

VU2ZP AT BANGALORE QUILTS I-B AIRWAVES

By SGT. CHARLES KELLOGG *Roundup Assistant Editor*

Late in the evening of December 9, a khaki-clad GI leaned close to a microphone in what had once been an unused warehouse on the giant Southern India Air Depot of the USAAF in Bangalore and said simply: "This is VU2ZP, your Armed Forces radio station, signing off the air for the last time."

With those words there came to an end broadcasting activities which started on January 29, only nine days after Col. Melville C. Robinson, the commanding officer of Southern India Air Depot, made known to AFR the need for a radio station at the sprawling air base, located in the south central part of India.

During its short life on the India airwaves, VU2ZP was for American, British and Indian troops in the Bangalore area their main source of news and entertainment, due to the fact that Bangalore is out of the range of any station on the medium broadcast band. From its inception, the AFR outlet had an international audience and many of its programs followed that theme.

NEWS FLASH

Highlighting the news activities of VU2ZP was the first flash that the Japanese had accepted the terms of the Potsdam declaration. At 5:35 on the morning of August 14, VU2ZP brought that news to its audience, thus making Bangalore the first major city in India to learn of the surrender.

Conversion of the warehouse in which the first broadcast was made, into a modern, well-equipped broadcasting center was completed on Feb. 18 with the assistance of American civilian employees of the Hindustan Aircraft, Ltd. At the time of its final broadcast VU2ZP boasted two studios, a reception room, an office and transmitter. Installation of equipment and the solution of technical problems were handled by Capt. Robert L. Black, radio officer of the I-B Theater, and Sgts. Henry Alto and Howard T. MacFarland.

The station used regular AFR programs, made in the United States and flown to Bangalore and Army News Service material for its news broadcasts, as well as originating a number of "live" programs in its own studios. Two of the latter, "Sunrise Serenade," and "Strike Up The Band," were extended from 30 minutes to an hour each as audience reaction proved their popularity.

VU2ZP extended a "helping hand" to tens of thousands of British troops in South India when George Formby, Britain's leading musical star, visited the Bangalore area. Unable to make personal appearances before all the troops in that area, Formby stepped before a VU2ZP microphone and brought a touch of England and home to home-sick Londoners.

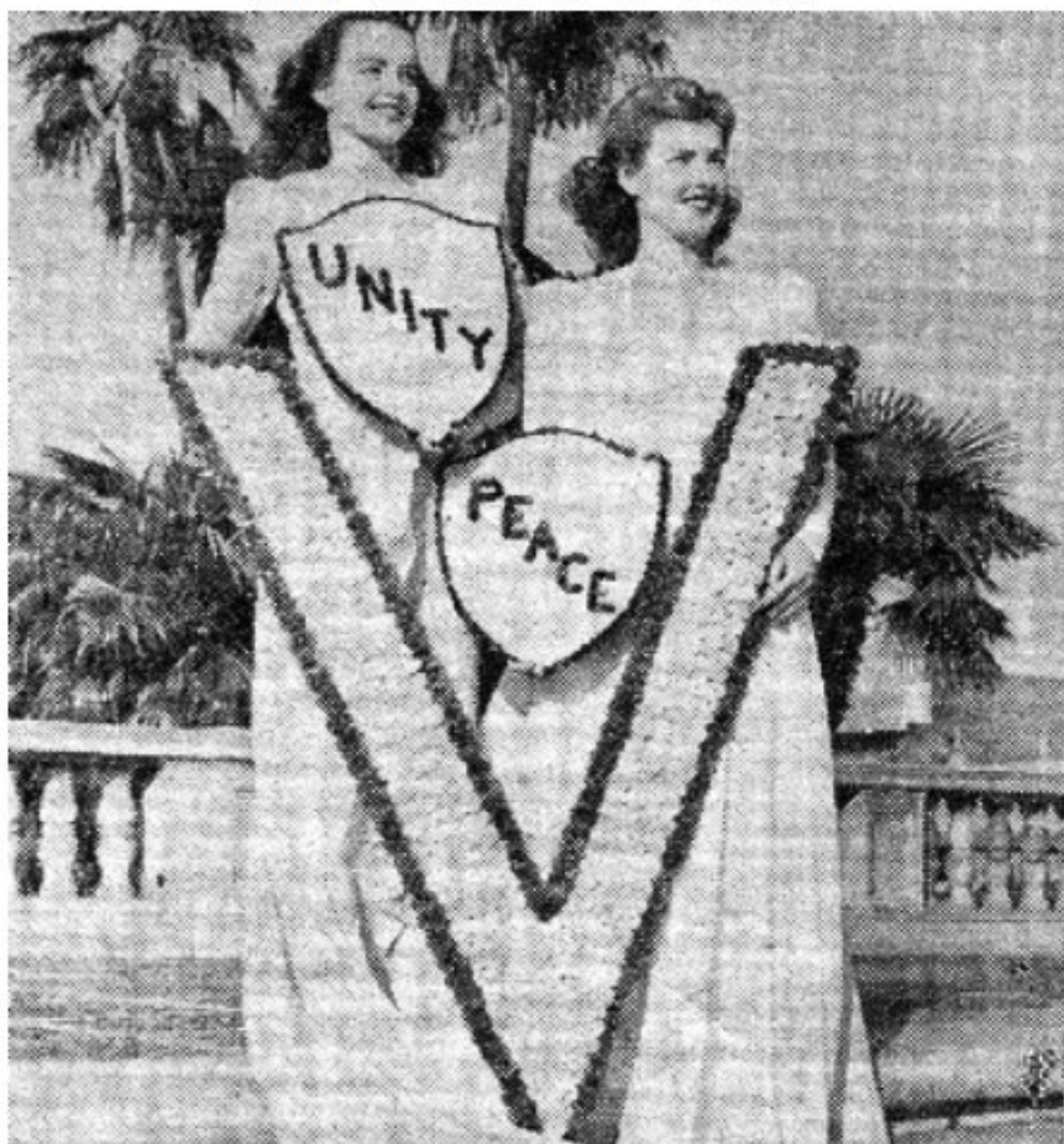
Included on the staff of the station were Arthur J. Tracy of Goulds, Fla., William F. Keating, New Haven, Conn., Burt B. Urdank, North Hollywood, Calif., Kent Haven of Grand Rapids, Mich., Marvin M. Zelony of New York, Gordon J. Seopa, Tago, Minn., Howard T. MacFarland, Belmont, Mass., and Gilbert S. Croft of St. Louis, Mo.

In an official commendation to personnel of the station, Col. Roy H. Lynn, commanding officer of the depot, said the "VU2ZP has been a constant source of entertainment to the officers and men of Southern India Air Depot, and has served with appreciable effectiveness as a factor in maintaining a high standard of morale.

"Furthermore, as the comments of various Allied commanders have borne out," Lynn continued, "the benefits of the station have been limited only as its broadcast range has been limited. To British and Indian troops, as well as our own, the Armed Forces Radio Service presentations from VU2ZP have come as welcome entertainment features in the otherwise near-barren medium of radio."

In commemoration of their stay at Bangalore, members of the staff recently published an illustrated brochure called *Yank Radio . . . Bangalore*, illustrated with photographs of the staff at work and the studio.

ALL'S 'ROSEY' NOW



Wartime queens of the annual Pasadena, Calif., "Tournament of Roses" announce the theme - "Victory, Unity and Peace," for the New Year's Day resumption of the floral fete in that city. The girls are Naomi Riordan (left), the 1944 queen, and Mrs. Robert Stephens, who, as Mildred Miller, was adjudged queen of the 1943 carnival.