

## DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS REGIMENT



**CAPTAIN ROBERT ASTI**

Inducted 31 October 2014



Born on March 12, 1916 in Freeport, Pa., Capt. Robert Asti graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 1938 and entered the U.S. Army in April 1942. After completing Field Artillery basic training and Officer Candidate School, he was briefly assigned to the 731st Field Artillery Battalion at Camp Maxey, Texas, before he transferred to the Military Intelligence Branch, where he became a specialist in aerial photographic interpretation; later teaching it during the Military Intelligence Training Course. While serving as an instructor, he came into contact with members of the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Mobile Radio Broadcasting Companies, who recruited him for the unit. He became a Propaganda Officer in the 5th MRBC on June 14, 1944.

The 5th MRBC was responsible for providing tactical PSYWAR support for the Ninth Army, the French First Army and for the Psychological Warfare Division, Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force. After the war, the 5th MRBC formed the cell for what would become the Information Control Detachment, which controlled publication of German language newspapers, radio broadcasting, movies, music and entertainment throughout the American Zone of Occupation. Although the 5th MRBC was formally inactivated on Nov. 25, 1945, Asti was not discharged until April 1946. After the war, Asti focused on his legal career.

With the opening of the Korean War, the Army needed to build up its psychological warfare capability; only one platoon-strength unit remained on active duty after World War II. Additionally, there were a handful of experienced officers still on staff; however, Brig. Gen. Robert A. McClure, the head of the Office of the Chief of Psychological Warfare, began to rebuild the capability. With his experience as a Propaganda Officer, executive officer and commanding officer of the 5th MRBC, Capt. Asti was a rare commodity; in November 1950, he was recalled to active duty “for the specific purpose of starting a Psychological Warfare School at Fort Riley, Kan.” Asti and the rest of the small staff had the daunting task of simultaneously standing up the Psychological Warfare Division under the Department of Resident Instruction, Army General School, writing a syllabus for the Psychological Warfare Officers Course and instructing the officers of the 1st and 301st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Groups (Strategic PSYWAR). Two other courses — the Psychological Warfare Staff Officers Course and the Psychological Warfare Noncommissioned Officers Course — were added.

In October 1951, Capt. Asti received orders to train with the International Broadcasting Division, Department of State, for six months. Asti’s professionalism and competency resulted in his receiving orders to report to the 3240th ASU, Psychological Warfare Center, where he worked for the next five months.

Upon return to civilian life, he pursued a successful legal career. Asti passed away on Oct. 16, 2005.