

## CHAPTER II

### THE AMERICAN FORCES RADIO AND TELEVISION SERVICE

#### Introduction

The American Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) is the congregate designation applied to a world-wide radio and television system created to provide command information, news, and entertainment to United States military personnel and their dependents stationed in foreign countries.

An activity of the Department of Defense (DoD), AFRTS is administered through the Office of Information for the Armed Forces (IAF) under the overall direction of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.<sup>1</sup>

The radio and television outlets which are part of AFRTS comprise the largest reticulation of broadcasting stations under one organization, operated by and intended primarily for the information and entertainment of U. S. military citizens. Unlike the affiliates of commercial

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<sup>1</sup>U. S. Department of Defense (DoD), Office of Information for the Armed Forces (IAF), AFRTS-Washington, "AFRTS-W Broadcast Schedule," DoD pamphlet, September 5, 1971. (Hereinafter cited as "AFRTS-W Broadcast Schedule.")

broadcasting networks which are electronically linked for instantaneous programming in the United States, AFRT outlets and networks function independently within the region or country of their location.<sup>2</sup> Figures 1 and 2 give the number and geographic location of AFRT outlets.

#### Operational and Administrative Organization

Under normal conditions AFRT networks are operated by the several military departments: Army, Navy, and Air Force. The departments keep the unified/specified (or joint) commanders (for example, Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Pacific Forces: CINCPAC) informed of programming, financing, operations, and other activities of AFRT facilities within the commanders' geographic areas of responsibility. The joint commanders have been given specified duties of providing guidance in conjunction with host country agreements permitting the operation of AFRT broadcasting facilities in foreign states, and of ensuring that the policies

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<sup>2</sup>There are 448 radio and television outlets loosely linked to AFRTS. DoD, IAF, "AFRT Outlets," November 7, corrected through December 8, 1971. (Mimeographed.) (Hereinafter cited as IAF, "AFRT Outlets.") The distinction between AFRT outlets and commercial networks is deemed necessary in view of accepted analogy. It would be more appropriate to compare AFRTS with commercial program distributors and independent stations except for AFRTS' centralization. "The Sun Never Sets," Broadcasting, LXXVI (January 20, 1969), 83, intonates that AFRTS is the most extensive information and entertainment medium in the history of broadcasting."

	December, 1971		
	Radio	Television	Total
Army	98	26	124
Air Force	168	44	212
Navy	78	27	105
Interior	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>7</u>
Total	351	97	448

Fig. 1.—American Forces Radio and Television (ARFT) Outlets.

Source: U. S. Department of Defense, Office of Information for the Army Forces, "American Forces Radio and Television Outlets (AFRTS)," November 7, 1971, P. 1. (Mimeographed.)

December, 1971

Antarctica	Iceland	Portugal
Australia	Iran	(Azores)
Belgium	Italy	Ryukyu Islands
Canada	Japan	(Okinawa)
Cuba	Korea	Spain
Denmark	Morocco	South Vietnam
(Greenland)	Netherlands	Taiwan
Ethiopia	Panama	Thailand
Germany	(Canal Zone)	Turkey
Greece (& Crete)	Philippine Islands	United Kingdom (Ascension Island)

Other outlets (United States, U. S. Territories, Possessions, and Trusts):

Alaska	Koror	Moen
Canton Island	Kolonia	Puerto Rico
Colonia	Kwajalein	Saipan
Guan	Majuro	Somoa
Johnston	Midway	Wake Island

Fig. 2.—American Forces Radio and Television (ARFT) Outlets.

Source: U. S. Department of Defense, Office of Information for the Army Forces, "American Forces Radio and Television Outlets (AFRTS)," November 7, 1971, P. 2. (Mimeographed.)

and objectives of the United States and the Defense Department are served by AFRT networks and outlets within their areas of command. Additionally, under conditions of a declared emergency or upon the implementation of contingency plans, a joint commander may assume full operational control of all or a portion of the Army, Navy, and Air Forces AFRT services in his area to insure a coordinated command information effort.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, in the Pacific area, the joint commander of all U. S. forces (CINCPAC) has assumed operational control of AFRT services in the Republic of Vietnam and has directed his subordinate joint commander, Commander, U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (COMUSMACV or MACV), to assume these responsibilities, including command authority, for all AFRT services in the geographic area of South Vietnam.<sup>4</sup>

Administrative and support responsibilities remain vested in the military departments which are assigned areas of the world relative to the departments' dominance. For example: the Army has administrative and support responsibilities for AFRT outlets in Korea and Vietnam, and all

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<sup>3</sup>U. S. Department of Defense (DoD) Instruction, 5120.20, "American Forces Radio and Television (AFRT)," April 26, 1971, p. 1. (Hereinafter cited as DoD Instruction, 5120.20.) DoD, Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Pacific Forces (CINCPAC) Instruction 5720.12, "AFRT," April 29, 1968, p. 2. (Hereinafter cited as CINCPAC Instruction 5720.12.)

