# Three Years under the Mastheads
# February 1963 - June 1966

# Table of Contents

# Cast of Characters

## Journalist School, Service School Command, Great Lakes, Illinois

| | |
|---|---|
| LCdr E T Sullivan | Ever Absent Commanding Officer |
| Lt J A Lynch | Reticent Executive Officer |
| GySgt Norbert Malecki | Sadistic Marine Instructor |
| Frank Orr, JO1 | Half-witty Instructor |
| Will Leslie, JOC | Foppish Photo Instructor |

## USS *Midway*, FPO San Francisco, California 96601

| | |
|---|---|
| Capt Leroy E Harris | Silent Skipper |
| Capt Whitney Wright | Not-so-silent Skipper |
| Cdr Daniel H Stinemates | Non-involved Executive Officer |
| Ltjg Gerry W Langkammerer | Unkempt Public Information Officer |
| Ens Jay M Kennerly | Youthful PIO Replacement |

## Commander, US Naval Forces, Japan - Yokosuka

| | |
|---|---|
| Rear Adm John L Chew | Doughty Commander |
| Capt Richard M McCool | Usually Inebriated PIO |
| Lt Gerald R Mead | Dour, Miscast Assistant PIO |
| Wilbur L Leslie | Foppish NCOIC |

## Far East Network, South Camp Drake, Asaka-machi, Japan

| | |
|---|---|
| Col Mark D Meranda | Uneasy Commanding Officer |
| LCdr Eugene Smith | Supercool Executive Officer |
| MSgt Milton E Balinger | Resident Glad-hander & NCOIC |

# Introduction

*During my senior year at Boston University, like everyone else in the Journalism section, I was expected to serve an internship for several months and then write a paper on it afterwards. I went to the chairman and asked him whether, instead, I could write about my three years as a US Navy journalist. He said* okay. *What follows is what I wrote way back then. It's here because journalism, with its emphasis on accuracy, succinctness and deadlines, is probably the best writing discipline of all.*

# Journalist School

When I arrived at the Lakes, another class was in session so I had to wait five weeks for my course to start. The Navy used this time to carefully ferret out other non-average sailors with journalistic potential. I spent the interim typing for another school on the base.

By the time the 12-week school finally got under way, some 36 students, including a small contingent of Waves and Marines and a lone Coast Guardsman, were on board. Classes began at 0800 and ended at 1600 (4pm) with an hour off at noon for chow. The first week was devoted to testing our general knowledge of grammar and writing technique, so the instructors could acquire a relatively accurate idea of the difficulty of the task ahead and quickly weed out those who most clearly would not make it.

The attrition rate, incidentally, had in the past run about 30 percent. Our class proved average, losing seven. Several weren't bright enough or just couldn't write. One was dismissed as a misfit. And a Wave was dropped because she hadn't enough sense to limit her promiscuity to influential personages.

Once we had established we were capable of becoming Navy journalists, our instructors (principally a journalist first class and a Marine gunnery sergeant) undertook the business of moulding us into finished products. During the morning hours we concentrated on leads, bridges, inverted pyramids and the like. The afternoons were spent absorbing information on such related fields as photography, lithography, layout and make-up, tape recording, and radio and television.

Each Friday our class was tested to see what, if anything, we had learned that week. In addition, we were given a spelling test on 100 of the most frequently misspelled words in the language. (Grades, by the way, were either G for good, S for satisfactory or U for unsatisfactory.) At the end of the 12-week course we took a final exam to ascertain just what we'd been able to retain. Even the 1,200 spelling words were thrown in. Those who passed graduated as designated journalist strikers.

• • •

Now for a closer look at this school. After the first week of reviewing, testing and receiving a smattering of journalism history, we took up leads. Our assignment when introduced to the "five W's" was to pore over back issues of the Chicago Tribune (which all of us subscribed to), select several leads and then identify who, what, when, why and how. Juvenile as this may sound, the exercise was important not only in familiarizing us with the various parts of a good lead but also in encouraging us to look at newspaper stories in a new light. We didn't just read the stories, we also tried to discover the structural devices used by various reporters.

