grand  
Central, New York City**

**Time: Noon**

**Cost: \$50 for members;  
\$60 for nonmembers**

**Meet Walter Cronkite,  
Andy Rooney and Bill  
Walton. (See left.)**



Walter Cronkite—dressed in his 1944 war correspondent uniform—reads a copy of *Stars and Stripes* at the May 26 luncheon honoring D-Day.

Amy Sitco

## Mexico...

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in the jungle.

When the peace negotiations began in February, some 300 foreign and local reporters were accredited to cover the talks in the elegant colonial resort of San Cristobal de las Casas.

In addition, the recent assassination of the ruling party's presidential candidate, Luis Donaldo Colosio, in the state of Baja California plunged Mexico into political turmoil.

Many news agencies and newspapers have expanded their bureaus in Mexico in light of the NAFTA and the presidential election of August 21, which is expected to be one of the most closely watched in Mexico's fraud-marred electoral history.

Mexico is a challenging assignment. The country stretches more than 760,000 square miles, much of it inaccessible terrain, and it has a population of 85 million people, nearly a fourth of whom live in the crowded and polluted capital.

The government's byzantine ministries are hard to crack, with the most often-heard reply to any journalist's query being, "No sabria decirle," or "I couldn't tell you."

Foreign correspondents are rarely notified of news conferences and often end up chasing the headlines of the day's newspapers. Key economic data are released at odd hours, sometimes late Sunday night, particularly if the news is bad. But the current administration's emphasis on economic growth and its effort to lure foreign investment has prompted it to crack open the door a little.

For all its inaccessibility, the Mexican government takes pains to make foreign correspondents feel safe, issuing accreditation cards that serve to ward off Mexico's notorious police

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## D-Day...

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we've been trying to do to rebuild and revitalize the club. The fact that these veteran correspondents would want to share this emotional moment with the OPC and then carry our plaque across the Atlantic says it all."

Still cutting a natty figure in his 50-year-old war correspondent uniform, Cronkite said: "Newspeople, all of them volunteers like Bill and Jack, were given the opportunity to go into the jaws of death. D-Day assignments were fraught with immense peril. A special bond was created between the soldiers in the foxholes, who appreciated this, and the correspondents, who were right alongside."

Recounting his own D-Day foray aboard a bomber over Normandy, Cronkite remembered: "As we went over the ocean with bombs ready to go, we were met with an incredible sight—an entire armada of ships big and small, from cruisers to battleships to destroyers, filled the ocean."

Jack Thompson, known as the dean of war correspondents, recalled going

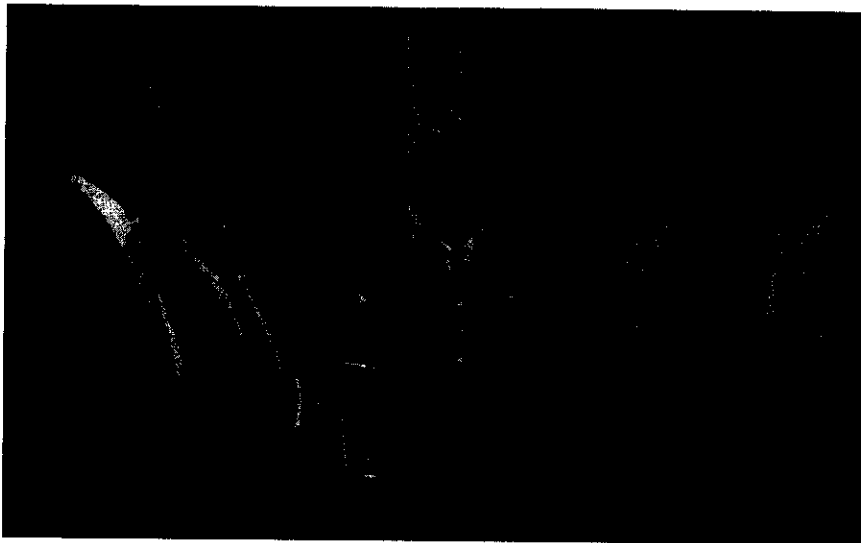
ashore on Omaha Beach at "Easy Red," slogging through chest-deep water while shielding his face with his typewriter. Amidst the death and destruction, and with artillery shells falling, "medics worked as if nothing were happening, taking plasma bottles and draining some blood into these men with their yellowish faces," Thompson recalled.

Having flown in the first B17 missions over Germany, Sgt. Andy Rooney was subsequently assigned to the 1st Army and later to the staff of *Stars and Stripes*. He reminisced about the time and entertained the audience with his notable wit and humor.

Said Cronkite: "The greatest part of the experience was associating with the kind of guys we did in the press camps across Europe. They're my buddies, and I'm proud of them." His sentiments were echoed by each speaker.

After the program, Smith and Holstein expressed their appreciation to Ben Wright, a former president of the OPC, for his contribution to the program: Wright, who was an information officer for the 9th Air Force during the Allied invasion, acted as master of ceremonies for the program.

# OPC Bulletin



Amy Shico

D-Day luncheon: Larry Smith, OPC president, Andy Rooney, Bill Walton, Walter Cronkite, Jack Thompson and Ben Wright with OPC plaque that was to be placed at site of U.S. 1st Army's Press Camp in Normandy.

## Correspondents Recall Bloody Omaha Beach

BY CARYN FRIEDMAN

Four of those who were there told a crowd of 140 during lunch at The Grand Hyatt in New York City recently what it was really like when members of the press corps struggled ashore on the shell-shattered beaches of Normandy on June 6, 1944.

Walter Cronkite, Andy Rooney, Jack Thompson and Bill Walton shared their experiences at the luncheon, which was sponsored by the Overseas Press Club of America, the Committee to Project Journalists and the Deadline Club.

Larry Smith, the president of the OPC, presented a bronze plaque to Cronkite, Rooney and Ben Wright, a longtime friend and colleague, who set sail three days later aboard the QE 2

for the 50th anniversary celebration in France. The three were to affix the plaque on the Chateau Vouilly in Normandy. The chateau served as headquarters for correspondents who traveled with the 1st U.S. Army.

"We're thrilled with this event and fiercely proud to be sponsors—indeed, the creators—of the plaque these men will be taking to Normandy," said Smith. He went on to acknowledge the outstanding job done by Bill Holstein, the vice president of the OPC, in putting together this program, and each of the monthly programs sponsored by the club.

Holstein remarked: "I feel like this event really validates a lot of things

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## Mexico's News Coverage Expands

BY CHRISTINE TIERNEY

Mexico City is arguably the most important hub of foreign correspondents in Latin America, with many journalists covering not just Mexico but all of Latin America and the Caribbean out of the Mexican capital.

The foreign correspondents' association ACEM lists 147 members, ranging from China's Xinhua agency to *The Washington Post* and Spain's *El Pais*.

Those foreign correspondents accustomed to spending most of their time on the road at more exotic destinations have discovered a hot story in Mexico in the past year.

The debate over the North American Free Trade Agreement and the pact's implications for U.S.-Mexican relations were eclipsed by a Maya Indian rebellion on Jan. 1 in the southern state of Chiapas.

Foreign correspondents descended in droves on the poor state where they were at no more disadvantage than Mexican reporters in trying to extract information from Tzotzil, Tzeltal, Tojolabal and Chol Mayan rebels living

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## Coming in July:

**It's election time again. Look for the next issue, which will include the list of candidates. (See page 4 for details.)**