Radio Pusan
The Voice of South Korea

by Charles H. Briscoe
While the rest of 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group (1st RB&L) was reorganizing to meet the number one Far East Command (FE COM) Psywar priority, broadcasting from Radio Tokyo and creating a Voice of the United Nations Command (VUNC), Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Homer E. Shields needed an initial assessment of the KBS (Korean Broadcasting System) facility in Pusan. Rebuilding South Korean radio stations was his number two priority. In mid-August 1951, he told Chemical Corps Second Lieutenant (2LT) Jack F. Brembeck, who had worked in an Army Expeditionary Radio Station in Italy and directed the preparation of an enlisted Psywar program of instruction (POI) at Fort Riley, KS, to select someone to help him evaluate and begin supervising KBS operations in the port city. Private First Class (PFC) Leon H. “Lee” Nelson, a 4th Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company (MRBC) programmer, was his choice.

They were to write and broadcast daily news and commentaries on current events. This was critical because the South Korean [Republic of Korea (ROK)] president, Syngman Rhee, and his government had returned to Pusan after Seoul was captured by the Communist Chinese in early 1951. LT Brembeck and PFC Nelson were to build a transmission capability to deliver Psywar beyond the 38th Parallel. Until the 4th MRBC mobile radio systems arrived in theater, UN programs would be broadcast over KBS stations that American military were in the process of rebuilding in the South. MRBC teams were capable of doing this at several different sites once Radio Pusan was well-established.

The purpose of this article is to explain how and why Radio Pusan, the first American-supervised KBS station, became the “Voice of South Korea,” the central radio hub for the 1st RB&L in Korea, and the FECOM G-2 Psywar “clearing station” for all UN broadcasts made in the Republic. Korean presidential speeches with reunification rhetoric broadcast over the radio posed threats to UN Armistice negotiations. Yet, the responsibility for ‘controlling’ the ROK president fell upon a junior 1st RB&L officer serving as the Program Officer/Officer-in-Charge (OIC) of Radio Pusan. In order to understand how this cooperative arrangement evolved, a look at the MRBC structure is in order.

According to its Table of Distribution (T/D) effective 1 September 1951, the 4th MRBC was to conduct strategic propaganda against the enemy and disseminate information to friendly elements in enemy-held territory by radio broadcasting. The company headquarters, in addition to providing administrative and supply support, had a Captain (CPT) commander and lieutenants as the executive officer, radio officer, and monitoring section leader. A WWII Infantryman, CPT Robert A. Leadley, the 4th MRBC commander, had been dual-hatted as 1st RB&L Radio Officer [S-3 (Operations)] to oversee Radio Tokyo and VUNC. Since each of the three MRB platoons was authorized four officers and twenty-two enlisted men, LTC Shields had a pool of talented personnel to ‘kick start’ the KBS radio stations. They could be task organized as independent detachments to conduct strategic radio Psywar.

LT Jack Brembeck was to restore radio broadcasting for President Rhee. But, a family emergency interrupted his efforts. Thus, Signal Corps ILT William J. Eilers, a Stanford electrical engineering and journalism graduate who had Armed Forces Radio (AFR) experience in Tokyo (1946-1948), Infantry 2LT Eddie Deerfield, a decorated WWII Air Corps veteran, and PFC Joseph E. Dabney were sent to join PFC Nelson and Corporals (CPL) John L. “Stod” Stoddard and Alvin R. “Al” Busse at Radio Pusan in mid-August. Since Radio Pusan was the surrogate for Radio Seoul, it became the “Voice of South Korea.” “We ran a ‘seat of the pants, jerry rigged’ operation with American military-repaired/replaced Korean transmitters, antennas, and station facilities,” said LT Eddie Deerfield.

Co-locating in the KBS compound on a hilltop overlooking Pusan harbor offered the best operational solution. The 4th MRBC enlisted soldiers lived in a Quonset hut while two wooden-floored tents served the lieutenants and any visitors. The Radio Pusan ‘office’ was

*Broadcasts are made from fixed stations or from mobile broadcasting stations. In some cases, the latter can be established on the site of fixed stations that have been destroyed and employ the frequency of the station they replace.* U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 33-5, Psychological Warfare in Combat Operations, August 1949.