We went on to identify leads in terms of direct address, contrast, question, quotation, picture (descriptive), background and freak. We also labelled stories which fell into the

following categories: immediacy, proximity, oddity, consequence, prominence, sex, human interest, conflict, suspense and progress.

The instructors wasted no time in impressing upon us the value of space and the need for simplified writing. Using the AP style book as a guide, we learned how to abbreviate Massachusetts, use *married* rather *united in wedlock*, *give* instead of *contribute* and *persons* rather than *people*, except when a people was being discussed.

Once our instructors were convinced we could isolate that information which belonged in a lead and then condense it as succinctly as possible into a readable paragraph, we moved to bridges. We practiced writing paragraphs that would best amplify the Ws used as news pegs or would act as tiebacks in continuing stories.

Next came exercises in determining the importance and thus the position of various facts in the story. We were given the facts and simply instructed to arrange them in the proper inverted pyramid order.

With the preliminaries over, we began to actually write the kind of news stories we would most likely encounter in the military. The news gathering format never changed. After reviewing returned papers we would interview one of our reluctant mentors acting as authority (or attributive source) for each news story. We would ask questions until he felt we had enough information. Then we would rush into an adjoining typewriter room and hope our creativity and typing speed would be sufficient in combination to meet our tight deadlines. And so the routine went, day after day, as we learned to interview, write under pressure and improve our copy. We also learned the importance of accuracy. Because anytime a story included an error in fact (including misspelled names), it automatically earned a U-, which amounted to no credit. A harsh but, I feel, a perfectly justified measure. Of course, if I'd gotten more, I might be biased the other way.

Other morning activities included copy reading, caption writing, headline counting, justifying, proofreading, military letter writing, hometown news releases, editorials and a session on the legal aspects of journalism.

After lunch we'd return to tackle those related activities I mentioned above. Generally two weeks were devoted to each subject.

In photography we were taught how to operate a camera (specifically the Speed Graphic - it seems the Navy had warehouses full of these awkward, impractical and outdated 4x5s), how to take pictures and then how to develop and print them. As with our writing assignments, we concentrated on typically military situations. Like presentations. More presentations. And still more presentations.

Another two weeks were spent on layout and make-up, culminating in several dummy newspapers. Each staff of five or six would assemble and write news, justify the copy, take accompanying photos and then lay out the pages. The headlines were done in photo-type because the paper was to be printed on an offset press. Our finished products were theoretically ready for the printer.

In conjunction with classroom activities we took a field trip to a Waukegan newspaper plant where we were able to see everything we had learned about on a fairly large scale. We met our glossary of printing terms in person. Em-quads, chase, linotype, matrix and the like. Field trips may sound childish, but this visit gave most of us an important added insight into the broad scope of journalism.

Because the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service chooses journalists when filling empty Navy billets, we also spent time learning about taped interviews, radio copy and broadcasting. The school boasted two studios that simulated actual conditions. The procedure went something like this. We would read our newscasts into live mikes. Then blanch as we heard the playback.

On October 1 twenty-nine of us graduated. I led all Navy men. But this is misleading because in front of me stood one Coast Guardsman, one Marine and one Wave. As a reward for my outstanding academic work I found myself the only Navyman not assigned shore duty. Since then I've often reflected whether my fate might have been more fortunate had I not participated in a softball game between our school and Administration - the persons who made out orders. We beat them and I had a fine day. One play I particularly remember was a run-down. I tagged out their executive officer perhaps a bit more vehemently than necessary. His signature was on my orders.

# USS *Midway* (CVA-41)

After 15 days leave I reported aboard USS *Midway* (CVA-41) in Alameda, California, and was assigned to X Division and the Public Information Office. One of the brochures put out by this office told *Midway*'s history something like this:

The USS *Midway* was launched at Newport News, Virginia, on March 20, 1945, as the first of three 45,000-ton attack carriers. It was named after the World War II naval battle fought from the third to the sixth of June, 1942, near Midway Island. Here US Naval forces sank four Japanese carriers, forcing the Imperial Navy to retreat for the first time in the war.

The *Midway* received her commissioning pennant and first Navy crew at Portsmouth, Virginia, on September 10, 1945.

