

INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

Mystery of a Disgraced War Correspondent



A 52-page excerpt from a new book
by **Don North** that examines the
relationship between a journalist
and his editors during World War II

“At a crossroads in a man’s life the frailties of his past
reached out and poisoned his best hour.”

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by Don North*

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The Mystery of a 'Disgraced' War Correspondent

WAR CHANGES AND OFTEN HARMS NOT ONLY ITS COMBAT-ants but also its observers. The war correspondents whose job it is to get as close as possible to war, report what they see, and survive to tell about it, have a unique job. Neither victim nor killer, they risk death while struggling against those who would censor their truth. It is often a frustrating profession and one that can destroy its best and bravest.

In 1944 Paul Morton was a reporter for the *Toronto Daily Star*, at that time the most influential newspaper in Canada. He had covered the war in Italy for a year but mostly doing interviews with soldiers and Italian civilians caught in the battle between Allied forces and the German Army. His big break came when he was in Rome June 4, 1944, the day it fell to the Allies. His stories were relegated to the back

pages of *The Star*

When the Normandy landings took the headlines on June 6. Morton's bad luck with timing would continue.

With the invasion trumping his story of the fall of Rome and with the end of the war now in sight, Morton was despondent that he had seen no serious combat. So when the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) asked him to jump behind Nazi lines and cover the partisan war in Northern Italy, a virtually uncovered theatre, he didn't hesitate to accept. Living the high life in wartime Rome, his self respect demanded he finally share the risk.

The SOE was a secret agency born July 1940 on the orders of Winston Churchill to undermine Hitler's Europe from within. In Italy they helped train and supply the Italian partisans to sabotage the German occupation Army. There had been little information in the international press about the partisans war effort. Churchill, a former war correspondent himself decided it was time send in a journalist to publicize partisan exploits in the summer of 1944 when they were substantially helping the Allied war effort by tying down at least six German divisions. It was also encouraged by General Alexander's Eighth Army headquarters who felt news stories about the aggressiveness of northern Italian partisans might inspire their less supportive southern countrymen to more vigorously help allied efforts against the Germans.

Morton who spoke fluent Italian, endured two weeks of intensive military training and qualified for a parachute jump behind Nazi lines. However, from the beginning of

training Morton felt British officers of SOE were not in favor of Churchill's orders.

In his memoir written twenty years after the war, Morton wrote: "In a number of subtle and devious ways, they let me know they were against my mission. And why not? Why should they want a civilian newspaper reporter of all things, peering into the clandestine war? Then why pick a Canadian for such a mission? I believe it was to confound Mr. Churchill. However, the British are a fun loving people. I think they appreciated the absurdity of our position. They felt I was an intruder and a bounder. But I think they knew I knew what they thought, which was to half forgive me. In any case we got along."

Only two journalists are known to have been embedded in the secret world of SOE or its American counterpart the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during WWII. Joe Morton of the AP, no relation to Paul, accompanied an OSS mission in Slovenia to rescue downed American aircrews, but was captured and executed in a German concentration camp. Not surprisingly the SOE was regarded with suspicion by regular armed forces. They were not known to play by "marquis of Queensbury rules" and one friend of Morton's warned, "don't cry if you are let down by the SOE. These people have a very bad reputation for doing that if it suits them."

In World War II, where the struggle against Germany and Japan seemed as close to a worldwide crusade against evil as any war fought, strict censorship of correspondents writing from the war zones was in effect. In his seminal work on

war reporting Philip Knightly in *The First Casualty* wrote “It remains hard to reach any conclusion other than that the war could have been better reported. The main bar to this was the correspondent’s excusable identification with the cause and his less excusable incorporation into the military machine.” Following his training Morton would be armed and thoroughly incorporated into the military machine and would not only report on the partisans war but in order to stay alive wound up fighting it as well, pursued by German army units that vastly outnumbered the little guerilla bands.

The night before his drop behind Nazi lines, Morton met a few of his British commando instructors in the Rome officer’s mess for a farewell drink. The conversation turned to how to defend yourself with a .9 mm Beretta sidearm. Goaded by his commando friends and well into his cups on Rye whiskey, Morton demonstrated his aim by firing a couple of rounds at bottles on the bar. He was immediately thrown out of the mess and took off the next day to be parachuted into Italy on a mission he knew would have a fifty percent chance of him ending up dead or in a German concentration camp.

Morton was accompanied by Captain Michael Lees, a British SOE escort officer and Captain Geoffrey Long, a South African Army war artist. As the Halifax bomber approached the drop zone 200 miles inside enemy lines they spotted two signal fires in the darkness below. One of the fire plans was flashing a light and the three men dropped through the floor hatch at an altitude of 1,000

feet. However, they were dropped to the wrong partisan group. Morton later wrote: “The group, into whose hands we’d fallen called themselves Garibaldini. Their salute was the clenched fist of Communism. Just how intensely they followed the Red Star of Russia was one of the mysteries I was sent to uncover. The Garabaldini were mildly apologetic. They frankly admitted trying to steal British arms: bodies they had not expected.”

Within hours, Morton, Long and Lees were on the run with their partisan communist hosts as the German Army patrols closed in to investigate the parachute drop.

Hiding in haystacks provided by friendly Italian families, they eluded the Germans for several weeks, but often were engaged in close quarter firefights. One such encounter was related in Morton’s memoir: “The first German bullets to scythe into the hillside on which we lay started skirting our hidden positions at about seven o’clock in the morning. Except for the random fusillades of the enemy, we were not uncomfortable as we lay in the shade of the rising Italian sun....and waited for death. Young Captain Mike Lees, always a responsible British officer, looked shocked. Then a wide grin blanketed his face. He tightened his gun belt, shot a nervous glance at Geoff Long and me, then shouted ‘Avanti! Lets pay the bastards back.’ And with that, the whole crowd of us took off down the valley side. Running where? We were off to attack the German patrol. It was more like a rumble than a skirmish. Had I been a German in that patrol I would have been scared silly.”

Morton and his comrades finally found their way to

the Monarchist partisan unit they had originally planned to work with in the Piedmont hills. They met an amazing cast of characters including escaped British prisoners of war, who had joined the partisans and Allied air crews shot down over Italy. After almost two months of adventure and close encounters with German forces, Morton and the artist Long accompanied by an escaped British soldier and an American Army B-17 gunner escaped to France.

Morton described walking past German sentries as they made their way toward the French border. "We reached the bridge across the Raja River. A German sentry stood at the eastern approaches, observing us with what seemed careful attention. Our plan was a simple one: ordered to halt, we were going for our guns. If this were a movie, we'd want to call it "High Evening" with us the villainous four who'd come to take the sheriff.

