

Alexander Gault MacGowan was a leading war correspondent during World War II. Born February 7, 1894, to Scottish parents in Manchester, England, he was educated at Manchester Grammar School. Before the war, from 1929 to 1934, MacGowan was the editor of the *Trinidad Guardian*, hiring Seepersad Naipaul, the father of Nobel prize-winning V. S. Naipaul, to write features for that newspaper. In October, 1934, MacGowan began a sixteen-year stint with the *New York Sun*, later known as the *New York World-Telegram and Sun*. He rose from correspondent to become managing editor of the *Sun's* European Bureau after the war.

Before the war he covered the coronation of George VI, the Spanish Civil War, and spent time in Morocco with the French Foreign Legion (1937). MacGowan won a Selfridge Prize in 1932 for an article about Devil's Island that appeared in the *Times of London*.

During World War II, MacGowan wrote for the *New York Sun*, covering the Battle of Britain, the disastrous Dieppe raid (in which he wrote about dive bomber strafing and depth charges around his ship), and shifting later to North Africa. There Ernie Pyle referred to him as the "oldest" correspondent, fearlessly popping up from his foxhole to interview soldiers between incoming rounds. After the defeat of Rommel in Africa, MacGowan transferred to Italy, and in 1944 covered the D-Day landings in northern France. On August 15, 1944, he had a brush with death as he was captured, along with a couple of other correspondents, by two German light tanks firing machine guns at them. His capture was reported in daily newspapers in London, New York and elsewhere around the world. The *New York Times* headline read, "MacGowan of Sun Captured in France; Nazis Report Companion Hurt in 'Scrape'". A couple of days later, he eluded his captors by leaping from a prisoner-of-war train in the middle of the night.

After the war, MacGowan continued to work as European Bureau chief of the *Sun* until the newspaper was sold to the *New York World-Telegram* in January, 1950. The *World-Telegram and Sun* dropped all nonunion *Sun* employees after a strike that began in June, 1950, among them MacGowan. He then became a European correspondent for the North American Newspaper Alliance, also starting a venture of his own with the production of a series of small guidebooks for tourists, such as "Heidelberg Confidential," and "Switzerland Confidential." In 1956 he began to devote all his efforts to writing and publishing the travel newspaper, *European Life*, first in Munich, then after 1963 in Heidelberg. MacGowan died on November 30, 1970, as a result of the complications of osteoporosis.