During the M*idway*'s early years, she was home-ported at Newport News and made seven cruises to the Mediterranean with the Sixth Fleet. In 1947, *Midway* was the site of the first shipboard launching of a heavy rocket missile when the V-2 rocket was fired from her flight deck.

On December 27, 1954, *Midway* departed on a world cruise after serving with the Second, Sixth and Eighth Fleets for more than nine years. At the end of this cruise, *Midway* served a seven-month operational period with the Seventh Fleet in the Western Pacific. Upon completion of this lengthy deployment, *Midway* entered the Bremerton Naval Shipyard, Washington, where she was decommissioned and underwent extensive overhaul and modernization.

On September 30, 1957, *Midway* was recommissioned. The ship was capable of operating anywhere within a 600,000-square-mile area in any given 24-hour period as a result of the most up-to-date improvements. (With a hurricane bow, an angled flight deck and a streamlined island structure the ship emerged from the yard period as a 62,000-ton carrier.)

The modernization of the three steam catapults, new arresting gear, jet blast deflectors, and the largest aviation crane ever installed on a conversion enhanced the ship's capability for operating the latest weapons of modern warfare. The *Midway*'s serial armament included twin-engine heavy jet bombers, supersonic and all-weather jet fighters and light attack aircraft as well as a few special mission propeller-driven planes.

Following post-yard sea trials and inspections in mid-December 1957, the *Midway* sailed for her new homeport at Alameda, California.

Since her recommissioning in 1957 the *Midway* has made four cruises to the Western Pacific during which she has constantly been on the alert. She patrolled the Formosan area for 37 continuous days when the Quemoy and Matsu conflict flared in 1958. And in 1961 *Midway* spent several weeks on patrol off the coast of Vietnam in the South China Sea during the peak of the Laotian crises.

When I arrived the office staff consisted of a part-time lieutenant junior grade public information officer, two second class journalists and two non-designated seamen. Within a week we shoved off for a seven-month Western Pacific cruise. Our itinerary included port calls at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; Subic Bay, Philippines; Hong Kong and Sasebo, Beppu, Iwakuni and Yokosuka, Japan.

While at sea I worked 16 hours a day, seven days a week. My day began at 2330 (11:30pm). I would crawl from my rack, attend to necessary toilet functions and stand in line for mid-rats (midnight chow). There were two unvarying menus. Either chilli con carne or beef stew, cooked by apprentice cooks using apprentice food.

The reason I suffered such long hours and lousy food was the daily newsletter Mid-Watch. The other most junior man, Nick Bernatz from Winona, Minnesota, and I won the task of putting out this wonderful little six-page journal crammed with the best AP and UPI could offer and the guys in the radio shack could steal. So, after wolfing down the chilli con carne (minus the beans, which I picked out) or beef stew, either Nick or I would journey high into the island structure to gather whatever the teletype had spewed forth that day. Because the ship subscribed to neither service nor considered the accumulation of non-military news of primary importance, we generally returned to the office with rolls and rolls of mostly garbled copy. As quickly as we could, Nick and I culled through the rolls searching for useable stories. Often times our criteria for inclusion became readability rather than pertinence. Imagine leading with a story about the bunnies in the Manila Playboy Club.

About the only rewriting we did was necessitated by intermittently garbled words or lines. Regularly we would have to guess from the copy preceding and following an illegible section just what the news service had in mind. But our only truly creative touches were the headlines. Sometimes we were too creative. On my second night I wrote a headline that earned me one of my severest warnings. The story was about a horse race at Sarasota Springs. It seems the lead nag fell and caused a pile-up that kept any horse from finishing. (And the track from paying out.) The fans went wild and, as they say in the newspapers, a melee ensued. Naturally, I headed the story, "Race Riot in New York."

Actually, Nick and I were keenly appreciated by most of the ship's complement: we soon discovered we served as the official source for football scores. And other sports results. For many fans these scores were practically necessities of life. But for the devout gambling faction so rampant aboard *Midway*, they were necessities of life. I can't remember how many officers and gentlemen suggested I block a field goal or call back a touchdown with my typewriter - for a stipend from their resultant winnings. I never did. The odds of my getting away with it were lousy.

