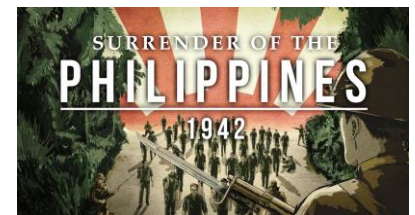


VOA Bubbles to the Surface During the Battle of the Philippines



The U.S.C.G.C. *Courier* was not the only seagoing VOA Relay Station. America's voice broadcasted from an AM radio station aboard a submarine during the Battle of the Philippines near the end of WWII.



In defense of the Philippines from a Japanese attack in December 1941, the USA lost that battle and surrendered to the Japanese in May of 1942. See the YouTube documentary [HERE](#).

By October 1944, General Douglas MacArthur returned with 750 American and Australian ships to capture the islands in January 1945.

To boost morale and win the hearts and minds of the Filipino people one month prior to the battle, a submarine would surface just offshore in the Japanese controlled waters. The submarine would float long enough to broadcast news and words of encouragement from America. The existing land-based AM station was 300 miles away—too far for reliable daytime communications. Programming was under the auspices of OWI, the Office of War Information and VOA California.

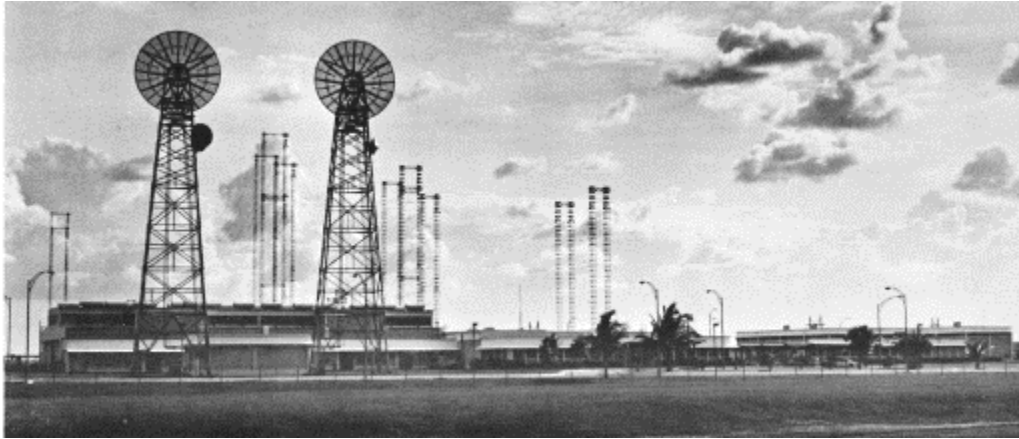
The call sign for the VOA submarine radio station KZSO was chosen to appeal to listeners in the Philippines. The letter K in the callsign KZSO, back then, indicated an American radio station in the Philippines. The letter Z indicated the island of Luzon, and the letters SO stood for Submarine Operation.

Programs broadcasted in English and Tagalog and were compiled from three sources:

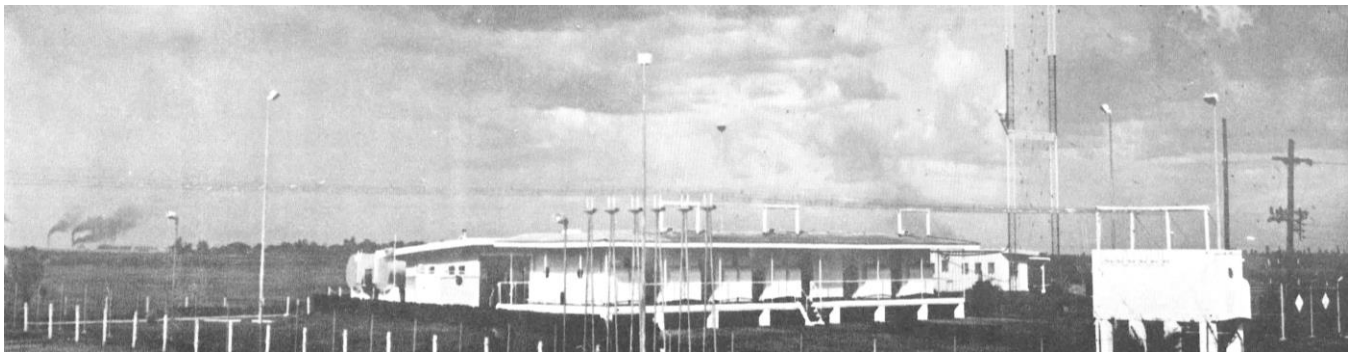
1. Prerecorded programs were loaded into the submarine before leaving the California coast.
2. Live off-air programming was relayed on shortwave from VOA California.
3. A radio officer aboard the submarine made live local announcements.

After America took back the islands, VOA installed three broadcast stations in the Philippines: one in Poro Point and two in Tinang.

Tinang 250 kW shortwave station.



Tinang transportable 50 kW shortwave station.



Poro Point 1 MW mediumwave (1143 kHz) and 100 kW shortwave station.



Below is a picture of the VOA float from a 1954 parade celebrating Filipino independence. The picture is supplied by Don Smith, son of Charles E. Smith who worked at Bethany station, managed the VOA 1 MW longwave station in Munich for 15 years, and worked at the VOA facilities in the Philippines.

In amazing detail, the float contained a replica of each building at the VOA site. At the end of the parade, the display buildings from the float were donated to Don Smith as toys. Don has fond memories of hours of playing with the model buildings.



Source: AWR Wavescan <https://www.radioheritage.com/voice-of-america-relay-station-in-a-submarine/>

The original submarine article by Adrian Peterson aired on Adventist World Radio's "Wavescan" DX program of February 6, 2022. On the Wavescan page, listen to the audio version from WRMI.

Leland L. Hite

12/23/2023