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., CINCPAC, p. 3.

radio outlets in Germany; the Navy has outlets in Iceland, Midway, and all U. S. Navy ships. The Department of the Army has assigned these responsibilities in the Pacific area to Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Army, Pacific (CINCUSARPAC).<sup>5</sup>

The military departments receive assistance in carrying out assigned AFRT responsibilities from the Office of Information for the Armed Forces (IAF). IAF provides overall guidance regarding the establishment, administration, support, and operation of AFRT outlets and networks; and supplies programming materials which meet the requirements of the military commands maintaining those outlets.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>.DoD Instruction 5120.20, pp. 1-11. Assuming the AFRT outlets in South Vietnam were not operating in a contingency situation and a network and outlet system like AFVN prevailed in Vietnam, operational and administrative control would ordinarily be in Army hands. A U. S. Naval Base at Cam Ranh Bay, for example, would be served by an AFRT outlet which would be run and supported by the Army. The outlet would be at the Navy commander's disposal for command information programming and the outlet staff would be supplemented by naval personnel. Command authority would rest in the outlet officer in charge, and operational and administrative responsibilities would remain within the Department of the Army under the local Army commander.

<sup>6</sup>See Appendix A, for detailed responsibilities of the Office of Information for the Armed Forces (IAF) regarding AFRTS. IAF is also responsible for the former Armed Forces Education Program and administering command information programs for the Defense Department. Source: IAF, "AFRTS-W Broadcast Schedule," September 5, 1971, reverse side. Former designations have included Armed Forces Information and Education (NS), 1949, Office of I&E, 1952, and Directorate for Armed Forces I&E, 1961; DoD, IAF, "American Forces Radio and Television," descriptive article, January, 1971, pp. 2-5. (Mimeographed.) (Hereinafter cited as IAF, "AFRT History.")

AFRTS-Washington

In order to furnish programs of service news, world and national affairs, information and entertainment, IAF operates two field activities in Washington and **Los** Angeles which may be termed program distribution centers for AFRT outlets.<sup>7</sup> AFRTS-Washington (AFRTS-W) is a timely source of radio material, specializing in news and feature programming, which is linked instantaneously by direct satellite and cable circuits to the major AFRT networks. Shortwave broadcasts are utilized to serve the remaining outlets and networks via Voice of America transmitters at Delano, California (for nineteen and a half hours per day); Bethany, Ohio (for twenty-four hours a day); and Greenville, North Carolina (for nine and a half hours a day).<sup>8</sup> It is possible to link most all outlets for major national events, such as Presidential and major government officials' addresses, and championship sporting contests. It should be noted, however, that except in cases of special broadcasts deemed by the Secretary of Defense to be of importance to military personnel world-wide,<sup>9</sup> each network and outlet is free to utilize AFRTS-W programs as dictated by the needs of the audience

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<sup>7</sup>Letter from Colonel James E. Adams, USA, Chief, Joint Media Support Division, IAF, November 12, 1972. (Hereinafter cited as Letter from Colonel Adams,)

<sup>8</sup>IAF, "AFRTS-W Broadcast Schedule."

<sup>9</sup>DoD Instruction 5120.20, p. 21.

and the command served. As demonstrated in Chapter III, the American Forces Vietnam Network (AFVN), for example, chose not to broadcast news report summaries originated in Washington, but relied heavily on the center for sports and special events programming.<sup>10</sup>

Utilizing cycle programming, AFRTS-W originates one six-hour program block every twenty-four hours and rebroadcasts the block four times, thus enabling outlets in various time zones to take the Washington feed as appropriate.<sup>11</sup> Outlets receive newscasts on the hour and half-hour as they are broadcast by commercial networks in the United States. Only the commercials are deleted.<sup>12</sup> The program block is divided into six similar segments, one of which is illustrated in Figure 3. The hourly formats remain the same until pre-empted by a special news feature or sports event.<sup>13</sup> Direct-loop teletype circuits and broadcast conference calls link AFRTS-W with the networks and outlets for program coordination.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>See Chapter III, pp. 5354, *infra*.

<sup>11</sup>Notes of discussion with Program Director, Mr. C. G. Wells, during personal tour of AFRTS-W, December 8, 1971.

<sup>12</sup>IAF, "AFRTS-W Broadcast Schedule."

<sup>13</sup>Interview with Mr. C. G. Wells.

<sup>14</sup>Personal interview with AFRTS-W Commanding Officer, Colonel Frank T. Hurray, USA, December 8, 1971.