After typing out the six stencil sheets we averaged, Nick and I would carry them to a short, round, fat creature with a tiny head and huge glasses who cared for the mimeo-graph machine. His name was Nash and his machine's name was Minnie. He was terribly fond of his AB Dick creation. In fact, he eventually moved from the X Division compartment and set up a cot in the cramped niche that harbored Minnie. Nash was a simple person, but we had convinced him he ranked as an integral part of the newspaper

publishing business. So he was more than happy to be wakened around 0230 each morning to assume his Hearstian duties for 15 or 20 minutes.

With 500 copies in hand we would return to the office for assembly. We took turns putting pages in order or stapling. Stapling was the worst part of the entire publishing process. Bang. Bang. Bang. Five hundred times. Hard - because the stapler didn't work all that well. (Our arms would quiver for some time afterwards.) We'd distribute the news on the mess decks and in the officers' mailboxes. And then maybe a catnap or up to the flight deck to watch the sun bob glowing to the surface.

After breakfast the regular day began. My duties varied. Track down a story about a pilot, write about the division of the month, play inquiring reporter, draft some fleet home town news releases, swab the office deck, create a cruise book ad, pacify the print shop, lay out a port brochure, work on the monthly magazine *Midway West*, and so on. Till 1600. Then Nick and I headed for the compartment and sleep. Just as everyone else in X Division headed for the same compartment and the radio speaker there. We would turn off the lights and radio. The others would turn them on. But we were usually so bushed we would sleep right through to 2330 and the next shift. Each day, seven days a week.

We returned to the States and Alameda on May 26, 1964. After taking a month's leave in July, I reported back aboard to find orders to Japan. Two weeks later I arrived in Yokosuka, site of the largest US Navy base in the Far East. I was assigned to the Public Information Office of Commander, US Naval Forces, Japan.

# Commander, US Naval Forces, Japan

History: When Naval Forces, Japan, was established in 1957, command boundaries were delineated to include Japan, Okinawa and the areas surrounding these islands. This area includes the international seas bordering on Eastern Russia, Northern Communist China and North and South Korea.

Commander US Naval Forces, Japan, is the senior US Navy flag command ashore in Japan. The mission of this command, briefly stated, is to act as the naval representative of the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, in Japan and the Ryukyus. To support this mission, Commander US Naval Forces, Japan, must perform the following special tasks:

1. Support fleet forces.
2. Prepare plans for anti-submarine warfare.
3. Coordinate with and advise the Naval Section, Military Assistance Group, Japan, in matters concerning the training of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force.
4. Coordinate harbor defense planning.
5. Provide intelligence support to the Office of Naval Intelligence and Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, as directed.
6. Coordinate and supervise the implementation of disaster control policies and procedures received from higher authority.
7. Plan for and affect, within capabilities, the evacuation of non-combatants for whom the US Navy is responsible.
8. Provide for local protection and security of US Naval Forces and installations within Japan and the Ryukyus.
9. Plan for logistic support of the United Nations Command Naval Forces and Korean Naval Military Assistance Program as directed.

As an Operational Commander, Commander US Naval Forces, Japan, is Commander Task Forces 36 and 96. The primary responsibility of CTF 36 is the active prosecution of all unidentified submarine contacts. In carrying out this responsibility CTF 36 utilizes air and surface forces from the Seventh Fleet and directs their efforts toward identification and collection of information on enemy submarines. In time of active hostilities this effort would be aimed at the destruction of the enemy submarine forces.

Of equal importance is the control and protection of shipping. In fulfilling this responsibility, friendly shipping is tracked and reported to the Movement Report Office Center in Pearl Harbor. Contact is maintained to form individual ships into convoys and direct the offensive forces in their protection if needed. Routing instructions are provided, and directions issued, for transits within the CTF 36 areas.

The provision of Harbor Defense Facilities is also a responsibility of Commander US Naval Forces, Japan. Since these facilities are normally required only in time of war, the equipment installed at Yokosuka and Sasebo has been turned over to the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force for operation and peacetime training.