Previous page: Former radio sportscaster Yun Chul Sung became the “Voice of Philosophy” commentator for Radio Pusan.
in a separate wooden building. A ten-minute drive to the 2nd Logistics Command mess by the railroad station was convenient. An armed Korean guard provided security by controlling the compound gate. The only threat was an occasional North Korean Air Force ‘Bed Check Charlie.’ The pilots of these WWII-vintage propeller aircraft hand-dropped mortar shells into the perimeter at night. Within three weeks 2LT Deerfield was elevated from newsroom OIC to detachment Radio Officer responsible for assigning script writing tasks, editing products, and coordinating broadcast times with the KBS station director.10

Officially, the Radio Pusan team had four major tasks: (1) supervise and counsel KBS personnel in the installation and operation of radio broadcast equipment; (2) take the initiative in program development for all programs aired over the Pusan network, not just Psywar; (3) co-operatively promulgate FECOM and UN Command policy with ROK government officials; (4) successfully sell Psywar at ‘ground’ level by developing a close working relationship with the Korean people.11 U.S. assistance was categorized as technical and programming support.

Technical assistance came first. This included arranging the transportation, engineering, and installation of new broadcast equipment and coordinating use of interim Army Signal Corps broadcast equipment until KBS network facilities were restored. Specifically, the following was done for Radio Pusan: (1) an Army Signal Corps master sergeant was temporarily attached as the engineering advisor to supervise the installation of a U.S. Army 5 KW broadcast transmitter. This supplement to the one KW expanded local transmission coverage and reduced station down time. He also managed the network and worked to improve the quality of transmissions; (2) they arranged for the installation of a radio teletype news service to provide 24-hour daily world news for the network; (3) they coordinated the transfer of repair parts and components for transmitters and studio equipment; (4) they programmed one of the AN/MRT-5 Mobile Studios for Pusan to tape record and serve as backup for live broadcasts; (5) they furnished fuel, Korean vehicle tires and parts, water, and transportation when deemed critical to broadcast operations.12 While these technical aspects were being accomplished, LTs Eilers and Deerfield focused on programming.

“My maxim was to always tell the truth,” said LT Deerfield. “You never wanted to get caught in a lie. That always worked well for me.”13 The programs were consistent with overall theater policy based on the best available intelligence. Truthful, accurate news was the backbone of American programming. The Free

The Reds’ newest Weapon: ‘Kaesong’

Good evening, soldiers of China. The war in Korea erupted anew today as the Communist-caused armistice talks suspension dragged through its thirteenth day.

On the battered heights north of Yanggu, the “Battle of Bloody Ridge” continues in all its savagery. Yesterday, the Communists attempted to regain a strategic hill they lost last week. They pushed some 5,000 of their soldiers into murderous UN fire. The Reds attacked behind a heavy artillery and mortar attack. But when the artillery lifted, UN troops greeted the Reds attackers with searing-white steel and lead.

While the battle flamed on in Korea, the UN Command worked overtime to bring about a honorable armistice. General Matthew B. Ridgway called his negotiation team to Tokyo last night. Presumably the UN Command leaders will draft a reply to the poisonous Communist message of Saturday. In it, the Reds “demanded” the UN re-investigate their Kaesong neutrality violation charges. The Communists, however, failed to answer the challenge Ridgway had put to them, that of his offers to resume armistice talks.

Ridgway has become fed up with the flabby and numerous invention the Reds have produced to stall the negotiations. He probably will ask for a change in site.

And just as surely, the Communists will react with a volley of excuses to keep the talks in Kaesong:

You see, Kaesong has been a Communist tool. It has been exploited just as infamously and as bloodily as you yourself have been exploited, soldier of China. Kaesong is a Red weapon. With the Communist have called their own signals. To the Reds, Kaesong was a Godsend. The walls of Kaesong have afforded the Reds a wobbly base to escape responsibility for breaking off the talks... The Reds went to Kaesong on that initial day of negotiation — July tenth — with three purposes in mind: To gain political ground; to make up for their failure on the battlefield; and to re-establish themselves for a re-invasion of the ROK.
The Reds' Newest Weapon: 'Kaesong,'
written by CPL Joseph E. Dabney,
Radio Pusan, 4 September 1951.

...at all their pretending was weak and their negotiation efforts... The Reds broke them with a bludgeon of KAESONG. It was deliberate. Maybe accidental...

...And the world was told about the... that the UN Command had discovered their infamous KAESONG. It appeared that the Reds were... to the Reds... were to blame for the breakdown...

...Again, and this time it's the result of their own little iron curtain around the world... and hoped would symbolize their name of... weapon of treachery. Behind the close... the Reds invented incidents at will... treacherous blackmailing, and try as they have not pulled the wool over the eyes of the world... the dishonesty which underlined their objectives.