Walking towards the sentry was easy. Passing him was rather less so. Walking away from him was downright nerve wracking. It is always uncomfortable to turn one's back to a man with a gun. I had the uncomfortable feeling he knew we were not simple townspeople, homeward bound from a day's work."

Morton and his friends bought a sturdy rowboat from a fisherman friendly to the partisans in the Mediterranean port of Ventimiglia and rowed west to France. Morton

found his way to Allied headquarters in Nice and was returned to Rome to a strangely cool reception from the British and Canadian headquarters who had dispatched him. Through clenched teeth they allowed him to write

and send a series of nine articles through censors to *Toronto Daily Star* editors.

Within days of his arrival in Rome, Morton was put on “parade” before the Commander of Canadian Army Public Relations Col. Bill Gilchrist and Joseph Clark, the Director of Public Relations for the Canadian Army. They chided Morton for his alleged “inappropriate conduct,” gunplay in the officer’s mess with a Beretta sidearm the day before he left on assignment to the partisans. His accreditation as a Canadian war correspondent was revoked. No records could be found in Canadian archives concerning these charges or the disciplinary proceedings. However, it is well documented that the Canadian Army took a lenient view toward hard drinking war correspondents, particularly at the front and discipline was rare. Lifting the accreditation of drunken reporters could have left few to cover the war. Within days he was ordered by the *Star* editor Harry C. Hindmarsh to return to Canada. He was fired but given no reason. His ten years with *The Star* were over. Hindmarsh was well known for firing staff without much cause. He had driven Ernest Hemmingway to quit as a reporter in 1924. In his book *Ink on my fingers*, A.J. Cranston, a *Star* reporter wrote, “Hindmarsh hated prima donnas. He was ambitious, cruel and jealous of the success of others. He ruled by fear. He was a sadist who took delight in breaking or humbling men’s spirits.” Harry Hindmarsh remains today a bleak and ambiguous individual in the annals of Canadian newspaper history. He was one of the few most important men in North American journalism, but his legacy is better described by

one of his former reporters who wrote “he warmed his hands over the fires of other peoples lives.”

Curiously Morton’s first dispatch to *The Star* was published October 27th after he had been fired. It was a glowing report on the contribution and bravery of the Italian partisans, the type of story he had been sent in to write. But *The Star* editors claimed the other eight articles were garbled in transmission and too heavily censored to print and were “spiked”, that is assigned to the waste basket. Morton’s only published dispatch from behind the lines can still be seen on the *Stars* website *Pages of History*.

Meanwhile, Morton’s reputation was savaged. It was widely rumored in Toronto that Morton had been fired for fabricating his dispatches from behind the lines. However, correspondence I found in the Canadian archives in Ottawa between *the Star* and the Canadian Army show that Hindmarsh followed and negotiated every nuance of Morton’s assignment in Italy.

Morton could never find another job as a journalist with this suspicion hanging over his head. He spent years in the north woods of Ontario as a logger and became an alcoholic.

In 1964 he received a letter from the partisans he had covered in 1944 asking him to write a memoir of his time with them. He sobered up for a few years, wrote his memoir and demanded the British Ministry of War in London confirm he had been assigned to a mission behind the lines and that he had successfully completed his war reportage. In a letter from the British Under-Secretary-of-war James

Ramsden the British confirmed Morton's mission. But *The Star* never apologized and today *Star* officials say they have no records or correspondence regarding Paul Morton. To be called a liar after risking his life for the story of his career sent Paul Morton into a tailspin of depression, emotionally and spiritually for the rest of his life. His last mission to confront the enemy inside ourselves that often renders us incapable of coping with insults that challenge life's proudest moments failed. All he wanted was an apology from *The Star* and restoration of his dignity, honor and reputation as a journalist. Instead, a true Canadian war hero died a broken man in 1992.

The mystery of Paul Morton's cavalier treatment by the British and Canadian Army and *The Star* had been hidden in dusty memos and directives of the Allied forces until a few months ago when a collection of declassified papers was sent to me by an Italian historian. File 10000/136/338 Directive Psychological War Bureau (PWB).

“ALLIED PROPAGANDA SHOULD NOW PLAY DOWN PARTISAN SERVICES”

“Publicity given the patriots has grown to a point where it is out of proportion to the war effort in Italy. There is evidence certain elements are making political capital out of the activities of the patriots. It is incorrect to speak of the patriots as liberating any particular area; if they are in control of any place it is because the Germans have withdrawn and are not taking action. We should remember it is the Allies who are liberating Italy with the help of the Patriots. The Patriots are unable to liberate of their own accord. Play

down very gradually the activities of Patriots to liberated Italy and to the rest of the world.”

This directive is dated October 13, 1944. Morton arrived back in Rome with his reports of the partisan's war on October, 15. Other directives I have been given issued at the same time indicate the Allies were convinced the partisans were overwhelmingly communist and must be neutralized as the Germans retreated. Although the communist partisans were effective and strong, history has shown they were not allied with the Soviet Union and were largely prepared to support a democratic Italy. Plans to disarm the partisans by holding mock victory parades and handing out certificates from the hands of Allied Generals were recommended in these directives from British General Harold Alexander's headquarters. It was a risky operation. Morton was apparently not considered capable of keeping such plans secret.

There is an unspoken trust in wartime that soldiers will loyally obey commands from senior officers knowing that they in turn will not be sacrificed for unnecessary purpose. Loyalty should flow down as well as up. That trust was broken when Paul Morton, who had been thoroughly trained and incorporated into the Army was destroyed in the interests of the “war effort” by Army officers and *Star* editor Harry Hindmarsh who decided he was expendable.

Morton's friend Douglas How of the *Readers Digest* who had also been a journalist in Italy during the war suggests Paul stepped over that mysterious line that should separate a journalist from his subject, leaving him in a no man's land,

not entirely an observer and not fully a participant. “The final irony may well be that his story could only be told well and sold well in a form which some people seem long to have wrongly thought they were: as fiction.” Or as Morton wrote in his memoirs, “ I went in behind enemy lines and emerged as a kind of agent. I went in as a reporter and came out a kind of soldier. I sometimes wish I had never gone in at all.”

Don North
Washington DC
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Portrait of Paul Morton, when in the company of Italian partisans in 1944, drawn by combat artist Capt. Geoffrey Long, Army of South Africa

CHAPTER ONE

Mission Inside Begins

(Morton Memoir)

“WAKE UP, SIR, WE’RE OVER THE TARGET,” I HEARD THE dispatching sergeant say. I got to my feet and started to struggle into my parachute.