Commander US Naval Forces, Japan, handles his responsibilities for search and rescue operations under the Commander Task Force 96 title. Emergency calls are frequently received for Naval assistance in disaster distress at sea. Seventh Fleet units, both surface and air, operating under Commander US Naval Forces, Japan, perform these functions in a well planned and coordinated routine.

Commander, US Naval Forces, Japan, also carries the title of Commander US Naval Component, Japan. The missions assigned to this title are:

1. Coordinate Naval matters with other US services and the Japanese.
2. Assist Commander US Forces, Japan, in providing for the local defense of Japan.
3. Assist the Commander US Forces, Japan, on Naval matters in the conduct of negotiations with the Japanese Government, as requested.

To provide the required support and to perform his other varied tasks, US Naval Forces, Japan, is organized so that the lines of responsibility flow up from Commander US Naval Forces, Japan, to the Commander US Forces, Japan, in Tri-service channels.

Within US Naval Forces, Japan, there are the following major commands: Commander Fleet Activities, Yokosuka; Sasebo; Ryukyus; Commander Naval Air Bases, Japan; Security Group Activity, Kami Seya and Naval Communications Station, Japan. These commands occupy 59 separate facilities in areas totalling nearly 60,000 acres with a plant value of $235,000,000.

• • •

The Public Information Office was a professional operation dating back to MacArthur days. My boss was Capt. Richard M McCool, the only public information officer in the Navy with a Congressional Medal of Honor. Below him were a hapless lieutenant, a senior chief journalist and a varying assortment of first, second and third class journalists along with a designated striker or two. The enlisted complement usually numbered about seven or eight.

Physically, our spaces consisted of a front office for the two officers, a first class yeoman and a Japanese secretary; a room for the chief, another enlisted man and two Japanese interpreters; a radio section with one enlisted man and a Japanese electronics expert who together handled taped interviews; and finally, the press section where five men and two teletype machines sent out an average 1,000 releases a year.

During my year there I worked in each section and even subbed for the yeoman who took a few days off when his wife left him and their five kids for a brief fling with a fleet sailor. Off hand, I'd say the only animal that could be attracted to the wife of a Navy enlisted man is another Navy enlisted man. I'm convinced dependent housing houses the ugliest women in the world. But back to our story.

The press section was the heart of the staff public information office operation. Our duties were many. We wrote releases about interesting Navy-related happenings. We clipped newspapers each morning so the Admiral could see what the local English-language press thought of the Navy. (Our interpreters combed the Japanese papers or

*shimbun* every day for Japanese opinion.) We acted as a liaison for local commands and the Seventh Fleet ships when they dealt with Japanese nationals. We saw to it that re-enlisting Marines got their pictures taken with the Colonel. We acted as couriers to Tokyo where the Press Club, the Press Liaison Office and the American Embassy were located. We took TAD (temporarily assigned duty) trips aboard various ships to cover special missions. We provided pictures and information for official briefings. We wrote messages for the Admiral's signature at Christmas, Easter, Memorial Day, etc. We escorted thousands of reporters and visitors around the base and/or ships they wanted to see. We released the official word on Navy and Marine plane crashes. And we made light of N-subs visiting Sasebo while 30,000 Japanese leftist demonstrators snake-danced outside the Yokosuka gate some 100 yards from the office.

My duties made for some interesting personal experiences. In February 1965 I went aboard the LST USS Whitfield County to cover the off-loading of "Project Handclasp" material in Osaka. After four days of slowly making our way down the coast we gained Osaka Harbor. But never tied up. Things had suddenly become unusually hairy in South Vietnam, and the Whitfield County was directed by radio to Numazu at the base of Mt Fuji. Here the Handclasp material and I were dropped, and some Marines and their equipment took our place. I caught a train back to Yokosuka. But the LST crew didn't get back to their homeport for three months.

Another time I did a story on the base Ship Repair Facility and during my tour of the buildings saw something I probably shouldn't have. The official Japanese position regarding Vietnam was strictly one of non-involvement. Yet here were Japanese employees converting old landing ships into gunboats for use in the Mekong Delta. Apparently everyone involved knew what was going on, but nobody asked questions.

