



The 7721st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group

The May 1953 de-federalization of the reserve 301st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet (RB&L) Group in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) forced U.S. Army, Europe (USAREUR) to resolve the issue of remaining 301st soldiers and equipment. On 14 May 1953, USAREUR Headquarters, Area Command (HACOM) issued General Order #22. That order set 20 May as the activation date for the 7721st RB&L, the strategic psychological warfare (Psywar) replacement for the 301st.¹ However, the 7721st was just a short-lived holding detachment that was deactivated in September 1953, closing out the Army strategic Psywar presence in Europe for years.

Upon activation, the 7721st RB&L was to organize according to the USAREUR-created Table of Distribution (T/D) 77-7721, which was modeled on existing T/Ds for RB&L Groups. Because the 301st had that structure, the 7721st did not have to re-organize. The 'newly formed' 7721st would occupy the former barracks of the 301st (Sullivan Barracks), with the exception of one MRB detachment situated at the Vogelweh Cantonment in Kaiserslautern



COL Frank A. McCulloch assumed command of the 301st RB&L in September 1952 and remained at the helm when on 20 May 1953 the 7721st RB&L replaced it. McCulloch lobbied USAREUR to maintain a strategic Psywar capability, but that faded away with the deactivation of the 7721st on 15 September 1953.

that was relaying American Forces Network broadcasts to soldiers under Western Area Command.²

On 1 June 1953, formal assignment of 301st personnel and property to the 7721st happened "smoothly and efficiently."³ COL Frank A. McCulloch, 301st RB&L commander from September 1952 to May 1953 who then became the 7721st RB&L commander, told his subordinates that only the Group number had changed. "Personnel, equipment, and the mission remain the same, and it is my earnest hope that the new Group will carry on in the old tradition, in spite of the change in designation."⁴ Soldiers noticed no difference in their day-to-day routines.

One soldier who served in both the 301st and 7721st RB&Ls was native Lithuanian Private First Class (PFC) Vytenis Telycenas. Drafted in 1952 while residing in Cleveland, Ohio, Telycenas took basic training at Fort Knox, Kentucky, before specializing in signal and radio communications. In late 1952, he reported to the 525th Military Intelligence Service Group at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He soon received orders to the 301st RB&L Monitoring Section. When the 301st 'became' the 7721st, Telycenas recalled that nothing changed: "Everybody kept doing the same jobs."⁵

The 7721st maintained the same research and training focus as the 301st, continuing some of the latter's projects. The Group printed *Propaganda Review*, a product initiated by the 301st months prior that offered a daily summary of broadcasts by Radios Moscow, Warsaw (Poland), Prague (Czechoslovakia), (East) Berlin, Brasov (Romania), and Bucharest (Romania). In addition, it produced *Propanol*, a monthly analysis of broadcasts intercepted from the Communist bloc. According to the unit newsletter, *Psyche*, the purpose of *Propanol* was "obtaining intelligence to oppose [Communist] propaganda." Monitors tuned in twenty-four hours a day to broadcasts from behind the Iron Curtain, recorded relevant broadcasts, and forwarded



Designed to provide intelligence to oppose Communist propaganda, *Propanol* was a monthly intelligence analysis of foreign broadcasts. These images were pulled from a 1953 edition of *Psyche* and depict the process of producing *Propanol*. (1) Monitors assigned to the MRBC tuned into foreign broadcasts around the clock. PFCs Vytenis Telycenas (front) and Dennis Burgess tune into 11.96 AM to hear Russian commentary. (2) Tape recordings of intercepted broadcasts then went for translation. An enlisted Russian linguist (front) translates Soviet broadcasts while 1LT Roy W. Nickerson waits to have his Romanian tape translated. (3) Translated tapes were transcribed. PFC Hans A. Deutsch (L) and PVT John Leffingwell (R) “pound out *Propanol* copy.” (4) The S-2 analyzes the typed-up broadcasts and reduces them to their most relevant points. (5) Final analytical touches and approval happen at the command group level just prior to official publication of *Propanol*.