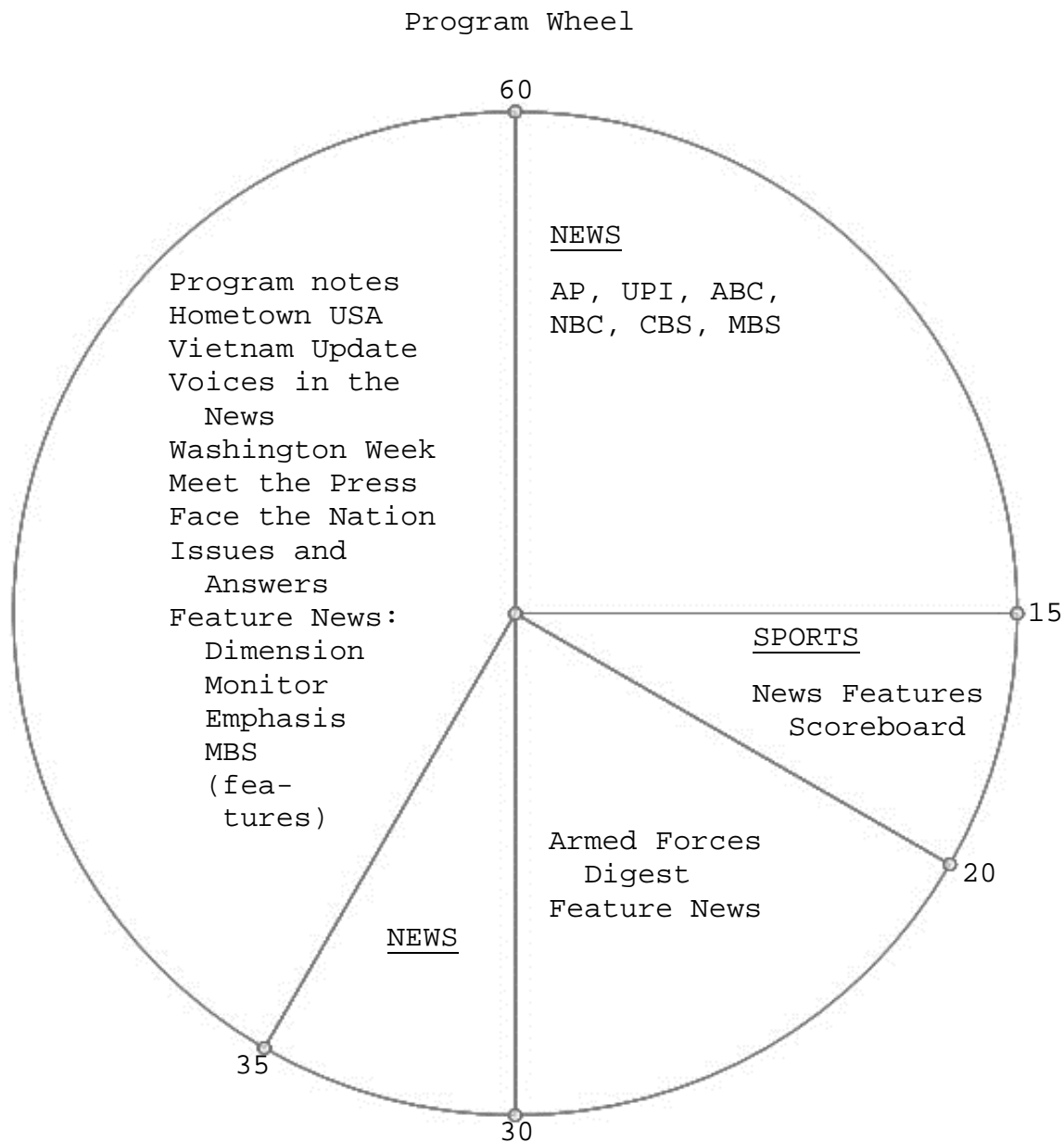


Fig.3.--American Forces Radio and Television 60-minute Program Wheel Concept.

Source: U. S. Department of Defense, Office of Information for the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service-Washington (AFRTS-W), "AFRTS-W Broadcast Schedule," September 6, 1971. (Pamphlet.)

ARTS-Los Angeles

The field activity in Los Angeles (AFRTS-LA) is the program distribution center for all packaged radio and television programming materials.<sup>15</sup> Although overall responsibility for the coordination of activities is clearly vested in the Director, IAF, AFRTS-LA is correctly termed the headquarters of AFRT regarding entertainment and information programming, distributed on video and audio tape, film and audio transcription discs. In addition to weekly packages, AFRTS-LA furnishes each outlet and network a basic music library and priority shipments (consisting of sports events and news shows on film or video tape). AFRTS-LA is the central agency for programming advice to AFRT outlets worldwide.<sup>16</sup>

Whereas AFRTS-W is a relative newcomer and recently consolidated service,<sup>17</sup> AFRTS-LA was established in World War II when the location was chosen for its proximity to talent and mass recording facilities. It was soon realized

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<sup>15</sup>Letter from Colonel Adams, November 12, 1971.