...been deceiving. It has not been an easy task... UN prestige has been enhanced by its... and Communist trickery. The UN stands as a shining beacon of the... and Communist fabrications...

...The Reds twist, however, they cannot use a permanent failure in the face of it and it will be obliterated...

...General Van Fleet, put the case clearly and succinctly: "We can crush anything the Reds throw at us." Then the pistol-toting general added emphatically: "And they KNOW it."

...From San Francisco, meantime, the President of the United States, Mr. Truman, put it bluntly also: "We will not give in to aggression..."

...The American president emphasized, however, that the UN Command is ready at any time to reach an honorable settlement...

...The recent series of fast-twisting and incident-manufacturing has not gained the Reds one square foot of ground. They have attempted vainly to wear down the UN Command's patience... through their nefarious exhibition of trickery, they have only aroused the world... to the true picture of Communism in action...

...Kaesong has become another Communist weapon. And never more will the world trust anything propaganda that comes from behind its Communist-controlled portals...

...Yes, the Reds have used Kaesong as a tool. They're using you as a tool, too, soldier of China. How long will it be before you discover the truth?

Original news commentary script
World proclaimed that its Psywar was based on truth while that from the Communist world was built on lies. Specific program times were allocated for daily news broadcasts from the United States Information Service (USIS) and UNACK (UN Civil Assistance Command, Korea).

Beginning with four daily fifteen-minute sessions, the script writers (CPLs Stoddard and Busse and PFCs Nelson and Dabney) explained why UN forces were fighting in Korea, UN goals versus those of the Communists, and tried to undermine enemy leaders. The RB&L soldiers were labeled the “Root Beer & Lemonade” guys by the combat soldiers in Korea. CPLs Anthony E. Severino, Kenneth V. Benson (farm programs), and William F. Morton were replaced after several months. Korean service rotations for 1st RB&L script writers and programmers varied from three to four months, but some stayed longer. By late 1951, Radio Pusan programming had stabilized.

Programs included live and taped broadcasts that were regularly used by KBS and VJINC. Network world reports, commentaries, a daily children’s show, a special for teens emphasized responsibilities in a postwar Korea, a weekly farmers program, special events in Korea, and UN spot announcement campaigns filled the air time. This broadcast schedule was accomplished by one officer, four enlisted writers, and a Korean staff working twelve to sixteen hours daily. Four Korean local news reporters covered assigned ‘beats’ in Pusan. A Korean DAC (Department of Army Civilian) supervised seven bilingual translators who spanned the day and night requirements by working overlapping eight hour shifts. Asian news transmissions via Morse Code were recorded by five Korean monitors doing four hour shifts. Regular anchor programs provided consistency to the daily and weekly broadcast schedule.

Though there were two breaks (0830-1130 hours and 1430-1730 hours) in the broadcast day that went from 0630-2300 hours, the ‘Gander’ (nickname for 1st RB&L personnel) script writers never stopped writing. They rewrote news broadcasts from AP (Associated Press), UP (United Press), INS (International News Service), Reuters, Pan Asia wire services & Central News Morse Code transmissions, wrote commentaries and children stories, and edited the local news and field interviews (by KBS reporters) for content and policy violations, and did the ‘first cut’ English reviews of translated materials. Recording local interest stories was challenging.

Considerable innovation was necessary. Battery-powered Japanese tape recorders did not work well in the winters and hot, humid summers of Korea. Cigarette lighter fluid hand warmers, popular with North American deer hunters, increased functionality.

The Radio Pusan detachment, 4th MRBC was attached to 2nd Logistics Command (SSI shown here) for administration and logistics support.
“Factual news and entertainment, such as music, sports reports, and skits are particularly effective with soldier audiences” FM 33-5, Psychological Warfare in Combat Operations, August 1949.

in the cold. “Tube technology recording equipment was ponderous, unreliable, and weather-sensitive. Capturing live current events like the Koje-do prison riots, speeches by Generals [Matthew B.] Ridgway and [James A.] Van Fleet, the inauguration of the ROK Military Academy, counter-guerrilla operations around Chiri-san in December 1951, and interviewing wounded aboard the USHS Hope was frustrating. They were ‘crap shoots,’” said Deerfield. “There was nothing worse than getting back to HLKA (Radio Pusan) and discovering that the recording tape was either distorted by static or contained nothing.”

Pre-recording “Voice of South Korea” speeches by President Rhee was a necessity.

