

The Ganders:

Strategic PSYWAR in the Far East

Part I: Introduction and Movement to the Far East

by Robert W. Jones Jr.

AFTER World War II, the U.S. Army followed its historic pattern of demobilizing. During the war, a robust psychological warfare capability had been built “from the ground up” (today’s “psychological operations,” PSYOP was referred to as “psychological warfare” or PSYWAR). After World War II, the PSYWAR capability was reduced to small staff sections at major headquarters. By 1948, the only PSYWAR unit in the Regular Army was the Tactical Information Detachment (TID) at Fort Riley, Kansas. This small unit (four officers and twenty soldiers) used loudspeakers and leaflets to support aggressor elements in maneuvers against U.S. forces.¹

With the 1950 North Korean invasion of South Korea, PSYWAR units were needed to support United Nations forces. To cover tactical support, the TID became the 1st Loudspeaker and Leaflet Company. However, there was a gap in PSYWAR capability at the strategic level. The Department of the Army decided to form several units at Fort Riley while the Army scrambled to reestablish psychological warfare staffs and units at all levels. In less than a year, a PSYWAR school was established; several units formed, trained, and deployed; staff officers trained, and PSYWAR sections created from Department of the Army to corps and division headquarters. This article discusses the formation, training, and initial service of one such unit, the 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group, nicknamed the “Ganders” by the soldiers.

During World War II, there were several tiers of PSYWAR capability in the U.S. Army effort. In the European Theater,

PSYWAR was directed by Brigadier General Robert A. McClure at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEP) level. Staff sections were established at Corps, Army, and theater headquarters. Experience gained in the Mediterranean theater was incorporated for the Normandy and Southern France invasions. At

the tactical level, Mobile Radio Broadcasting Companies with organic radio broadcast, printing, and loudspeaker capabilities provided support.²

In the Southwest Pacific Area Command, General Douglas MacArthur was slow to develop a PSYWAR structure. In early 1944, his Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB) numbered less than forty soldiers, but it grew to almost five hundred by the end of the war. Several tactical loudspeaker units attached to the infantry units operated in the Philippines and Okinawa.³ At the end of the war, all the tactical PSYWAR units were inactivated and the staff sections at all levels disappeared.

In 1947, the Far East Command (FEC) in Tokyo re-established Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB) as the “Special Projects Division” under the G2 (Intelligence).⁴ Major General Charles Willoughby, the FEC G2, selected Colonel J. Woodall Greene to head the PWB. Greene had been a Psychological Warfare officer and the executive officer of the PWB during World War II. With a small staff of two civilians and two officers, he began planning psychological warfare for conceivable conflicts in the Far East.⁵ These early preparations were invaluable in 1950.

Kim Il Sung’s North Korean People’s Army (NKPA) invaded South Korea in the early morning of 25 June 1950. President Truman ordered U.S. forces to assist the South Koreans on 27 June 1950.⁶ The U.S. advisors assigned to ROK units were immediately drawn into combat, while in Japan, the U.S. occupation forces began preparations to deploy. The numerically superior and better armed North Korean units quickly pushed aside the Republic of Korea (ROK) Army into the Southeast corner of the peninsula.⁷

The small Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB) was energized and responded quickly with PSYWAR products. The U.S. Air Force was dropping leaflets over the battle area in Korea on 28 June 1950. These 12 million crude, hastily printed leaflets produced by Japanese printing firms, urged the Koreans to resist the Communists and said that help was on the way. Civilian radio



1st RB&L
Group insignia



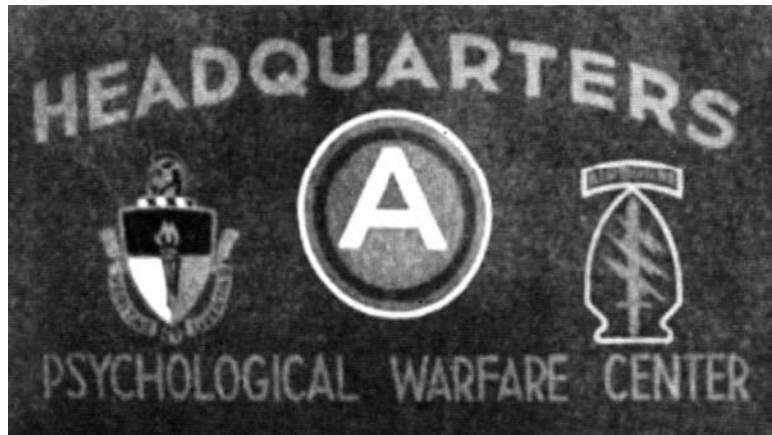
stations in Japan broadcast into Communist-held areas a few days later.⁸ It was a “band aid” PSYWAR operation but it was better than nothing.