I had slept the full four hours flying time from Brindisi far to the south on the heel of the Italian peninsula. We were now over the mountains of Piedmont, where the “cavalier Boot” fans out to meet the frontiers of France and Switzerland. We were 600 miles from base and 200 miles inside enemy lines. It was 1944 and the end of the war in Europe was a year away.

Our Halifax bomber had a Polish air crew, veterans of deadly flight schedules to the partisans of Europe. They

moved among us with a quiet efficiency. Their job was to locate a fire plan on the ground, descend to 700 feet, then drop us into the midnight sky, like so many human bombs on target, to the partisan fighters of Northern Italy.

Rubbing sleep from my eyes, I watched two airmen straining to open the hatch on the floor of the bomber. I was checking the release catch on my parachute when the dispatching sergeant came over to see that my static line was hooked up properly to the aircraft. The line would open my chute when we jumped.

“You’re lucky to be able to sleep,” the sergeant said, “Most men can’t do it on a flight like this.”

His tone was respectful, as if my ability to sleep reflected favourably upon my nervous system; as if, perhaps, I were braver than most men. I did not have the time or inclination to tell him I’d been dosed with pills to fight off a bad case of Italian dysentery, a condition not likely to be helped by parachute drops behind enemy lines.

The group that took up drop positions around the jump hatch was an odd lot. In nominal command was Capt. Michael Lees, 21, a British liaison officer with No. 1 Special Force of the famous 8th Army in Italy. His mission was to bring certain distinguished Italian partisan leaders safely to Rome.

Roberto, about 35, the only one in civilian clothes, was a former Italian fighter pilot. His mission was not known to us.

My personal operational partner was Capt. Geoffrey Long, a South African war artist assigned to map making

and the drawing of a pictorial record of our mission.

I was the only authentic civilian among us, a Canadian war correspondent for the Toronto Daily Star and, according to the terms of the Geneva Conventions, a non-combatant. In defiance of this Convention that set up the ground rules of war, I was armed. Geoff Long and I were 31.

My mission was complex. Some 20 years later it was to be described officially by the British Secretary of State for War in these terms: "Mr. Morton's job was to provide the press with an account of patriot activities and sabotage exploits in Western Liguria. "Liguria" is one of the 20 regions of Italy. Located immediately south of Piedmont, it borders the Mediterranean Sea to form one of the most beautiful coastlines in the world . . . the Italian Riviera.

I have often wished that my mission had turned out to be as simple as it has since been described by the British War Office. I went in behind the lines and emerged a kind of agent. I went in as a reporter and came out a kind of soldier. I sometimes wish I had never gone in at all.

Here, roughly, is what we said before pushing out of the Halifax bomber into the night sky. Commands were given in Polish and translated to us by the dispatching sergeant.

Navigator on intercom: "We're just about there. When I flash the red light overhead, drop in sticks of two."

Lees: "Right. Let me know as soon as you see the fires."

Navigator: "I've had a sight on them for several minutes. Six bonfires burning bright."

Lees to me: "Okay, Paul, we go first."

Mike Lees sat with his feet dangling over the hole. I sat

behind him, sideways to the hole.

Navigator: "Hold it! There are two fire plans down there. They're about eight miles apart."

Lees: "Describe them. One of them has got to be right."

The seconds tick by slowly. I dreaded the thought of another long flight home. This was our second try. During the first try two nights before, an engine had caught fire. Only 20 minutes out we had turned back to crash land at the Brindisi air base.

Capt. Lees looked grim, unhappy.

He said: "I don't know about you chaps, but I'm for getting down there."

Navigator: "One of the fire plans is flashing a light. The other is just bonfires."

Lees: "That settles it. Let's go."

There's a difference between 21 and 31. The years make a man more cautious, and any parachutist will tell you it's always wise to know what the terrain is like below. I glanced at Geoffrey Long and Roberto. They looked worried. The bomber started to make its turn. I could feel Mike Lees's tense his body. His eyes stared steadily at the red light overhead. The light flashed on. He dropped away from me.

I swung my legs over the hole and followed him down, down, down . . .

Frightened men don't curse. I think we murmur a prayer.

My head missed the speeding fuselage by inches. Then I was blasted out, out, out, stiff as a board in the unimpressive, but efficient British drop style, my body "walking the sky" in the slip stream of the departing bomber.

My parachute opened—bless it!

I looked skyward first, saw the bomber briefly, then looked down.

I was sinking gently at what appeared to be about 1,000 ft . . . too high for a fast, safe decent. In operational drops of this kind, the faster one hits the ground, the less likely one is to be observed by an enemy below.

Off to my left was a white, chalk-like cliff. Then a few houses became visible immediately below me. They poked out of what appeared to be an orchard of some kind. I had been briefed on what to expect. Our forces to the south were in wireless communication with our target area. This wasn't it! As I swayed gently downward in a stately Saraband, all the ghosts and unreasoning fears of my childhood came back to haunt me; not the sudden, spasmodic bursts of fear that one feels under a bombing or shelling attack, but the quiet persistent fear one feels in the presence of the unknown.

Now the familiar sensation of the rapidly accelerating rate of descent was beginning to make itself felt. I could now get a better look at the terrain racing up to meet me. The small forest of trees directly below me demanded my full attention. I started to climb my lines, as if to delay the inevitable sickening plunge to earth.

I was no longer frightened; not even particularly nervous. It is a curious fact that the rapid removal of one kind of fear dissipates all fear for some time thereafter. If this were not true, far more men would break down in war. If men were frightened, they'd quit fighting.

Now I was just above tree top level . . . then I went

sweeping through the trees, let go the parachute lines to lighten my weight, and landed . . . standing up!

I had wafted onto the target like a feather. The wrong target. Fumbling for my Colt .45 I threw myself flat on the ground.

Out of the night I heard a plaintive whisper: “Tedesco?”

‘Tedesco’ means ‘German’ in Italian. Why should he think I was German? We were supposed to be dropping to Italian partisans according to a prearranged plan. They should have some idea of our identity. I struggled free of my parachute harness, snapped a bullet into the barrel of my .45 and aimed in the general direction of the hidden voice.