Formal addresses by the ROK president were recorded to edit sensitive UN issues like a South Korean victory and Korean unification. “The South Korean president took the monitoring well. It was his Austrian wife, Francesca, who always gave me a hard time despite having arranged every session through the Minister of Public Information, Dr. Clarence Ryee. I was the only U.S. Army Psywar officer who worked directly with President Rhee. LTC Shields told me to ‘cut the power’ if the ROKs tried any shenanigans. Thank heavens, they did not,” stated LT Deerfield. But, that guidance was easily given from Tokyo when you did not live in the HLKA compound and work with the KBS staff daily.

Official guidance came to LT Deerfield from Tokyo via teletype, not radio or telephone. As controversial as some of the things done by President Rhee and the National Assembly were, “the teletype provided solid records.” Since
he was at “the tip of the Psywar radio broadcasting spear” in Korea, the WWII veteran took care to submit Memoranda for Record (MFR) on tough issues: Accusations of domestic interference (after some out-of-favor ROK assemblmen sought asylum in American Army facilities); Armistice negotiation caveats; and constant reunification rhetoric by President Rhee. Deerfield had no choice because CPT Robert Leadley, his company commander and the Psywar Group Radio Officer, simply reiterated guidance from COL Greene, Chief, G-2 Psywar Division, FECOM and his deputy COL James E. Goodwin:

1. Primary mission in KBS: retain control of the stations where we have detachments.

2. Secondary mission: See that material supporting UN interests in turbulent political situations is aired over the KBS facilities.

The secondary “umbrella” mission was to be accomplished by airing only official ROK PIO (Public Information Office) releases not blasphemous to the U.S. or UN cause, all official statements from LISR, UNCURK (UN Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea), UNCAK (UN Civil Assistance Command, Korea), UN, other UN or State Department agencies, and authenticated news releases not speculative nor editorial in nature if they come from reliable sources and these sources are carefully labeled.

An Army second lieutenant was held accountable for daily judgment calls on blasphemy, speculation, and non-objectivity from every conceivable information or intelligence source. The teletype message concluded with this reminder: “Despite our mission of supporting the UN cause and carrying out all of the above, we must remember that KBS broadcasts go above the 38th Parallel. We must not furnish the enemy with food for propaganda against us (the U.S.).” The ‘we’ was ‘the royal we’ because whenever there were radio broadcast problems in Korea, “the buck stopped at LT Deerfield and Radio Pusan,” the 1st RB&L in-country radio hub.

LT Deerfield had to explain that Army personnel at Radio Pusan suggested that a Korean announcer read a denial of ROK Government charges that eight National Assemblymen arrested had been involved in an international plot against President Rhee and received money from Communist sources. After discovering that it was the result of a misinterpreted comment, LT Deerfield officially apologized to Dr. Clarence Ryee, the ROK PIO, but reiterated his authority over all KBS broadcasts: “We will continue to exercise censorship on news and commentary affecting United Nations policy, but we will refrain from interfering in the internal affairs (of South Korea).”

Deerfield’s frustration was evident when he reminded LTC Shields and MAJ Leadley that he was “caught between the proverbial rock and a hard place”: “A constant state of alert is required to catch all utterances [by President Rhee] and to edit them for policy” before they can be aired as KBS broadcasts because they could sabotage the VUNC campaign if presented in the original form. A junior Psywar officer ‘at the tip of the spear’ was the ‘lone arbitrator of high policy on the spur of the moment.’
The *Radio Pusan* officer also reminded the Psywar Group and FECOM staff officers in Tokyo that his Korean reporters and translator/interpreters and the HLKA managers and staff should be praised for being “disciples of radio Psywar,” instead of being called to task. The interpreters, in particular, bridging the language gap for the Americans were “very wary about new program ideas, special events, and the speeches by public officials” being approved for broadcast by KBS. Though they were on “tricky ground,” the loyal KBS personnel regularly alerted *Radio Pusan* personnel about potentially controversial issues. LT Deerfield summarized it well: “They were numb to just how tricky this unwritten responsibility is. There might well have been ‘loss of face,’ relations ruptured between the ROK government and KBS, and policy violations.”

Because there was a continuous exchange of ideas, daily coordination, and mutual respect between KBS program directors and the Psywar detachment officers, Deerfield felt that they had a good working relationship. The Psywar detachment and KBS were in the same family working generally toward the same purpose. “The KBS staff is almost one hundred percent in agreement with the aims of Psywar and with what it is trying to help the network do in Korea.”