The scramble in the United States to “reinvent” PSYWAR included Secretary of the Army Frank Pace Jr.’s selection of Brigadier General Robert A. McClure, General Dwight D. Eisenhower’s chief of European PSYWAR in WWII, to be Chief of the newly designated Office of Psychological Warfare. Formed on 15 January 1951 from the small Army Psychological Warfare Section in the Army G-3, BG McClure was responsible for PSYWAR training.⁹ He had to start from scratch since there was no psychological warfare training in the Army. According to Dr. Alfred H. Paddock, the Army had less than ten PSYWAR-qualified officers on active duty in the summer of 1950. The Army immediately tried to redress this by sending six officers to a semester of psychological warfare training at Georgetown University in October 1950.¹⁰ The long-term solution was the creation of an Army school to resurrect the World War II capability.

In the spring of 1951, the Psychological Warfare Department of the Army General Ground School at Fort Riley began training students. The course was six to seven weeks long, covered psychological warfare, strategic intelligence, and foreign army organization. Four officer and two non-commissioned officer classes produced 334 graduates. All four services and some Allied nations were represented.¹¹ When Army Reservists and draftees with PSYWAR skills (psychologists, journalists, illustrators, advertising executives, newspapermen, commercial radio technicians, etc.) were called up, they were sent to Fort Riley for training and assignment. Theater-specific training took place when they arrived in Japan or Korea. The Psychological Warfare Department at the Army General Ground School became an independent Army School when it relocated to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in early 1952.¹²



General Dwight D. Eisenhower presenting Brigadier General McClure with a Distinguished Service Medal as Chief of PSYWAR in World War II. McClure was the pick of the Secretary of the Army to revitalize PSYWAR in the service.



Psychological Warfare Center sign at Fort Bragg circa 1954–1955. While the Psychological Warfare School started at Fort Riley it expanded at Fort Bragg.

The Psychological Warfare Center, the predecessor of today’s U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, was the proponent responsible for Psychological Warfare training, doctrine, and equipment. The Psychological Warfare Board of the Center evaluated PSYWAR tactics, techniques, procedures, doctrine, and equipment. During the Korean War, the board conducted over forty evaluations of receiver/transmitters, loudspeakers, mobile reproduction equipment, and improved leaflet dissemination techniques. Supporting the PSYWAR Center at Fort Bragg was the 6th Radio Broadcasting & Leaflet Group (RB&L), formed 14 September 1951, at Fort Riley.¹³

When the Korean War broke out, the only tactical PSYWAR unit in the Army was the Tactical Information Detachment (TID) at Fort Riley. The four officers and twenty enlisted men in the unit were alerted for movement to Korea in August 1950. They left Fort Riley by train on 9 September, and sailed from Seattle on 15 September.¹⁴ The TID that arrived at Pusan on 15 October was short on personnel and equipment, but was redesignated the 1st Loudspeaker and Leaflet Company (L&L) on 4 November 1950. The 1st L&L began tactical loudspeaker operations, but most systems were inoperable by the time the Chinese entered the war in late November.¹⁵ The UN retreat, subsequent defensive operations, and a lack of equipment kept the 1st L&L from routine loudspeaker operations until early 1951.¹⁶ While the 1st L&L Company covered tactical PSYWAR for the Eighth U.S. Army, there was no strategic level support. That would be solved by creating new units at Fort Riley.¹⁷