Once I did a photo feature on the fire fighting school aboard the base. The story received wide publication including *Navy Times* and *All Hands*. But immediately after sending the story out, I got word to report on the double to the captain under whose command the school fell. By the time I arrived he was too apoplectic to talk. So I appeared before his exec. His temper wasn't much better. By the time all the blustering had petered out, I'd learned my great sin had been exclusion of the CO's name. Since I'd cleared the story with all my superiors, even asking whether I should throw in the CO's name, I became somewhat disenchanted with them for putting me in this position where I could not retaliate. So as the exec chewed me out, I just replied, *Yes, Sir. Yes, Sir. Yes, Sir.* And backed out. But the captain's name never did appear.

The episode that really soured me on the military in general and the Navy in particular occurred after I'd been assigned to the Press Liaison Office in Tokyo. Located in the Sanno Hotel, PLO had one enlisted representative from each of the services (Coast Guard excluded) to act as a liaison between his military branch and the press. Civilian clothes and an expense account went with the job. It was pretty good duty, and I had won the honor of being the Navy representative through hard work. My tenure lasted one week.

Before I had left, I'd written a book review of *Candy*. Actually, it was a 10- or 15-minute job, very bland and mainly for laughs. I said essentially that *Candy* was a dirty but funny book available at the base library. I cleared it with my boss and submitted it to the base newspaper just before leaving for Tokyo. Though the editors chose to run my review

under the headline "Candy Starts Trend Toward Funny Smut" and the sub-head "Sex, Sex, Sex", their officer adviser approved it. Eight hundred issues were printed and distributed. Then the phones started ringing. First the chaplains and then other myopic individuals. The military minds reacted typically. Instant panic. The order went out and 500 copies were quickly confiscated and burned. A full-scale investigation was launched. I was returned from Tokyo. The Navy informally charged the editors and me with corrupting the morals of the dependent children on the base, and they suspected us of receiving funds from Communist sources for our "subversive" activities. Really. After several weeks passed I finally was called before the Naval Intelligence people conducting the investigation. The scene reminded me of the Caine Mutiny courtroom. I defended myself. The climax came when I asked the commander in charge of the proceedings just what it was I had written that the US Navy objected to. He turned to some papers and searched for a copy of my review. He read it. And frowned. He reread it. At last he looked up with a puzzled look. *Wel*l, he said, *I guess it really isn't so bad after all*.

That just about finished the *Candy* scandal. Except to save face, they wouldn't let me return to the PLO. But Capt. McCool thought I'd been badly treated. So just before he left to take over Seventh Fleet public information duties, he had me transferred to Far East Network, the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service operation in Japan.

# Far East Network

History: For 20 years, Far East Network, born September 12, 1945, has been many things to thousands of American military and civilian families in Japan. It has been a link with the home that left behind and a daily guide to the life and culture of Japan, the country in which they serve. It has provided them with an hour-by-hour account of significant news events around the world.

Turn to FEN any hour of the day, night or early morning, and you will hear an American voice - a Washington press conference, a championship fight, a big league ball game, a "live," locally produced drama, variety show, musical or a space flight in progress.

FEN operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from Tokyo (the network's headquarters), feeding radio programs via landline circuits to Sasebo, Misawa, Iwakuni, Itazuke, Chitose and Wakkanai, as well as Iwo Jima. In Chitose, Misawa and Wakkanai, television stations have been added to the far-flung FEN complex. They telecast 70 hours a week. There are radio relay stations at Wakkanai and Sasebo.

To reach distant audiences and ships at sea, FEN operates three short-wave transmitters.

Actually, FEN is a paradox that grew bigger as it became smaller. It evolved from a string of Armed Forces Radio Service outlets in Hollandia, Dutch New Guinea, Iwo Jima, Guam, Saipan and Okinawa called the Jungle Network.

In March, 1945, Capt. Graf Boepple, now retired, set up the key station in Manila and designated the chain "the Far East Network." The operation moved again, from Manila to Tokyo, after MacArthur landed in Japan August 30 to complete arrangements for the Japanese surrender.