The introduction of Korean radio announcers with name and voice recognition proved popular. Yun Chul Sung, a well-known sports commentator, regained his ‘star’ status shortly after HLKA began broadcasting again. “While his English was poor, Sung spoke Korean with a deep, melodious voice. He got the most fan mail. And, it was all good because we translated it into English,” said Deerfield. “He praised the scripts effusively.” CPL Burton C. “Bud” Perfit wrote many of Sung’s commentaries. Sung, the “Voice of Philosophy,” “built up an impressive following among South Korean listeners.” *Radio Pusan* started mimeographing his commentaries and mailed them on request.

2LT William F. Brown II a former *Look* magazine writer, conveyed the frustration of the Korean refugees and provided an astute assessment that was published in *The Proper Gander*: “If you look at Pusan with ‘Psywar Eyes,’ you notice poverty which is almost unimaginable, the necessary selfishness of almost everyone, and the vaguely accusing eyes of a people who have been cheated out of something. They can be our friends, or our enemies. Everywhere you go, you feel that ‘something has got to be done.’ The people need our help.” At *Radio Pusan*, the American Psywarriors helped the KBS staff and their extended families as best they could.

“Koreans probably get a bigger kick out of seeing a photo than any people in the world. Whenever someone pulls out a snapshot, he always has a balcony of Koreans leaning over his shoulder. You can imagine what happens when they get a chance to see a movie,” explained CPL “Stod” Stoddard. “The crowd starts gathering about 6:00 P.M. At first it is just kids. About 6:45 P.M. our Korean station workers start bringing chairs and benches into the Quonset hut. You’d be amazed at how many people can squeeze onto a board laid across a couple of water cans. At 7:00 P.M. the house is really filling up. Personnel from HLKA along with their friends and the neighborhood families pour in. The kids sprawl out in front. At 7:25 P.M. when we go over, the crowd is so thick that it’s like fighting through a bargain basement sale to find our seats. The lights go out, and *Bugs Bunny* springs onto the screen bringing a chorus of ‘Oh’s and ‘Ah’s’ just like

2LT Eddie Deerfield supervised the pre-recording of President Syngman Rhee’s speeches in Pusan. The bulky tape recorders pictured were also used in the field to collect live interviews and cover significant current events.

South Korean President Syngman Rhee and his Austrian wife Francesca commemorate the reopening of the Han River railroad bridges in 1951.
Saturday afternoons [matinees] back home,” wrote Stoddard.38 This entertainment was icing on a cake decorated with supplemental food and clothing provided by the American troops. But, health care for the Koreans in the Pusan Perimeter was limited.

The winter of 1951 was especially hard on the refugees who had sought sanctuary in the Pusan area. “About midnight one evening in early December, an HLKA staff member knocked on my tent door to introduce a friend whose daughter was extremely ill. There was no room for the seven-year-old child in any Korean hospital and her father was very distraught. In the dead of night I loaded them in my jeep and drove to the UNCACK hospital. Since we were approaching the Christmas season, I implored their sympathy to help the young child. They agreed to make an exception and the AP Wire Services and Stars and Stripes jumped on the story. It appeared twice on 10 and 14 December 1951. “The look of gratitude on the face of Cho Jong Hee’s mother made it a perfect Christmas,” recalled Deerfield.39

When UN forces stabilized the front near the 38th Parallel after the second recapture of Seoul, the success of Radio Pusan prompted LTC Shields to expand KBS rehabilitation efforts. Antennas were critical to transmitting and receiving radio broadcast transmissions. Repair of salvageable ones and the erection of new antennas was what the 4th MRBC riggers did. As the initial steps were put in motion for Radio Taegu and Radio Seoul, the antenna men were sent to Korea. Two occupations by the Communists had left Seoul in shambles.

Well ensconced in the best Pusan facilities, President Rhee and his government elected to remain there despite the reestablishment of Radio Seoul and the relocation of 4th MRB company headquarters to the capital. Thus, Radio Pusan remained as the 1st RB&L mother station and UN Psywar radio relay hub. It became the KBS model for radio stations in Taegu, Seoul, and Taejon. An Infantry lieutenant and his script writing teams were responsible and deserve the lion’s share of the credit for the American success—WWII veteran LT Eddie Deerfield—was the ‘tip of the Psywar spear’ in Korea, 1951-1952. Because the United States was funding the restoration and sustainment of radio broadcasting to South Korea, it was in the best interests of the government, military, and KBS staff to capitalize on the 4th MRBC talent and maintain good relationships with American Psywar detachment personnel. And, just as FECOM paid Japan Broadcasting System (JPS) for ‘air time’ in Radio Tokyo when the Occupation ended on 28 April 1952, they did the same after the Armistice was signed in Korea. This was basically a ‘win-win’ situation for all parties that most benefitted South Korea long term.41
Eddie Deerfield, born 24 August 1923 in Omaha, Nebraska, was the oldest of three children. The family moved to Chicago in 1927. While in high school, he was the sports editor of the Tuley High School Review. Graduating in June 1941, he was hired as copy boy on the Chicago Times, then left to enlist in the Army Air Corps after Pearl Harbor. His stateside assignment on a B-17 Flying Fortress bomber was in the cramped space of the ball turret operating a pair of .50 cal machineguns. On arrival in England, SGT Deerfield was reassigned as a replacement radio operator to a new crew. On his sixth mission, their heavily damaged bomber crashed in the North Sea.