To provide a strategic PSYWAR capability, Brigadier General McClure directed the formation of a new type of unit called the Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group.¹⁸ Three Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Groups were authorized. The 1st RB&L was formed at Fort Riley from reservists and draftees, and deployed to Japan. Its sister unit, the 6th RB&L Group supported the school at Fort Riley, and later Fort Bragg. The 301st RB&L was a Reserve unit from New York. It was hastily created and mobilized, and joined



1st L&L Company pocket insignia

While Fort Bragg is the current home of PSYOP, the birthplace could be considered Fort Riley, Kansas. Fort Riley was the hub activity for U.S. Army Psychological Warfare at the beginning of 1951. Simultaneously, the Army established a school, trained individual soldiers and units, formed the 1st and 301st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Groups, and the 2nd Loudspeaker and Leaflet Company. The 301st RB&L, a reserve unit from New York, was destined for duty in Europe and eventually went to Heidelberg, Germany.

the 1st RB&L in Kansas for training before being shipped to Germany.¹⁹ Korea was the priority for BG McClure.

Lieutenant Colonel Homer S. Shields, a European PSYWAR veteran, was selected by Brigadier General McClure to command the 1st RB&L slated for Korea. Mobilized with the Indiana National Guard in 1942 as an infantry lieutenant, Shields later served as the executive officer of the 7th Army Combat Propaganda Team in March 1944. After service in North Africa, Italy, and Southern France, Major Shields became chief of PSYWAR for the 6th Army in October 1944. Afterward, he became Brigadier General McClure's executive officer at Supreme Headquarters until the end of the war in Europe. Following the war, Shields returned to Indianapolis and the newspaper business, but maintained his commission in the Indiana National Guard.²⁰

Lieutenant Colonel Shields had a monumental task to accomplish in less than four months. He and his staff had

to form, equip, train, and ship the 1st RB&L to the Far East. The table of organization and equipment evolved as the Group received and trained soldiers. The 1st RB&L Group consisted of three companies. The Headquarters Company, responsible for the normal administrative and logistical support, also had a Research and Analysis Section "responsible for the preparation and composition of propaganda material" at the theater level.²¹ The 3rd Reproduction Company produced the strategic leaflets, newspapers, and other paper products. They would eventually print 20 million products a week. The 4th Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company was to broadcast PSYWAR from either fixed or mobile radio stations.²² In the division between tactical and strategic responsibility, the 1st RB&L's area of operations began where the 1st L&L Company's ended, forty miles behind the line of contact.²³

With the North Korean invasion of South Korea, the U.S. government mobilized Reserve and National Guard units and called-up inactive individual reservists and increased draft quotas (selective service).²⁴ Many of the draftees had technical skills and college educations. Some Reservists called-up were World War II veterans who had gone to college afterward and acquired new job skills since the end of the war. To take advantage of these skills and education, the Army established a screening and classification station at Fort Myer, Virginia. Basic training soldiers with a college education and/or specific job skills were taken to Fort Myer for evaluation. At Fort Myer, they were usually asked questions about their civilian background (i.e., education, job experience, language ability). Most soldiers did not have to produce any evidence, they were simply taken at their word.²⁵ Despite the sometimes casual nature of the selection process, it was able to select some highly qualified young men. The 1st RB&L drew soldiers from the Fort Myer pool to form the unit.

Simultaneously, the Army attempted to man the new PSYWAR units, establish a school, and fill staff positions throughout the service. The recruits came from a variety of sources. The 1st RB&L is a representative example in that it was primarily composed of draftees and mobilized reservists with civilian skills related to PSYWAR (i.e., journalists, artists, printers, graphics designers, etc). Over one-third of the enlisted men were college graduates, some with advanced degrees.²⁶

For many of the newly drafted soldiers, the telegram announcing "Greetings" was a complete surprise. Gudmund Berge had served in the Navy during World War II. Enlisting under the V-12 program, he then attended Navy ROTC at the University of Washington, and served for a short time on a destroyer escort before being discharged in August 1946.²⁷ Following his Navy service, Berge returned to the University of Washington to complete his degree in architecture. After certification, he began work as an architect in Seattle. Surprised when he received a draft notice, he was informed that his Navy service did not satisfy his national service obligation.



Lieutenant Colonel Homer S. Shields, the first commander of the 1st RB&L Group, in his office in Tokyo.