CHAPTER TWO

Paul Morton: Improbable Hero

(Don North)

ON AUGUST 27, 1944, PAUL MORTON, 31, A WAR CORRESPONDENT for the Toronto Daily Star, parachuted into Nazi-occupied northern Italy, to cover the partisans allegedly on orders from Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Morton was part of “Mission Inside,” the top secret plan of Britain’s Special Operations Executive (SOE) to train and supply the Italian resistance. Officially, Morton’s assignment was described by the British Secretary of State for War “to provide the international press with an account of patriot activities and sabotage exploits.” To stay alive, Morton not only reported on the partisan’s war, but fought it as well, eventually escaping Italy by boat. Paul Morton should have

been recognized as a hero, or at least respected for completing a dangerous journalism assignment. Instead, Toronto Daily Star Managing Editor Harry C. Hindmarsh fired him for unspecified reasons. It was a disgrace that would follow Morton to the grave 50 years later. Unfortunately, British Army officials, who had originally urged Morton to take the assignment, were less than eager to publish his reports due to changes in war strategy. Years later, Paul wrote, “I have often wished that my mission had turned out to be as simple as it was described. I went in behind enemy lines and emerged as a kind of agent. I went in as a reporter and came out a kind of soldier. I sometimes wish I had never gone in at all.”

By all accounts, Morton was a fascinating but conflicted journalist. He had cut his teeth as a reporter for Reuters in the Spanish Civil War. When the Second World War started, he was rejected by the Canadian Army because of stomach ulcers. He became a reporter and later war correspondent in Italy for the Toronto Daily Star, Canada’s largest newspaper. In the waning days of the war he was, by a strange set of circumstances, chosen for a secret mission behind enemy lines that should have been a reporter’s story of a lifetime.

The strange story of Paul Morton was first told to me by Peter Stursberg, who had been a correspondent for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) during the war in Italy. Stursberg was my inspiration as a war correspondent. The CBC had pioneered war reporting by recording combat with Canadian forces using heavy, cumbersome recording

equipment. Peter's reports from the battlefields of Italy rank with the most dramatic reports of the Second World War.

One day, in the library of his home atop a mountain in West Vancouver, Peter told me what he remembered of his friend Paul Morton. "He was a slim, handsome fellow who was considered a bit erratic," Peter recalled. "He could be moody and, on occasion, sullen and withdrawn. But mostly he was charming and articulate. I found him to be a good companion and we often talked far into the night." Stursberg described Morton as being very anti-establishment, and although many journalists had left-wing sympathies then, Paul held more extreme views than most. Peter remembered going with him to a concert for the troops in Venafro, with British entertainers Gracie Fields and George Formby. When the British national anthem God Save the King was played, Paul refused to stand up. "I thought this was foolhardy," Stursberg recalled. "If it was reported, he could have been dis-accredited."

Morton had been accredited to the Canadian Army at the time of the invasion of Italy and arrived in the Mediterranean theatre in the last months of 1943. The Public Relations officer Maj. Royd Beamish, recalled that the Toronto Daily Star was also represented by two well known correspondents, Gregory Clark and Frederick Griffin. Beamish wrote years later that Morton found himself assigned to writing mostly what the Army called "Little Joe stories," human interest interviews with soldiers and nursing sisters from the Toronto area. However, luck seemed to favor Paul Morton at first glance.

Stursberg told me about Morton's first big break. "The greatest story of the war so far was the capture of Rome, the first Axis capital. Sholto Walt of the Montreal Star and Paul Morton of the Toronto Daily Star entered Rome with Canadian forces on the evening of the day it fell, June 4, 1944. They were beside themselves with excitement: at long last, here was an opportunity to file a cornucopia of stories, heralding the capture of the first major city by the Allies. Sure-fire, front page, Extra! Extra! stuff.

The two Canadian newspaper correspondents went to work with a will and wrote glowing accounts of the way the Romans welcomed the Allied troops. Their reports were datelined 'June 6, 1944.' Their copy, however was relegated to the back pages while reports of the Normandy landings headlined every newspaper in the world."

Life for a war correspondent in liberated Rome was good. As Stursberg recalled:

"Paul took me to a party in a villa that was said to be owned by Manfredi, the contractor who built the Hitler Line; he was still in business, according to Paul, who said the Allies never arrested Fascists, only Communists. There were mostly British officers at this party. Among the women were an Italian film star and Antoinette de Lisle, who was the mistress of Crown Prince Bertil of Sweden. "Tony" as she was known, had a beak-like nose and was not so much beautiful as elegant and Paul was living with her in this villa. Paul, who did not hold his liquor very well, became bored with the party and started filling glasses with Javel, a cleaning agent. Tony prevented

anyone from being poisoned. After Paul left Tony, she took up with U.S. Gen. Mark Clark, which showed what a democratic courtesan she was.”

Peter Stursberg also described a bizarre social scene in newly liberated Rome. “At the parties arranged by young Italian wives; their husbands were also there skulking around in the shadows. They were a pathetic sight. The Italian husbands were largely shunned or ignored. The husbands were the victims of conquest while their wives were enjoying being the prize.”

Another friend of Morton’s was Douglas How of the Canadian Press. “Paul was one of us, a reporter,” How wrote:

“He was a bit more complex than most of us, I’d guess. By times he could be able, elegant, difficult, hard to handle, personable, articulate, gay, ulcerous, singular, and improbable. And being all these things, he got caught up in a bizarre and improbable episode in the war. At a crossroads in his life, the frailties of his past reached out and poisoned perhaps his best hour.”

Paul Morton was born August 14, 1912, in New Glasgow, Pictou County, Nova Scotia, a city of 9,000, and raised in Montreal, Quebec. His mother’s maiden name was Kennedy. His father, Arthur C. Morton, was publisher of the Montreal Herald. Arthur Morton was married twice. He had two sons Evan and Paul, by his first wife, and two

more sons, John and David by his second wife.

Arthur Morton's father was Dr. A.D. Morton, a prominent figure in Canada's religious history. Dr. Morton was a member of Fathers of Maritime Methodism who engineered the union of churches now known as The United Church of Canada. Dr. Morton died in Halifax in 1937 at age 92. Paul has written that his family originally came to Canada from the Plymouth settlement in Massachusetts.

Evan and Paul inherited their father's talent for writing and pursued careers in that direction. Paul attended French language public schools and later worked as a laborer on the Montreal docks. He became fluent in French. He joined the Reuters office in London, England from which he covered the Spanish Civil War. I could find no record of his stories in Spain as often reporters there worked without bylines.

When the Second World War came, all four sons of Arthur Morton joined the armed forces. Paul tried to enlist in the Canadian Army but was rejected because of his stomach ulcers. He then joined a Toronto unit of the Canadian Army reserves and continued his job as a reporter for the Toronto Daily Star. John joined the Royal Canadian Army Armoured Corps, but later transferred to the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and served as engineer on Lancaster bombers attacking Germany.

Evan joined the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN). David became a pilot with the RCAF and was reported missing while piloting a twin-engine Sunderland bomber on a mission over the North Sea, February, 1944.