<sup>16</sup>IAF, "AFRT History," p. 3.

<sup>17</sup>AFRTS-W evolved from the Armed Forces Press, Radio and Television Service, New York (AFPRTS-NY). In December, 1965, the Armed Forces News Bureau (AFNB) was created in Washington (actually located in Arlington County, Virginia) to replace the New York field activity. AFNB consolidated the functions of AFPRTS-NY and shortwave operations of the Los Angeles facility and began in January, 1967. AFNB was redesignated AFRTS-W in August, 1967. See IAF, "AFRTS History," pp. 1-5.

that the demand for program materials could not be met without the cooperation of commercial broadcast networks, sponsors and talent; and in 1943, the then Armed Forces Radio Services (AFRS) entered into firm agreements with the radio entertainment industry. With the ascendancy of television, AFRS expanded its scope with its convenient headquarters in Los Angeles.<sup>18</sup>

#### The Mission of AFRTS

What was initially a purely entertainment service came to the attention of the former War Department as a major contribution toward the solution of morale problems in areas of the world **where** shortwave reception was non-existent or inadequate. The medium of radio broadcasting could be utilized in such areas not only to entertain servicemen, but also to provide the area commander with an ideal vehicle for command information.<sup>19</sup> This justification for the military radio and television service is reflected in the mission of

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<sup>18</sup>IAF, AFRTS-LA, "Organization Manual," January 1, 1969, sec. III, pp. 2-5. (Hereinafter cited as AFRTS-LA, "Organization Manual.") It is interesting to note that the mass recording and rebroadcast techniques developed to meet the rapid growth of AFRS outlets during World War II were later adopted by the commercial radio industry in the U. S. See Sydney W. Head, Broadcasting in America: A Survey of Television and Radio (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1956), p. 148. The claim is substantiated in that ABC first started using transcribed programs in 1946. Other major networks followed suit and the practice came into general use in 1949.

<sup>19</sup>IAF, "AFRTS History," p. 1.

AFRTS-LA: to assist the Director, IAF ". . . in carrying out his mission and responsibilities in the field of information and entertainment . . ." <sup>20</sup> and in the mission of AFRTS-W, ". . . to supply timely and accurate Seat-of-Government news and information, military and general news, sports and special events programming. . ." <sup>21</sup> IAF is responsible for, ". . . providing information to American servicemen stationed throughout the world in support of the Military Departments' Command/Internal Information programs." <sup>22</sup>

Thus, while the entertainment functions of AFRTS dominate programming, the command information function is paramount to the mission of the service.<sup>23</sup>

Over the years of its development, AFRT has assumed the outward posture of a mass entertainment system that individually and collectively strives to provide the best of American-style radio television programming to U. S. military personnel and dependents stationed overseas. It is to the guilds, unions, sponsors, producers, and entertainers of the U. S. radio and television industry that AFRTS owes

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<sup>20</sup>AFRTS-LA, "Organization Manual," sec., II, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup>IAF, "AFRTS-W Broadcast Schedule."

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>See Appendix B, for the purpose of the command information effort as interpreted for general, public consumption.

its continued existence. Products and services of the industry are furnished, for the most part, free of charge.<sup>24</sup>

The widest possible variety of programming is offered to the system components which enables each to tailor its programming to suit the audience in the area served. Since AFRT is for the benefit of U. S. military personnel, only; the U. S., through the local commander, must obtain agreement with the host country for the operation of radio and television broadcast stations. The fact that other persons are able to receive AFRTS broadcasts is due not to intent but to the nature of the medium utilized. For this reason, DoD directs local outlets to utilize such measures as low power transmitters, special antennae, and closed circuits to reach the intended audience with the least practicable coverage of others.<sup>25</sup> It may be assumed that if a closed circuit or exclusive frequency system could be developed and readily accessible to U. S. personnel in foreign countries, it would be preferred over the broadcasting system. In respecting the host country agreement, careful

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<sup>24</sup>"The Sun Never Sets . . .," Broadcasting, LXXVI (January 20, 1969), 83.

<sup>25</sup>Letter from Colonel Adams.

attention must therefore be given to broadcast material that might prove offensive within the foreign country. <sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>DoD Instruction 5120.20, pp. 4-7. See: Donald R. Browne, "The World in the Pentagon's Shadow," Educational Broadcasting Review, V (April, 1971) 31-48 for discussion of the international aspects of the "shadow" audiences of AFRTS as experienced in Europe.

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