“You must remember the times—you didn’t question the government, you had a job to do and you did it. I had received my education through the GI Bill and I was ready to pay it back,” remembered Berge.²⁸ After basic training at Fort Ord, California, he was ordered to Fort Myer, for classification. Given the choice of service as an Army combat engineer or going to a new unit, he elected to go to Fort Riley in January 1951.²⁹ To occupy his first days in the 1st RB&L Group, “I painted a wall mural (8’ x 14’) of Fort Riley on a mess hall wall.”³⁰ Berge became a graphic artist designing leaflets.

Others were even more surprised at being drafted, especially those that had been declared “4-F” (unfit for duty) during World War II. Bill McCorkle was a sports reporter at the *Borger News-Herald* in Borger, Texas, when he received his draft notice. “I had been classified as 4-F in 1944 because of asthma,” said McCorkle.³¹ “I was drafted in November 1950 and attended basic training at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas, and then Chemical Corps training at Edgewood Arsenal (now part of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland).” In March 1951, McCorkle was ordered to Fort Myer with a follow on assignment to the 1st RB&L.³² He was assigned as a scriptwriter in the 4th Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company (MRB).

Bob Herguth volunteered for the Army in World War II, but was classified 4-F because of a heart murmur and a spot on the lung.³³ After graduating from the University of Missouri’s School of Journalism, he went to work as a copy editor for the *Peoria Star* newspaper. Shortly after the North Koreans had invaded the south, he was reclassified as 1-A and drafted to be a military policeman (MP). He went to basic training at Camp Custer, Michigan, on 24 September 1950.³⁴ “An officer on the battalion staff found out I was a newspaperman, so I became the editor of the battalion newspaper in addition to training,” said Herguth. “I was about halfway through advanced MP training when I was pulled out to go to the 1st Radio. The Army was looking for people with [civilian] skills so they didn’t have to train them. There were a lot of guys with college educations and skills that the Army could use. So I was a ‘fit’ for the 1st Radio,” remembered Herguth.³⁵ After being evaluated at Fort Myer, he was

During training LTC Shields held a contest for a unit mascot to cultivate a unit identity. With a collection of trained artists, it was quite a challenge. The winner was a cartoon figure drawn by Gudmund Berge dubbed “the Proper Gander” (a take-off of “Propaganda”). Berge received a three-day pass.⁴⁵



assigned to the 1st RB&L at Fort Riley. Herguth was assigned as a radio scriptwriter in the Group S-3.

After receiving his draft notice, Thomas Klein reported to Fort Sheridan, Illinois, in December 1950. Because he was a college graduate, Klein was shipped to Fort Myer for classification. It was there that he first heard of “this PSYWAR outfit and it seemed pretty interesting.”³⁶ Klein was then on his way to the 1st RB&L at Fort Riley. With a Masters degree in economics (University of Michigan), he was assigned to the Group’s Research and Analysis Section.³⁷ Klein deployed with the second increment, because he had not received basic training. Private Klein, when he arrived in Japan in September 1951, worked in Tokyo and spent time as a radio scriptwriter in Pusan during the summer of 1952.³⁸

Most of the 1st RB&L officers came

from the reserves, many with World War II combat experience. First Lieutenant (1LT) Eddie Deerfield had served in the 303rd Bombardment Group as a B-17 radio operator/aerial gunner flying from England during the war. After thirty missions, Deerfield had earned a Distinguished Flying Cross, three Air Medals, and a Purple Heart. After being discharged as a technical sergeant in

1945, Deerfield used his GI Bill to attend Northwestern University and received a journalism degree. During his senior year at Northwestern, Deerfield accepted a Reserve officer commission as a “journalism specialist” (public affairs).³⁹ He was working as a reporter for the *Chicago Times* when he got orders to report to the 1st RB&L at Fort Riley by April 1951.⁴⁰ Deerfield was assigned to the 4th MRB and eventually became the officer in charge of the Pusan radio detachment.