On his fourteenth mission, the crew bailed out of their burning B-17 before it crashed in the south of England. Technical Sergeant (T/Sgt) Deerfield came down hard and was prodded to consciousness by a pitchfork wielding farmer. “It was my ‘Chicago gangster’ accent that convinced him that I was not part of a German paratroop invasion,” laughed Deerfield. He added a Caterpillar pin for the jump to his Goldfish pin for the crash at sea. Missions against Berlin and preparatory D-Day invasion targets predated his thirtieth mission when he was wounded by flak. The young Tech Sergeant left England with a DFC (Distinguished Flying Cross), four Air Medals, and a Purple Heart to train at Truax Army Air Field, Madison, Wisconsin, on the B-29 Superfortress until victory over Japan in August 1945.

Returning to the Chicago Times in 1945, Deerfield progressed from sports reporter to features writer. Deciding to use his GI Bill, he earned honors as a freshman at the University of Illinois, Chicago campus, and then transferred to Northwestern University where he received a B.S. in Journalism in 1950 shortly after North Korea invaded the South. While at Northwestern, Deerfield accepted a commission in the U.S. Army Reserve (USAR). Infantry Second Lieutenant (2LT) Deerfield was activated from the USAR in April 1951 to serve with the 1st RB&L at Fort Riley, KS. His Radio Pusan assignment lasted fourteen months.
By April 1952, Radio Pusan had a staff of forty-four personnel. The 4th MRBC detachment consisted of an OIC (Technical & Program Officer), an assistant Program/Radio Officer/News Chief, two communications chiefs, two radio transmitter operators, a radio repairman, antenna rigger, two wheeled vehicle mechanics, a sound recording repairman, teletype operator, electrical powerman, a news writer, a production assistant-writer, and two radio broadcast script writers. A Korean DAC, the chief interpreter-translator, supervised eight local translators, five Morse Code monitors, and three bilingual stenographers. The OIC also had a bilingual secretary. Five Korean laborers were the responsibility of the senior detachment NCO (non-commissioned officer), who was one of the communications chiefs. It was “the high water mark” in Radio Pusan manning.

By late spring 1953, the original 1st RB&L Group had undergone a 90+ percent turnover in personnel and its organic companies (minus the 4th MRBC in Korea) had become assimilated into the FECOM Psywar staff and Publications Command. The drawn out Armistice negotiations, tactical stalemate along the 38th Parallel, and the anticipated end of combat impacted heavily on the strategic Psywar mission. WWII Army Air Corps veteran 1LT Nevin F. Price, the former 8th MRBC commander, 6th RB&L at Fort Riley, KS, and Fort Bragg, NC, was the link to what happened at Radio Pusan in 1953-1954.

The Fate of Radio Pusan 1953-1954

Having trained two Army Reserve RB&Ls on the new radio broadcasting equipment for their MRBCs and built the Radio Section, 5021st ASU into the 8th MRBC (three officers and thirty-four enlisted), the WWII B-26 Radio/Gunner brought a wealth of experience to the 4th MRBC in October 1953. Most notably, Signal Corps 1LT Nevin F. Price, when alerted for Korea, had written a letter to the Army Chief of Psywar requesting assignment to the 1st RB&L. He did not want his MRBC expertise to be wasted.

Hence, when the USS General William Mitchell (T-AP-114) docked at Yokohama, a 1st RB&L soldier was waiting for 1LT Price. They made a quick trip to Tokyo to change his orders to Korea. “I got no guidance or instructions, only told that I was replacing the Radio Pusan OIC who was homeward bound on emergency leave. With new orders in hand, I was driven to the airport to catch a plane bound for Korea. When I got to K-9 (Airbase) near Pusan, a jeep and driver were waiting for me. Though the company headquarters was in Seoul, I went straight to our ‘compound’ down the road and got to work,” recalled Price. While the Radio Platoons had three officers and twenty-three enlisted soldiers assigned according to the T/D, reality was quite different in the fall of 1953. Radio Seoul had reclaimed HLKA as its KBS call letters and Pusan had become HLKB again.

