

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS REGIMENT



**CAPTAIN ALFRED J.
DE GRAZIA**

Inducted 31 October 2014



Capt. Alfred J. de Grazia was born on Dec. 29, 1919. Prior to World War II, he attended the University of Chicago and Columbia University, studying political science and law; earning a bachelor's and later a Ph.D. Between 1940 and 1942, he taught courses on American government at the University of Indiana. He entered active military service on Sept. 4, 1942. On Jan. 16, 1943, as a Coast Artillery Officer, he was transferred from the 531st Anti-Aircraft Automatic Weapons Battalion at Fort Bliss, Texas, to the 2nd Signal Radio Service Section (Psychological Warfare Unit) at Camp Ritchie, Md.

Along with the 1st Signal Radio Service Section, the 2nd Signal Radio Service Section fell under the command of the Office of Strategic Services. 2nd Lt. de Grazia, along with a handful of other officers, organized the 1st Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company, which was formally activated on April 19, 1943. The new unit was comprised of soldiers from the 1st and 2nd Signal Radio Service Sections. Consisting of three operational sections and a headquarters element, the 1st MRBC was the U.S. Army's first self-contained Tactical PSYWAR unit, later providing the organizational prototype and operational lessons for four additional MRBCs during World War II. The 1st MRBC deployed to North Africa in May 1943 in support of the Psychological Warfare Branch, Allied Force Headquarters. For the next two years, the MRBC provided PSYWAR support for the 15th Army Group, and the Fifth, Seventh and Eighth Armies. In the course of the war, de Grazia served as a Propaganda Analysis Officer and in various leadership positions with the 1st MRBC and later Seventh Army's Psychological Warfare Combat team.

His World War II experience was summarized as follows: executive officer and then commanding officer of a psychological warfare detachment of 120 men, engaged in propaganda operations against the enemy in Italy, France and Germany; special political intelligence missions in Africa, Sicily, Sardinia and Italy; controlled operation of press and information service in occupied territories. Directed and supervised analysis and preparation of propaganda material for use by radio, press and loudspeaker trucks. Analyzed customs, habits, morale and psychological profiles of Italians, French, Germans and other European inhabitants. Evaluated press, radio, pictorial and other releases, collaborated with counterintelligence, prisoner interrogation and Allied agencies.

For his efforts, de Grazia earned a Bronze Star Medal, Croix de Guerre, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with one Silver Battle Star, two Bronze Battle Stars and the Bronze Service Arrowhead, as well as four overseas service bars. He earned campaign participation credit for Sicily, Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arno, Southern France, Rhineland and Central Europe. De Grazia left active service on Jan. 18, 1946.

Not only did de Grazia provide combat leadership in the relatively untried field of tactical psychological warfare during World War II, but he helped increase outside understanding of PSYWAR through his writing. He conducted studies and wrote manuals pertaining to PSYWAR for the Department of Defense and the CIA during the Korean and Vietnam Wars. In addition to works done on an official level, he typed, organized and made public all of his correspondence with his wife during World War II. These letters contain details pertaining to the mechanics, personalities and dynamics that he experienced in his wartime service, much of which never made it into official reports. In 2011, he published *A Taste of War: Soldiering in World War II*, an analysis of psychological warfare throughout the Mediterranean. In December 2013, the French government awarded him the Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur for his lifelong accomplishments.