John Morton, 91, was the last survivor of the Morton

brothers. He owned and managed a successful plumbing and heating company and lived in the upscale Rosedale suburb with his wife Beth. In his final years he lived in Hazelton Place, a comfortable retirement residence in central Toronto. John died November 11, 2012, and as he wished his ashes were scattered over Lake Ontario. John and I became friends when I first started my research on his brother Paul in 1990. John carefully preserved Paul's typewritten memoir of his mission with the Italian partisans, and a collection of his letters, drawings and photos which have been invaluable to me in documenting Paul's life.

Not long before John died I played a recording for him that I found in Canada's national archives of Paul broadcasting to Canada from England on the CBC, following his mission with the partisans in October, 1944. John was visibly moved and tears welled up in his eyes as he heard his brother's voice again. "Paul was always a great writer and speaker," he recalled. "He was eight years older than me and was always very nice to me. That broadcast made me think of when I used to sit on his knee and he told me stories."

John was always bitter toward the Toronto Daily Star for the way they treated Paul. "They were not satisfied with firing Paul. When he had a speaking engagement to talk about the war, they would call the sponsors and Paul would be told it was cancelled. Editor Hindmarsh had enough clout with Canadian newspapers to make sure Paul never worked again. I would like to see Paul's true story published before I die. It reflects on all us Morton brothers who fought in that war."

Paul Morton Goes To War

The first correspondence between the Toronto Daily Star and senior officers of Canadian Army Public Relations in the Canadian national archives concerning Morton is dated June 29, 1942. In a telegram to the Chief of Information, Armed Forces, Ottawa, J.M.W. Clark, the Toronto Daily Star's News Editor Ken Edey inquired:

“We would like to send Paul Morton to England as a war correspondent for three months stop His job will be mainly to interview Canadians who have seen stirring action stop Paul is a very fine young man from a Canadian newspaper family stop Perhaps you have run into him and know what a gentlemanly and competent young man he is stop What do I do to get him accredited please and is there a chance in the world of getting him over on a bomber Regards Edey.”

Canada's national archive has about 50 letters and cables concerning Morton's work preserved on microfilm, many faded and difficult to read, but conveying attitudes and factual information often forgotten or even mistaken years after the events. The fading letters prove beyond a doubt

that the Toronto Daily Star knew the importance and dangers of Morton's mission and would negotiate the best deal for him and the Toronto Daily Star. Moreover, they would negotiate from a position as Canada's largest, and most influential, newspaper. In 1942, the Toronto Daily Star had a circulation of 239,219. Its closest competitor, the

Globe and Mail had a circulation of 164,729. In fact, the Toronto Daily Star was at that time the largest news and photo service in the British Empire.

After eight years with the Toronto Daily Star, Morton was a familiar by-line, but hardly a star. Morton had a curious reputation of being a magnet for trouble, because wherever he was sent newsworthy misfortunes seemed to happen. Sent to Detroit on a minor story he was on hand for a major race riot. In Kingston to cover a speech, he got a front page story when a student pilot fell out of an RCAF bomber and was rescued in mid-air. Visiting his home town of Montreal, he lucked into a major riot as inmates wrecked St. Vincent de Paul penitentiary.

As an officer in the Canadian Army Infantry Reserve in Toronto, his training at least helped him know the difference between a mortar and a rocket. Toronto Daily Star management obviously thought highly of him to assign the mantle of war correspondent.

After a delay to recover from an emergency appendectomy, Morton flew to Britain on August 11, 1943, on a military transport and began work as a war correspondent accredited to the Canadian Army.

A notable Morton war story found in the Canadian National Archives was from microfilm of the Toronto Daily Star dated February 12, 1944. "Boy Rebels Sang Okay as Nazis Killed Them," by-line Paul Morton with the Eighth Army in Italy. It was a lengthy and detailed story about the courageous resistance of Italian villagers in Lanciano, four months earlier, while the town was under

German occupation. Morton wrote, “They were the first Italian civilians during the war to make a fighting stand, however futile it might be, for a free democratic Italy.” He interviewed a young physician, Dr. Carlo Shenheim, who had helped train the boys of Lanciano to fight the Germans. “We knew our boys would be shot when caught,” said Dr. Shenheim, adding:

“The Germans knew we would be ready to accept it philosophically as the penalty of rebellion. They used one boy as an example. They took young La Barba Trentino di Paulo, gouged out his eyes and hung him from a tree. This is true. We saw Paulo afterward. We will never forget.”

Morton’s story used extensive first-person quotes to describe the nascent partisan movement developing in Italy in early 1944.

“For two days the people of Luciano fought as one against a common enemy. Now the people are forming into factions; the moderates and the radicals. Thus may the party system reach full maturity in Italy. Both parties may have their faults, but they are young, and both believe that German fascism is their greatest enemy. Perhaps I have been privileged to witness the rebirth of democracy in this unhappy land.”

Stories like this and others showed that Morton had a comfortable relationship with Italians through some familiarity with the language. After a year in Italy, Morton’s

Italian was, as he said, “pretty good.” His stories may have brought him to the attention of the British Army headquarters in Rome. Of the hundreds of war correspondents in Italy, Morton was certainly not among the most experienced or proven in battle, but he seemed reliable and hard working.

Maj. Royd Beamish, the Canadian Army Public Relations officer in Rome, was surprised one morning when he was summoned to the office of the British Deputy Director of Public Relations, Col. McCormack. Writing some 20 years after the war’s end, Beamish recalled, “A new and highly secret operation was being planned, and there was room for one Canadian war correspondent to take part in it.” A special task force was being formed to drop behind the German lines in Northern Italy, to organize the resistance activities of an active but inexperienced guerilla force, known as the *patrioti*, and teach them how to blow up railway lines and generally make life difficult for the German forces. The correspondent chosen would have to take two weeks of parachute training before making the drop late at night.

Beamish wrote that the chosen reporter would not be allowed to advise his paper that he was going on a secret mission, let alone its purpose or destination.

Despite these restrictions, Morton eagerly volunteered and submitted his name to Allied Force Headquarters. He was carefully investigated and received security clearance. He reported to the paratroop training center in Bari and went about learning the arts of parachuting and guerilla warfare. The operation was postponed on the very night it was supposed to take place because of weather conditions.

All members were given 24 hours leave and Morton returned to Canadian press headquarters in Rome.

The first flight in late August, 1944, developed engine trouble, according to both Lees and Morton in their memoirs, and was slightly damaged in landing upon return. Beamish recalls:

“Having been tuned to concert pitch, only to be frustrated at the last moment by the turn of events, Morton proceeded to get himself deeply into the sauce in our mess and capped a night of revelry by pulling out the army revolver he had been issued and quite literally shooting up the mess. I still recall one bullet hole in the mirror behind the bar that had just missed our bartender, one Sgt. Brown. Then he went back to his unit, and took off the following night.”