“I arrived a week before a massive city fire destroyed HLKB. There were ten or twelve soldiers assigned, less than half authorized strength. My NCOIC was Master Sergeant (MSG) Pipkin. There was a Sergeant First Class (SFC) Fitzwater, who handled the broadcasts, a motor sergeant, a couple of antenna riggers (one, a former lumberjack from Oregon), two truck drivers, Private (PVT) Kintz, and some others. Since we had no radio mechanic, I became that as well as OIC,” related Price. “They had the same mobile radio broadcast vans that I had in the 8th MRBC at Fort Bragg.” (Note: The FECOM Table of Distribution Number 80-8239-2 for 4th MRBC dated 1 May 1953 reduced the Radio Broadcasting Platoons from three to one and the company headquarters to a third of its 1951 strength. Following the Armistice the mission was radio broadcast sustainment and public information instead of Psywar). After the fire swept Pusan in April 1953, the 4th MRBC detachment assumed the radio broadcast programming mission again.

“The day after the fire I moved our two twenty-six foot V-51 trailers with 556/GRC shelters [containing an AN/
The Great Fire of 1953

Fire ravaged KBS Radio Pusan within a week of 1LT Nevin F. Price’s arrival. Afterwards, the 4th MRBC detachment assumed the radio broadcast programming mission again in April 1953.

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— 1LT Nevin F. Price.
The rebuilt Radio Pusan compound consisted of wood-framed tents in early 1954.

Guard shack at the Motor Pool entrance to 4th MRBC Detachment at Radio Pusan. The two Autocar 4-5 ton G510 tractors behind it were the prime movers for the mobile transmitter and radio studio mounted on the V-51-G trailers.
In the spring of 1953, First Lieutenant Nevin F. Price, 8th Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company (MRBC) commander, 6th RB&L, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, was alerted for Korea. Price wrote a letter to the Chief of Psychological Warfare (OCPW) requesting assignment to the 4th MRBC (1st RB&L) in Korea. “I wanted the Army to use my radio broadcasting background and Psywar experience. It was that simple,” said the WWII veteran. The decorated Air Corps B-26 Marauder radio gunner accepted a direct Army Reserve commission as a Signal Corps Second Lieutenant in 1948 after NBC (National Broadcasting Company) began sponsoring the 301st MRBC as industry had done for other specialty units in WWII. Price was working in radio and television broadcasting in the New York City area. In March 1951, he volunteered for active duty, attended the Signal Officers Basic Course at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, and reported to the 5021st Psywar Detachment at Fort Riley, Kansas.

The former NBC radio transmitter engineer was sent to head the Radio Section, 5021st Psywar Detachment during the formative days of the 1st RB&L, 301st RB&L (USAR), and the 6th RB&L. 1LT Price scavenged Army and Air Force salvage yards throughout Kansas to build radios to train his personnel in Morse Code monitoring and broadcast transmission. He was the chief evaluator for the Gates Radio-produced mobile radio systems for the MRBCs, trained two USAR RB&Ls in Chicago and Los Angeles on their new equipment, and worked closely with the Psywar Board on research and development projects. LT Price graduated from Psywar Staff Officers Course #2 (January-March 1952), U.S. Army General School (AGS), Fort Riley, KS, as the Tables of Organization and Equipment (TO&E) and Tables of Distribution (T/D) for Psywar units were being finalized by the Psywar Division, AGS, the Army Psywar Board, OCPW, and Army Field Forces headquarters.

The Radio Section of the 5021st ASU became the nucleus for the 8th MRBC, 6th RB&L at Fort Riley, KS. The 6th RB&L relocated to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in September 1952, as part of the new U.S. Army Psychological Warfare Center. Having trained the 8th MRBC personnel from the unit’s inception, evaluated the new mobile radio systems for MRBCs in the active Army and Reserves, familiarized two USAR RB&Ls on their newly acquired mobile radio broadcast equipment, and commanded a MRBC for eighteen months before going to Korea, this WWII veteran brought a wealth of experience to Radio Pusan in October 1953.
The KBS staff at Radio Pusan pose with 1LT John H. Hill, the 4th MRBC Detachment OIC.