On September 12, FEN made its first broadcast from Tokyo, as the second Armed Forces station to broadcast in Japan. A marine station on Kyushu was first.

For a long time, FEN stations were known by call letters, WVTR, WVTG, WVTX, and by 1947 it was a sprawling communications giant with 16 stations.

It's not so big today. The number of stations in the FEN complex was cut back when AFRTS networks were formed in Okinawa, the Republic of Korea and the Philippines.

But, as FEN grew smaller, it expanded in other ways. For one, it acquired its own studio and transmitter facilities, to replace those it had leased from NHK in Tokyo.

It now transmits by microwave and geographic locations are used for identification instead of call letters. Example: Serving American Forces overseas, this is Far East Network. (Pause) And this is Tokyo - or whatever station you're listening to.

Far East Network's heart and hub is the headquarters at South Camp Drake in suburban Tokyo.

Japanese serve in clerical positions and maintain equipment. Both of FEN's relay stations, at Wakkanai and Sasebo, are run entirely by Japanese.

Station locations are determined by isolation and population. If there are 2,000 or more military listeners in an area, there will be a station. Relay transmitters serve areas with 500 or more.

The newcomer to FEN, no matter what his professional experience, is given an audition to see what he already knows, then he takes an orientation course covering such subjects as network policy, basic radio equipment, control room engineering and program design. He learns his way around the FEN music library, which stocks some 52,000 long-play records, 100,000 indexed cards to aid announcers in selecting music, more than 60 loose-leaf notebooks listing selections accumulated over the years and biographies of artists.

The staff provides more than half of the 168 hours of weekly broadcasting. Sixty-one hours of radio, and 70 hours of television material, come from AFRTS in New York and Los Angeles. They also send short-wave broadcasts and airmail shipments of popular music, speeches and current event programs.

FEN runs its own announcer school. Candidates must have a good, non-regional voice that does not crackle or drawl. A thorough knowledge of conversational English and grammar is required. An announcer also must be adept at operating a radio console and turntable as he speaks.

FEN has taken its share of awards. Two years in a row, it has won the worldwide American Heritage contest for presenting concepts of Americanism and the American way of life.

Many plaudits were also earned for the coverage of the 1964 Olympics.

• • •

So I scampered to Tokyo and some very fine duty. The main reason the duty was so good was that the Air Force ran the Network. And the Air Force offered their enlisted people something the Navy overlooked: comfort. I was assigned my own room with a thickly mattressed bed, giant lockers, rugs, a desk and bureau, several chairs, a refrigerator and whatever else I choose to furnish on my own. One fellow of legend even had his girl-friend living with him for several months. From all reports she was a groove and habitually joined the other men for a morning shower. If you find this hard to believe, I can personally attest to a series of similar episodes that occurred after I moved in. But I digress.

My job at the FEN newsroom consisted mainly of adapting AP and UPI news copy for radio newscasts. This generally meant a near total rewrite. First, because we were plugged into San Francisco, times had to be changed. For difficult-to-pronounce foreign names we either provided a phonetic spelling or found a way to leave them out. Because of the nature of radio, stories had to have a conversational ring. Sentences were cut down

to a 14-16-word average. The stories averaged eight to 10 lines. And since there were no commercial breaks, this meant a five-minute cast would run about 65 lines including a short kicker and the weather. For the longer casts at 0800, 1200 and 1800 we would write some stories to be supplemented by taped inserts from AFRTS correspondents around the world.

The newsroom was almost exclusively the domain of navy and marine personnel. Frankly, I believe this situation existed because the other services provided inferior training. Working the dayshift (on five days, off two) had to be the easiest duty. There were plenty of people with whom to chat and share the workload. And nights were free for those nocturnal pursuits Tokyo offers in abundance.

The swing shift (from 1600-2400) found one news editor manning the newsroom. (A news announcer who could also write would be on hand until 2000.) Five-minute casts had to be prepared for every hour plus a 15-minute TV cast to be sent by teletype to Wakkanai, Chitose and Misawa. (The 20-minute six o'clock cast fell to the day shift.) While more individual work was required on this shift than on days and one's social life was severely limited, it still amounted to far better duty than the mid-shift.