Another Reserve officer, 1st Lieutenant Alvin Yudkoff, spent World War II in the Pacific. After enlisting in the Army in 1943, he attended Japanese Language Training at the University of Michigan before assignment to a Japanese Language Detachment filled primarily with Nisei (Japanese-American) soldiers. Yudkoff participated in the invasion of Okinawa and later served in the occu-

pation of Japan. After the war, he became a writer and had started a career as a documentary filmmaker when he was recalled to active duty and sent directly to the 1st RB&L. Assigned to the Group headquarters, Yudkoff was put in charge of radio script production.⁴¹

Once the majority of the soldiers had arrived at Fort Riley, training began in earnest. LTC Shields and his staff began a ten-week training program in March 1951.⁴² The three phase training program was devised by the Group staff and conducted using 1st RB&L soldiers as instructors and assistants. 1LT Eddie Deerfield remembered “teaching classes in news writing.”⁴³ The program began with basic soldiering skills, moved to general PSYWAR doctrine, and ended with six-weeks of PSYWAR topics. Training culminated with the development and dissemination of leaflets and radio broadcasts.⁴⁴ The formation and training of the 1st RB&L was shaped by conditions in the Far East.

Unbeknownst to most soldiers in the unit was a maelstrom of messages and letters between the FEC and BG McClure’s office pushing for a May 1951 deployment. The PWB in Tokyo wanted the RB&L in theater by June. The unit was still under strength and short equipment. Most important were its mobile radio transmitters which were not due to arrive until August 1951. LTC Shields offered a compromise. A large advance party would augment the PWB as soon as possible. The main body would follow in July 1951. A third increment would remain at Fort Riley to train on the new equipment and then bring it to Japan in September 1951.⁴⁶

An advance party of twelve left Fort Riley bound for Tokyo in mid-June. The Air Force transport stopped to refuel on the West Coast, Wake Island, and Iwo Jima before arriving in Tokyo. LTC Shields gave the advance party two missions. They were to augment current PSYWAR operations in FEC by assisting the PWB with radio broadcasts and leaflet design. The second mission was to prepare for the arrival of the main body in July.⁴⁷

The majority of the unit was to depart Fort Riley by train for California. Kansas was hit by a five-day rainstorm on 11 July that caused massive flooding throughout the state. The Manhattan, Kansas, and the Fort Riley train stations were under two feet of flood water. A two and a half hour bus ride to Lincoln, Nebraska, solved



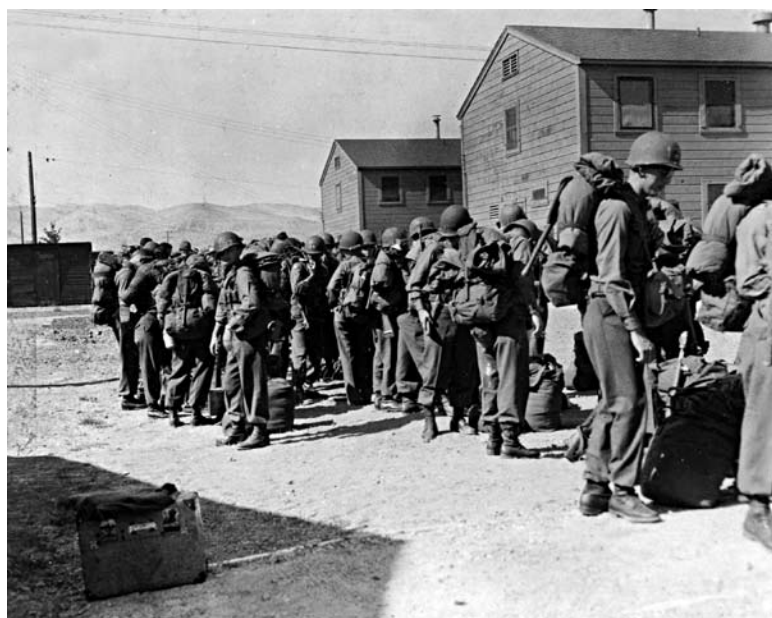
Troops line up ready for departure on 12 July 1951.



“It gets pretty tiresome to sit on a train for forty-eight hours so at stops we had drills or exercised,” said LTC Homer S. Shields



Leaving Fort Riley by bus during a storm on 12 July 1951. LTC Shields says goodbye to Colonel “Whitey” Gruber. The five-day rainstorm flooded the area and most of Kansas.