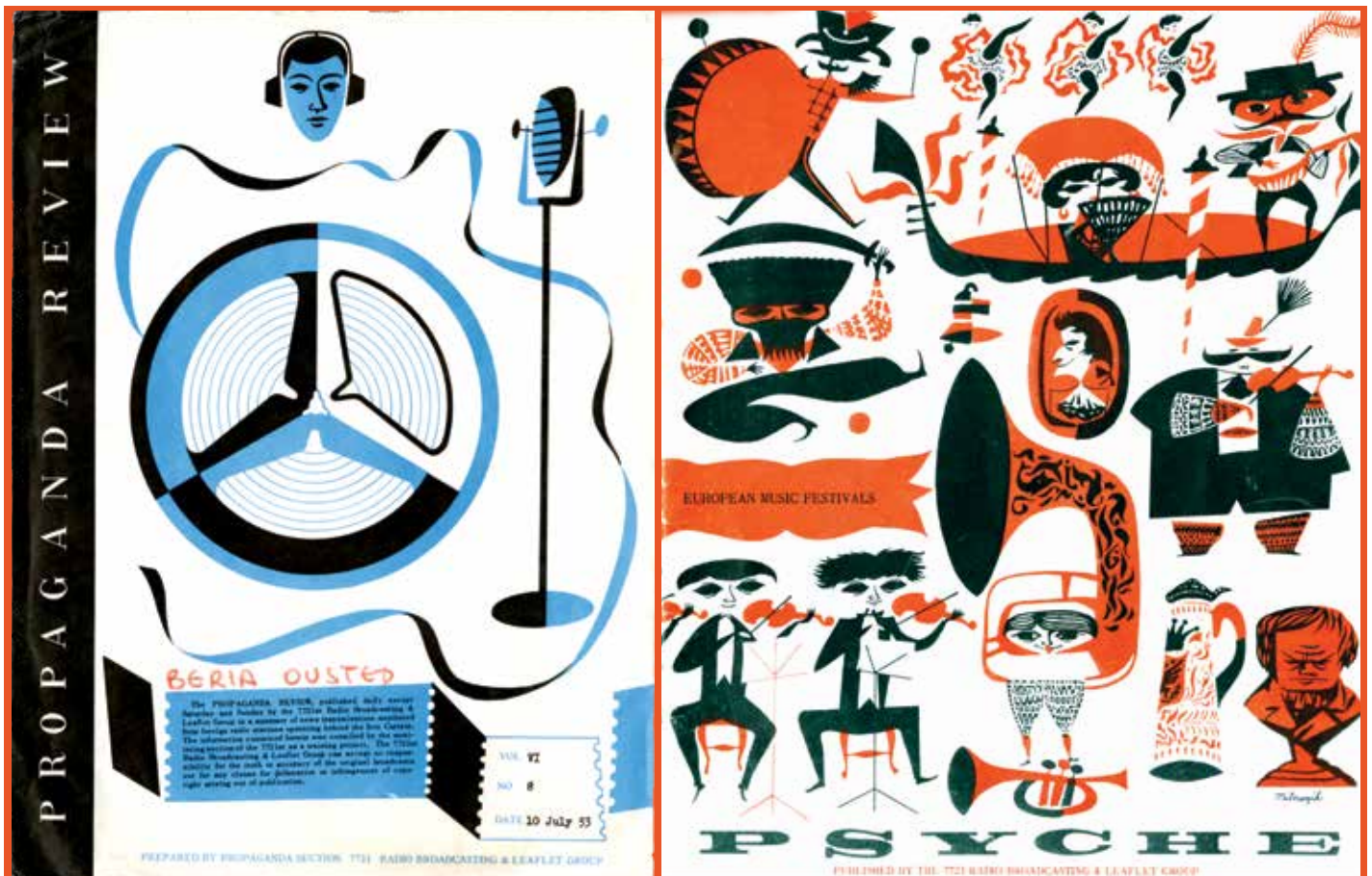
them to linguists for translation. Translated tapes then went for transcription and finally to the S-2 for a “strategic analysis and forecast.”⁶

In June, the 7721st carried out other tasks besides *Propaganda Review* and *Propanol*. In coordination with the 5th Loudspeaker and Leaflet (L&L) Company, Seventh U.S. Army tactical Psywar asset in the FRG, the RB&L assembled a Psywar exhibition in Paris, France. The Group developed and printed a “Welcome to Europe” pamphlet. And it established internal German language and Psywar-specific courses. Meanwhile, the Group continued tracking the political environment in Europe. For example, the Italian desk monitored and reported on that country’s June 7 national election in which the Christian Democracy Party emerged victorious over leftist parties and other factions in parliament.⁷