Mids meant there were just one news editor and the board-man running the station. It was a tremendous responsibility. For one thing, the time from 0000 to 0800 in Japan saw most of the major news stories breaking elsewhere around the world. Updating these stories every 60 minutes for the hourly five-minute casts was tough enough. But the real pressure came in the form of the 25-minute seven o'clock morning cast. The one man who wrote hourly casts also had to prepare a fresh, non-repetitive 240 lines of copy to be aired at 0700. That's hustling.

Another pressure factor was the occasional bulletin. I was on alone during two of the three Tokyo air crashes in early 1966. All I had were wire service reports. And the divergence in crucial facts between AP and UPI was amazing. With an educated guess or two and a couple of phone calls I put together a more complete and accurate story in 15 minutes than either wire service independent of each other could come up with for hours.

Probably what bothered me most (besides not getting enough air time) was the station's lack of resources for digging up local news and our resultant dependency on news services. I can remember vividly during the last major India-Pakistan border clashes both the Indian and Pakistani embassies calling us for more information. (More than 90 percent of our listeners were non-military and non-American.) I could only refer them to the Tokyo AP and UPI bureaus.

I moonlighted at a variety of jobs throughout my Navy years. During my eight months at FEN I worked briefly as editor for the largest civilian club in the world. I was in charge of an eight-page monthly news magazine dealing with the Kanto (Tachikawa) Civilian Club activities. They gave me the bare facts with personality pictures and biographies. I, in turn, was expected to write the stories and heads, lay out each page and then make a Japanese printer who spoke no English understand what I wanted. Because the last editor had quit without warning and without leaving a shred of finished copy, I was handed a pile of junk and a two-day deadline. I met it and received bounteous praise and

a pink slip. The newly elected board of governors' first act was to cut expenses by eliminating my new job.

# Summary

**Journalist School:** I must assign high marks to the now defunct JO 'A' School at Great Lakes. Considering the course ran only 12 weeks and was taught by non-professional educators, the quantity and quality of instruction was fantastic. And not only did I learn a great deal, but during my three-year career I was actually able to apply most of what I'd been taught. Even the radio and TV information. This strikes me as even more fantastic.

**USS Midway:** Turning to my year aboard ship. I learned little about writing, a lot about layout and make-up, something about cajoling printers, nothing about sleeping and everything I could about Far East bargirls.

**Commander US Naval Forces, Japan:** In Yokosuka I was part of a taut ship. Translated: everyone was up tight. It was a highly professional but much too gung-ho operation. However, I probably gained more practical experience in a year there than several years in a civilian PR firm could provide. Unfortunately, I hated the regimen.

**Far East Network:** At FEN I learned not only how to write ear-arresting radio copy but also that doing it can be one of the most boring writing jobs existent. If it weren't for certain creature comforts, I'd have probably succumbed to monotony.

**Summation:** I don't regret it.

# Appendix

In case you wondering, the preceding earned an A for me.

It's occurred to me that if you were curious enough to investigate this link, then get this far, you might also be interested in just what else Boston University's School of Public Communication reckoned would help prepare budding advertising creative types for the real world. Check out some of the course titles.

## Junior Year

**1st Semester**

Human Behavior & Communication
Attitude & Media Research Methods
Production & Design
Newswriting & Reporting 1
Introduction to Advertising

**2nd Semester**

Semantics
Photography 1
Newswriting & Reporting 2
Advertising Copy & Layout
Architecture of the 20th Century*

## Senior Year

**1st Semester**

Governmental & Political Communications
Feature Writing
History & Principles of Journalism
Fundamental Marketing Management
Public Opinion & Propaganda

**2nd Semester**

Magazine Publishing
Professional Internship
Advertising Campaigns
Modern American Novel*
Photography 2*

*Electives

And yes, we did study Goebbels in Public Opinion & Propaganda. For what it's worth, because of my Navy experience my Production & Design professor asked me to teach his lab sections for two semesters (@$150). And my Newswriting & Reporting instructor, long-time Boston columnist Harold Banks, tried to recruit me to work for his paper.