Troops preparing to depart Camp Stoneman, California.



1,200 additional troops infantry replacements for Korea aboard the USS Brewster in Hawaii.

the problem.⁴⁸ The three-day train ride began on 12 July 1951.

The port of embarkation was Camp Stoneman, near San Francisco. The soldiers loaded onto the USNS *Brewster* on 18 July 1951. The four to five hundred soldiers were put into the ship's hold in compartments with canvas and metal frame bunks four-to-six high. The trip to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, took five days. The civilian ship captain recommended that the soldiers be kept aboard rather than risk AWOLs in Pearl Harbor. Instead, LTC Shields announced on the public address system that as the troop commander he was allowing a twenty-hour pass for Hawaii. He told everyone that he was assuming personal responsibility that everyone would make the troop muster at 0900 hours the following day. The men returned that respect and confidence with a 100 percent muster the next morning.⁴⁹

After the night in Honolulu, the 1st RB&L soldiers had a real surprise when they reboarded the USNS *Brewster*. About 1,200 more troops, mostly infantrymen, had been loaded aboard for Korea. Worse than the overcrowding were the nineteen days to get to Japan. Aboard ship, the PSYWAR soldiers printed a daily newsheet. Movies were shown on deck, as well as boxing and wrestling matches, and religious services. The 1st RB&L Group organized and directed a variety show for everyone. Many of the soldiers simply read a lot. Bill McCorkle managed "... a book a day, including classics such as [Ernest] Hemingway, [John] Steinbeck, John Dos Passos, and [F. Scott] Fitzgerald."⁵⁰ A popular book was *Thunder out of China* by Theodore White, on the Communist take-



Troopship hold accommodations for the 1st RB&L soldiers during their trip to Japan.

over of China.⁵¹ Still, the nineteen days at sea were long.

When the Ganders got to Japan, their adventure was only one-third complete. Conducting PSYWAR became the business of the day. The majority of the command worked in Tokyo. The 3rd Reproduction Company went to the Far East Command Printing and Publications Center in the small town of Motosumiyoshi, half-way between Tokyo and Yokohama. Small PSYWAR detachments, mostly from the 4th Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company, went to Korea to reestablish the Korean Broadcasting System for the United Nations.

This is the first of two articles on the 1st RB&L Group. The second article will explain the PSYWAR mission of the 1st RB&L soldiers in Japan and Korea. ♣

This article would not have been possible without the assistance of 1st RB&L veterans including Tom Klein, Gudmund Berge, Robert Herguth, William McCorkle, Eddie Deerfield, and Alvin Yudkoff. The majority of the photos are courtesy of the Shields family.



The USNS Brewster steaming into Yokohama harbor. The RB&L left the ship while the infantry replacements for Korea stayed aboard. A band on the dock greeted the newcomers to Japan.

Endnotes

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- 16 Sandler, "Cease Resistance: It's Good for You," 210, 218.
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- 24 James F. Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War. Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1978), 120–21; **With the Selective Service Extension Act of 1950 President Harry S. Truman had the authority to mobilize Reserve and National Guard units, and individuals, and draft new men.**
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- 26 Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare, Its Origins*, 93.
- 27 **The Navy's V-12 program sent officer candidates to college for a year of intensive instruction in science and mathematics. The officer candidates then attended either Navy or Marine Corps Officer Candidate School, followed by commissioning as either an Ensign in the Navy or 2nd Lieutenant in the Marine Corps.**
- 28 Gudmund Berge, 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones Jr., 21 February 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, telephone interview notes, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 29 Berge interview.
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- 31 William L. McCorkle, 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones Jr., 15 February 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, telephone interview notes, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 32 McCorkle interview; Reunion Book, 209–10.
- 33 Robert Herguth, 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones Jr., 15 February 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, telephone interview notes, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Reunion book, 184.
- 34 Herguth interview; Reunion book, 184.
- 35 Herguth interview; Reunion book, 184.
- 36 Thomas Klein, 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones Jr., 1 March 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, telephone interview notes, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
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- 43 Deerfield e-mail.
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- 50 McCorkle interview.
- 51 McCorkle interview.