As a friend, Beamish said he agreed to help Morton satisfy assignments from the Toronto Daily Star still unfinished:

“Paul told me that he had a job he was supposed to do during the following fortnight. A new victory loan campaign was on in Canada, and his paper had instructed him to file a story every day, interviewing soldiers and nurses, and using their quotes to produce a story that might make Canadians more ready to buy bonds. I assured him that during his absence I would write the stories for him and file them to the Toronto Daily Star over his name. Canadian Army PR officers were authorized to produce what they called “Little Joe” stories on individual soldiers and along with a photograph it was sent

to hometown newspapers in Canada.”

Although Beamish and Morton were friends and Army Public Relations and journalists worked for a common war goal, neither the Toronto Daily Star nor Army headquarters would have condoned such an arrangement. In the period Morton was behind German lines between the end of August and November 1944, no articles appeared in the Toronto Daily Star under Morton's byline or resembling anything Beamish might have written under an Army Public Relations byline.

Capt. Geoffrey Long, War Artist

Paul Morton's partner on the mission to report on the partisans would not be a photographer but a war artist, Capt. Geoffrey Long of the Army of South Africa. Commonwealth journalists had been constantly criticizing British Military authorities for favoring the British press on newsworthy operations. This time, for whatever reasons, the highly secret story of SOE training and support of the partisans would be given to a Canadian and South African.

Geoffrey Long was born in Durban, South Africa in 1916. He studied at prestigious art schools in Durban and London, including the School of Contemporary Painting. He worked painting murals for South Africa House in London and in theatre and costume design at the Old Vic Theatre. In June 1941, after losing all his pre-war work during

a bombing raid on London, Long was appointed as an official South African war artist and attached himself to the British Eighth Army during its advance across North Africa. He was not an artist who drew from combat photographs or from descriptions of those who had experienced battle. He is described as daring and adventurous, ready to accompany the most hazardous missions to fulfill his role as a war artist. Long flew with the crew of a B-24 Liberator bomber on a 9th U.S. Army Air Force (USAAF) mission to bomb Sicily in 1943 and returned with a series of sketches over target. By a curious set of circumstances Morton and Long became a journalism team to document the Italian partisans in August 1944.

The notion of sending trained artists to depict the scenes of war was not a new one. The impulse to record in visual form both the pain and glories of battle was as old as war itself. For centuries however, the images of battle were created well after the fact. It was often the work of an artist who had not actually witnessed the conflict they portrayed and in their pursuit of art, had little problem with distorting the facts of an event.

In 1943, *Life*, the popular international magazine, although dedicated to photography had four combat artists on staff who made an effort to portray war from firsthand observation, offering authentic views of the conflict. *Life's* rationale for using combat art suggested that while a photograph could state the objective facts of combat, it remained for the artist to infuse them with a "philosophic inner illumination." The combat artist could offer through

subjective expression of color and composition, a sense of the human feelings engendered by its horrors and devastations.

It may have been a last minute decision of SOE commanders to include Long in the mission. He did not have time to complete required jumps for parachute wings and would make his last training jump to qualify over Nazi occupied Italy.

Long's technique as a war artist was to draw people and places in ink, then smear the ink with his thumb. His war art is on display at the Ditsong National Museum of Military History in Johannesburg, including 30 drawings from his mission with the partisans. It is the only military museum of its kind in South Africa. Museum director Maj. J.L. Keene generously sent me copies of Long's drawings with the partisans. They include a brooding portrait of Paul Morton in battle dress of a Canadian war correspondent with his recently won parachute wings sewn onto the uniform. A caption on the drawing in Long's hand suggests Morton is about to engage in an argument with someone whose name is not legible. Keene also sent me a portrait of Long drawn by a fellow South African war artist, Neville Lewis, which in the absence of any photographic memory is the only image I have of Geoffrey Long

On the trail of Paul Morton in Italy

In the summer of 2008, I visited the Piedmont area of Italy and searched archives in Cuneo and Turin, looking for any

trace of Paul Morton or Geoffrey Long to prove they had been there 64 years earlier. I had no doubt that Morton had, as his friends testified, gone on what was probably the most dangerous and difficult combat assignment of any Canadian journalist in the Second World War.

Why did Toronto Daily Star Managing Editor Harry Hindmarsh fire Morton? Allegedly because he did not believe Morton was with the partisans in Italy? Since Peter Stursberg died in 2006, I knew of no living source who had ever met Paul Morton with the exception of his younger brother John. The truth of his mission had not been unquestionably established during his lifetime. Could it possibly be verified 64 years after his adventure and 16 years after his death?

I started where Morton had completed his Italian odyssey, Ventimiglia, a fishing village on the Mediterranean a few miles from the French border. There, Morton and his companions slipped through German lines, hired a rowboat and escaped to France. Ventimiglia probably has not changed much since Morton passed through. It's a sleepy sunbathed town of pink buildings, fountains and palm trees between the azure water and the railroad station. I boarded the sleek bullet-nosed train, the 17:56 to Cuneo. I was reminded of the famous rationalization of Mussolini's disastrous leadership when some Italians would say: "Well, at least he makes the trains run on time." Indeed that afternoon they did. At precisely 17:56, the train moved out of the station, swung North and within minutes was steadily climbing into the Italian Alps at a steep angle.

Arriving in Cuneo on a Sunday afternoon, the streets were completely deserted and the Hotel Fonti reception desk was empty. A soccer game was on television and Italy was winning. At half time, the manager appeared and quickly checked me in. “Buon giorno! Would you by any chance know of any old members of the resistance, the partisans?” I asked hopefully.

“Si, grazie!,” she answered. “The priest, Aldo Benevelli, whose church is around the corner, was head of intelligence here with the partisans. I will ask him to join you for breakfast in the morning.”

Father Aldo Benevelli, a Roman Catholic priest, was chairman of the Associazione dei Partigiani of Cuneo. At 86, he was tall and erect with a full head of white hair. With the hotel manager translating, Father Benevelli began recounting his life as a 22-year-old intelligence agent in German-occupied Cuneo. It was a life in the shadows, filled with codes and double agents and surveillance by the ever-watchful Gestapo.

“Correspondent di guerra, Canadese Paul Morton? Did you know him, Father?” I asked.