Deerfield interview, 16 September 2010; Deerfield Memorandum for the Record (for 9 June 1952) to HQ, 1st RB&LG Group, 8239th AU, APO 500, 9 June 1952 in the Eddie Deerfield Collection, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; hereafter cited as Deerfield MFR, date, and collection.

Deerfield MFR (3 June 1952) sent 5 June 1952, Deerfield Collection.

Deerfield MFR (3 June 1952) sent 5 June 1952, Deerfield Collection.

Deerfield Collection, 16 September 2010.

“US Army Apologies,” *The Nippon Times*, Friday, 30 May 1952, Darcy Collection, Box 2, Folder 10, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA.


Deerfield interview, 16 September 2010.


Price interview, 7 October 2009.


Price interview, 7 October 2009; “The enlisted personnel of the Mobile Radio platoon are not properly assigned or distributed, therefore accurate discussion of their duties is not possible” read the FECOM T/D 80-8239-2. It also said that “it should be stressed that the technical personnel of an MRBC must be highly specialized and well trained in their duties, as their equipment is of commercial design and is not common throughout the Army.” ILT Nevin F. Price’s recall of the number of soldiers assigned to the Radio Pusan detachment was accurate. The 1 May 1953 T/D had a lieutenant dual-hatted as the platoon commander and program director. Enlisted personnel consisted of a Communications Sergeant (Master Sergeant) dual-hatted as NCOC, a Supply Sergeant, two Signal Message Clerks (Teletype Operators), a Clerk/Typist, and a Field Wireman. HQ, FECOM, T/D 80-8239-2 dated 1 May 1953, Price Collection.


Price interview, 7 October 2009; ILT Nevin F. Price received an official Certificate of Appreciation from the Republic of Korea government for his humanitarian actions during and after the Pusan fire in October 1953; U.S. Army General School, Psychological Warfare Division. Research and Development Section. Fort Riley, Kansas, report on “Standard Method of Packing AN/MRR-4 and AN/MRT-5 for Overseas Shipment” in Price Collection. Former CPL Nick H. Jones, 4th MRBC, amplified the advantages of the equipment being co-located with HKLB above the beach at Pusan: “We had our own Quonset but at the transmitter site on a nice beach about ten miles from town. The water was much too cold for swimming unless you were a native, but just right for chilling some brew. Ate and clubbed at an adjacent Engine company. Really OK duty.” *Life and Times* 2002, 190.

Price interview, 7 October 2009; 1st Radio Broadcasting & Leaflet Group, Personnel Records, 1 February 1953, Dance Collection, Box 2, File 2, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA.

Price interview, 7 October 2009.

Price interview, 7 October 2009; The Mobile Radio Broadcasting Station AN/MRT-5 was designed to broadcast over distances of 25 to 125 miles. Its operating range was 540 to 1600 kilocycles. ILT Nevin F. Price dramatically increased broadcast range with this simple ‘clothes line’ antenna. Report on Standard Method of Packing AN/MRR-4 and AN/MRT-5 for Overseas Shipment dated 20 December 1951. Appendix B – Characteristic Sheets Packing Report – Packing Methods for AN/MRR-4 and AN/MRT-5, 1. Price Collection.

Price interviews, 7 October 2009 and 28 July 2010; Radio Pusan, 4th MRBC, 1st RB&LG, APO 59, Certificate of Transfer of Classified Documents dated 20 January 1954, 4th MRBC, 1st RB&LG, APO 301, Orders Number 35 dated 6 July 1954 and HQ, 1st RB&LG, 8239AU APO 500, Special Orders Number 85 dated 3 June 1954, Price Collection. CPT Nevin F. Price was awarded the Army Commendation Medal for meritorious service in Korea, October 1953 to October 1954.


Deerfield interview, 15 September 2010. The B-17 crash into the North Sea earned T/Sgt Deerfield membership in the Goldfish Club for escaping death in an emergency dinghy on 30 July 1943.

Deerfield interview, 15 September 2010. Having his life saved by parachute on 26 September 1943 qualified T/Sgt Deerfield for membership in the Caterpillar Club and to receive its distinctive lapel pin.

Deerfield interview, 15 September 2010. The Army Air Forces Central Technical Training Command at Truax Field, Madison Wisconsin, trained radio operators to be B-29 Superfortress crewmen.

Deerfield interviews, 15 and 16 September 2010.

Deerfield interviews, 15 and 16 September 2010.

Price interview, 14 October 2009.

Price interview, 14 October 2009.

Price interviews, 30 September 2009 and 9 June 2010.