Training activities continued throughout July. Several 7721st personnel attended an abbreviated Russian language course at the USAREUR Intelligence and Military Police School, roughly 250 miles south in Oberammergau. The

Group propagandists developed a hypothetical leaflet directed at civilians in a combat zone as well as foreign language radio scripts for a field exercise. USAREUR tasked the Group to prepare scripts and assign a scriptwriter and two announcers for the Fourth of July festivities in Heidelberg. Complementing these more specialized opportunities was refresher training on such military topics as Military Security and Customs and Courtesies.⁸

On 22 July 1953, COL McCulloch received verbal notification of the forthcoming deactivation of the unit in September, effectively ending training. “Selected operations of the Group were discontinued pending official orders,” which came about a month later.⁹ On 17 August, Headquarters, Area Command published General Order #38. The order directed that on 15 September the 7721st RB&L would be relieved from assignment to G-3, USAREUR; T/D 77-7721 would be withdrawn; and personnel would report to G-1, USAREUR for new assignments. PFC Telycenas recalled, “We were told to make some phone calls and



In addition to *Propanol*, the 7721st RB&L produced *Propaganda Review*, a daily translated summary of Communist news broadcasts, and *Psyche*, the unit newsletter containing world news and relevant information for the Group. Depicted here are the covers of the 10 July 1953 edition of *Propaganda Review* and the June 1953 issue of *Psyche*.

find another job, and that's what we did."¹⁰ "Common equipment" was to be turned in "in accordance with existing regulations," but "equipment peculiar to [Psywar] will be prepared for disposition in accordance with special instructions to be issued by Headquarters, USAREUR."¹¹

General Order #38 ended 7721st RB&L operations. COL McCulloch wanted the Army to keep a strategic Psywar presence in theater. He proposed that USAREUR delegate a "panel of officers and enlisted men" to stay behind for that purpose, which was accepted. Three officers and five soldiers gathered "selected records and equipment" of the 7721st and reported to G-3, USAREUR. However, there is no indication that anything came out of their efforts. By 15 September 1953, all of the RB&L equipment was turned in and personnel were reassigned. The next day, the 7721st submitted its last Morning Report, an anticlimactic finish to the U.S. Army strategic Psywar presence in Europe in the early 1950s.¹² ▲

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Endnotes

- 1 Headquarters, Area Command, "General Order #22: Organization of 7721 Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group," 14 May 1953, Box 567, Record Group 338, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD.
- 2 The 7721st fell belonged to Headquarters, Area Command for administration and G-3, USAREUR, for operations. Dated 31 May 1950, T/D 250-1201 for the HHC of an RB&L authorized 8 officers, 2 warrant officers, and 71 enlisted men; T/D 250-1202 for the Reproduction Company authorized 2 officers and 31 enlisted men; and T/D 250-1203 for the Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company authorized 3 officers and 35 enlisted men. The only organizational change in the 7721st was the move of the Propaganda Section (linguists, script-writers, and artists) from the S-3 to become a special staff section in the HHC. History Card, 7721st RB&L Group, U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH), Fort McNair, Washington, DC, hereafter History Card, 7721st RB&L.
- 3 7721st RB&L, "Historical Summary of the 7721st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group [for the period covering 20 May 1953 to 15 September 1953]," no date (ca. September 1953), 1, Box 567, RG 338, NARA, hereafter 7721st RB&L, "Historical Summary."
- 4 COL Frank A. McCulloch, "From the desk of the Col. F.A. McCulloch," *Psyche* (no date, ca. June 1953): 2, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 5 Vytienis Telycenas, 301st RB&L and 7721st RB&L, interview with Jared M. Tracy, 1 March 2012, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 6 7721st RB&L, "Proponal: The Study of Propaganda," *Psyche* (no date, ca. June 1953): 16-17.
- 7 7721st RB&L, "Historical Summary," 1-2.
- 8 7721st RB&L, "Historical Summary," 2.
- 9 7721st RB&L, "Historical Summary," 3.
- 10 Telycenas interview.
- 11 Headquarters, Area Command, General Order #38, "Discontinuation of 7721st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group," 17 August 1953, Box 567, RG 338, NARA; History Card, 7721st RB&L.
- 12 7721st RB&L, "Historical Summary," 3-4.