“Si, Morton.” Benevelli knew very well who Paul Morton was, and that Morton spent more time with the partisans than any other foreign journalist. It was not a first hand acquaintance, but through the book Morton had written and published in Italian, his mission was well known. A copy of this book, *Missione Inside: Fra I Partigiani Del Nord Italia*, could be found at the Istituto Storico Della Resistenza on the Corso Nizza in Cuneo.

At the Institute, Director Marco Ruzzi showed me through books and files stacked to the ceiling which documented the history of the Resistance. There were a few photographs he retrieved for me of “The Farm” in the mountains 20 miles from Cuneo, where British Special Operations Executive (SOE) established its clandestine camp and radio transmitter, and where Morton spent two months.

“Paul Morton’s book is an important part of our partisan history,” Marco told me as he retrieved *Missione Inside* from a book shelf. “Morton was a trained observer, a journalist with an open mind who spoke fluent Italian. There are few such independent voices in our histories. What a shame the reports he wrote were not published and lost. If you can find them it would be a great service to Italians to know more what a foreigner thought of our Resistance at a time of the beginning of a new democratic Italy in 1944. Our Italian youth do not care too much about how hard we fought in those times. I think it is very sad.”

Veteran Partisans Remember Paul Morton

I asked Director Ruzzi if he could help me locate any partisans who may have known Paul Morton during his two months here. Ruzzi started calling partisans he knew were active near Cuneo in August 1944. On the third call, Giovanni Raineri said he remembered Morton well and would come to the Institute to meet me the following day. At 86, Raineri is still tall and slim with a thick white moustache and bushy

eyebrows, but no hair on his head. Raineri had been a partisan squad commander in Val Allero. After the war he had been a high school teacher and a Principal. He lives in Mondavi. He brought along Giovanni Ugliengo who was also a partisan who remembered Morton. "I remember well Morton and the artist Long who wore British Army uniforms," recalled Raineri. "Morton was always asking questions, his Italian was hard to understand, but he also spoke some French and Spanish so we got along. Long was constantly making ink drawings of everyone he met."

Raineri and Ugliengo spoke rapidly as they warmed to remembering the days they were partisans in their early twenties. They rarely paused for Director Ruzzi to translate and argued with each other about the details. They particularly remembered the supply drops while Morton was there that frequently brought them luxuries like cigarettes, Sten guns, ammunition and boots. They said unfair divisions of the supplies caused bitter arguments among the partisans who used the parachutes for table cloths, new clothes and even made the wedding dress for a bride.

The tin containers dropped with supplies were cut up and used to reinforce the roofs. Looking at an old photo from SOE days at The Farm, the base camp of Maj. Neville Darewski (code named Maj. Temple), the old partisans identified most of the foreigners in the photo, but said the day the photo was taken Morton was in nearby Prea trying to buy bottles of wine.

Their memories seemed to fixate on the mundane concerns of day-to-day life. The biggest issue they recall between the

foreigners and the partisans was who would wash the pots and dishes after a meal. Apparently the British in particular expected the local partisans to take care of kitchen duties, but the partisans demanded everyone share the kitchen chores which in most units were done by captured Fascist prisoners. They couldn't recall if Morton washed his own dishes. I asked them if they had read Morton's memoirs in Italian. They had and said they were accurate and truthful.

The Partisans' Historian: Mario Donadei

How Paul Morton came to write his book, so respected by Italians but never published in English, is itself a fascinating story. Mario Donadei, alias "Dona" was one of the most active partisan commanders in the Cuneo area and was the first to contact Morton about writing a book. Although Donadei died over 10 years ago, I was able to meet his younger brother Dr. Gianfranco Donadei, a psychiatrist. We enjoyed a fine meal in a local tavern, and discussed his brother's search for Morton after the war.

"Mario was very disturbed by his time with the partisans," explained Dr. Donadei. "It haunted his life and it was like what we now call Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a medical term that came into use during the Vietnam War that describes the anxiety disorder soldiers develop after a terrifying ordeal. Mario lost a lot of his friends in the partisans. It helped for him to write about them." Donadei left a letter describing his search for Paul Morton:

“Paul Morton’s name came to our attention in the spring of 1963, 18 years after the end of the war. We were involved in the completion of the war archives on our partisan group and were curious to find out what the Number One Special Force, five British missions, who were parachuted into our valleys, had thought, reported, documented about us; curious to know what we looked like to the Allies.

“Therefore, I wrote to the English Ministry of War and soon after I received a letter signed by a Mr. E. G. Boxshall⁷, White Hall, London SW 1, to whom the War Office had redirected our request for information. We became aware in this fashion that the English Secret Services, although certainly more efficient were nevertheless as tangled as ours. This is how we became aware that Paul Morton, Canadian journalist and war correspondent for the Toronto Daily Star took part in Mission Flap which was parachuted in August, 1944, over Marsiglia in Langh region and promptly moved to Val

Ellero. I immediately sent a letter to Canada and did not have to wait long for the reply which was vague and frigid. After consulting their archives, the Toronto Daily Star denied that a Paul Morton or anyone by such a name had ever reported on the war from the partisan zones of northern Italy through their columns. This was followed by a letter of ill-concealed disapproval directed at Mr. Boxshall, guilty no longer of reticence, but rather of mendacity. Then a diplomatically indignant reply by Mr. Boxshall, rejecting and firmly confirming the information about Paul Morton. Finally, a retraction through clenched teeth by the Toronto

Daily Star. Yes, it was possible that a Paul Morton had been involved with the paper for some time in the remote past, however the best way of finding it out would be writing him directly at 45 Glen Road, Toronto 5, Ontario.

“Paul, was one of those strange Englishmen who were rotating with our bands, coming down from the sky with their parachutes and leaving on foot or by boat to the front lines.

“They dissolved the nightmare that often recurred; the nightmare to be alone, a bunch of fools, obstinate about a war of which the free world, indifferent and remote, was not aware, and would never have known about.

“Paul spent a lot of time with Geoffrey Long, an army captain from South Africa. He was a war artist. In its pathetic love for tradition, the British Army of 1944 had kept these specialists within its ranks with the mandate to record with carbon and paper war scenes and people that the camera, already invented and tried, could have done better with greater clarity and accuracy.

“Paul Morton, a journalist, a man trained by trade to observe, evaluate and report on events and circumstances, was the best choice to satisfy our curiosity. I wrote him immediately.

“Signed, Mario Donadei

Within a few months, Morton wrote a memoir of his assignment with the partisans.

Capt. Michael Lees

Few men are so different in character and personality than Paul Morton and Capt. Michael Lees, the SOE officer assigned to escort him behind enemy lines. Morton was a Canadian, a professional war correspondent, and Lees a professional British soldier, a liaison officer of the SOE, committed to secrecy and sabotage. Each embraced the characteristics of nationality and profession that made them who they were. The cultural rift between the two would make their two month association a prickly one.

Michael Lees was born in 1921 into an English country family with a military tradition and was educated at Ampleforth College, a Benedictine school in North Yorkshire. When war came after service in the Dorset Yeomanry, he was drafted to India where he wangled his way into the Parachute Brigade. In 1943, 21-year-old Lees was in Egypt, but after nine months his brigade was being sent back to the UK. "It was in Shepherds Bar in Cairo that I first heard of the activities of the 'tweed cap boys,'" Lees wrote in his memoir *Special Operations Executed*. "My informant, a gentleman of cheerful mien with a glamorous blonde, was making a gallant attempt to impress her with a detailed account of his recently acquired position on the staff of a highly secret department of General Headquarters." Lees' devious nature did not give him pause listening in on a private conversation at the bar. The overheard conversation was about 'tweed cap boys' of a special new military organization designed to dispatch agents to enemy-occupied Europe. It was the

first time Lees had heard of SOE. “I decided to discover all there was to know of this secret organization and, if it were at all possible, force my way into it, although I had only the sketchiest idea of what that would imply.”

After the blonde left, Lees bought the drinks and pumped the drunken officer for more information about the nascent SOE. Over the next month, through guile, bluff and pure lies, Lees got himself recruited by SOE. Before signing on, Lees received a prophetic warning from a fellow officer knowledgeable about the SOE. “Mike, remember this: don’t cry if you’re let down. Those people have a very bad reputation for doing that if it suits them.” Lees paid no heed to his friend’s warning, signed on and was given a book on the Serb-Croat language to study for a month before being dropped into German-occupied Yugoslavia to work with the partisans.

The drop was about 50 miles east of Pristina to a resistance group of Serbian Chetniks⁸ led by Drachma Mihailovic and loyal to the Serbian King. Lees soon found himself embroiled in the political mosaic of Yugoslavian resistance. The Yugoslav Communist partisans, led by Marshal Josip Broz Tito, were steadily gaining power, and ultimately the Allies switched their allegiance and recognized the Communists as the Yugoslav Resistance Movement. After a year, Lees mission members found themselves in the middle of a civil war and were pulled out by the British War Office.

Lees had operated under impossible conditions, constantly under attack by Bulgarian forces and unable

to muster effective counter-attacks from the reluctant resistance. Radio contact with the Cairo base was often silent and supply drops were rare. During that year, Lees goaded the resistance into helping him derail eight German supply trains and twice destroying a mile of track. Finally, without help from his resistance contacts, Lees was reduced to setting explosive charges by himself in the dark of night and without clear intelligence on what he was destroying. On his last mission, instead of a military supply train, Lees managed to blow up track and derail a passenger train.

After returning to the SOE base at Bari, Italy, Lees learned that he was labeled by SOE headquarters as “wild,” based on adverse reports from other British officers in Yugoslavia who had been less active. Lees complained in his memoirs that SOE headquarters was not interested in learning the details of his sabotage exploits in Yugoslavia. It seems that even in elite warrior organizations, petty jealousy and mistrust of talented colleagues led to sabotage of each other’s reputations.

Refusing to take his accumulated leave, Lees stayed at Bari, constantly badgering SOE command for a new assignment. Finally, it was decided to drop Lees to an SOE base in Northern Italy to work with the Italian partisans. “I was warned that I might be taking a war reporter with me, as it was considered advisable to publicize the resistance of the Northern

Italians in an effort to obtain better co-operation from their southern brethren in the liberated territories.” In the several months of inaction at Bari, Lees met and romanced

Lt. Gwen Johnson, a FANY9 who worked in the radio operations of SOE. They were married a few weeks before Lees took off on his new assignment to Northern Italy. In his memoirs, Lees eloquently described saying farewell to his new bride at the Bari airstrip:

“The evening came and we drove to the airfield together. It was dusk when we arrived. Aircraft stood dispersed around the drome; the great black shape of a Halifax loomed ghostly in the fading light. Around its belly men moved quietly, and unconsciously they pitched their voices low. The scene was quiet and still—this gateway to the other life.

As he boarded the Halifax bomber, Lees met the journalists Morton and Long who he would be escorting and recorded his first impressions:

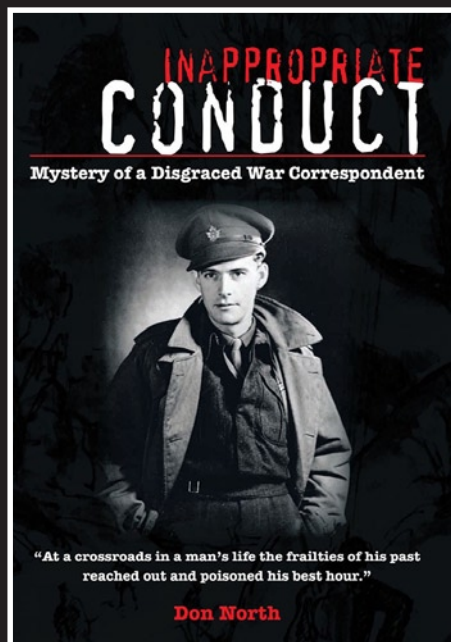
“My companions were a war reporter and an artist. The reporter, Paul Morton, was a frail-looking man of around 30 years of age. He had waited some weeks for an opportunity to join the partisans. A pleasant enough fellow, talkative and outspoken, I was rather worried about him. He complained of a strained ankle contracted during his training jumps and had tied every conceivable form of bandage and brace around it as a precaution against further injury. For good measure he wore rubber pads on every part of his body that might conceivably come into contact with the ground, so that his final appearance was somewhat like a foreshortened Laurel prepared to be Hardy on a motor cycle.

“The artist, Geoffrey Long, was charming and very keen. Loath to be separated from his paper and chinks, he carried them in a bag suspended from his chest. He was about the same age as Morton and was small and very slightly built. He was thrilled at the opportunity of being the first war artist to drop to the partisans.

“My orders were brief. We were to be dropped to a ground on the edge of a plain south of Turin, about 30 miles north of Maj. Neville Temple’s hideout for his ‘Mission Flap’ in the Maritime Alps. The reception would be organized by a group of partisans commanded by a monarchist Maj. Enrico Mauri.”

"I went in behind the lines and emerged as a kind of agent. I went in as a reporter and came out a kind of soldier. I sometimes wish I had never gone in at all"

- Paul Morton



It was the worst nightmare when war reporter Paul Morton found his greatest story, on which he had risked his life behind enemy lines, was not believed by his editors at Canada's largest newspaper . . .

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