



Schenectady, New York  
1/2/48

Mr. Kneitel:

General Electric's Around-the-World Broadcasting Service acknowledges with thanks your communication reporting reception of station WGEX

WGEX ~~WGEO X~~ operating on a frequency of 17880 kc., on Oct. 1, 1947

WGEX operates on the following frequencies:

11:15AM-2:00PM 21590kc Europe  
2:15PM-6:05PM 11770kc Europe  
8:00PM-10:00PM 11810kc Brazil

WGEO operates on the following frequencies:

11:15AM-6:00PM 15770kc Europe  
7:00PM-12:00M 9685kc S. S. America

**GENERAL  ELECTRIC**  
SCHENECTADY, N. Y., U.S.A.

General Electric shortwave stations in Schenectady, N.Y., used this QSL card through the 1940s. (Courtesy Tom Kneitel, New York)

vate companies, using call letters such as WRUL, WGEO, WLWO, etc. We found no references made to stations identifying as the Voice of America. Reports to stations carrying OWI programs in those years brought QSLs from Worldwide, NBC, CBS, etc., but not from VOA.

So what's your definition of a station? Is a program entitled to be called a station?

### Apparent Birth of VOA

At various times in the 1940s, the VOA had owned or leased several relay stations, including those in Hawaii (KRHO), Manila and Munich. Also, it had made arrangements with broadcasters in other nations for its programs to be rebroadcast.

As noted in our May issue, the OWI and U.S. Army Signal Corps built a powerful station late in 1942 in the city of Algiers, North Africa. The station was AFHQ, or Allied Forces Headquarters, and broadcast shortwave and mediumwave signals into Europe. Briefly, beginning in July 1945, it was identifying as United Nations Radio.

Reader John R. Hall, W5ETK (ex-W1JSV), who was an engineer at this station, recalled that when the war ended, it

passed into the hands of the U.S. Information Agency, under the U.S. State Department, and became known as the Voice of America, with its own QSL.

This was confirmed by an item in the November 1945 issue of *Radio News*. Under the headline *The Voice of America in North Africa*, it read: "United Nations Radio, 9.540, is now off the air. These sta-

tions in Algiers no longer use the United Nations Radio slogan. Reports may be sent to ..."

The digging we did revealed Algiers as the first instance of the VOA truly being an actual VOA station, not merely a program over leased facilities. Certainly, one might consider that VOA dates its lineage back to the start of the OWI, and OWI's programs over privately owned stations. You could say the VOA can trace its history back to OWI-Army station AFHQ, originally was constructed in late 1942. Or, you might say 1945 was when the VOA was born.

Suppose we say there might be a tenuous precedence for VOA dating itself back to 1942. We are more than generous with what we can accept, but maybe they stretched the ball of twine a few inches beyond what we can accept without a few doubts. Well, maybe if they had a transmitter in 1942...

If you wish to read more about the history of the VOA, the following are excellent references: *Radio Warfare*, by Lawrence C. Soley, Prager Publishers, New York, (1989); also *Stay Tuned: A Concise History of American Broadcasting*, by Christopher Sterling and John Kitross, Wadsworth Publishing Co., Belmont, Calif. (1990).

We received a note from Dan Elyea, engineering manager of Family Network shortwave station WYFR. Dan corrected the June issue information that the former WRUL facilities in Scituate had been sold to WCSN. It wasn't WCSN! In 1973, they were sold to WYFR and used by WYFR until November 1979, when all Scituate operations had been completely phased out by WYFR's new site in Okeechobee, Fla. Thanks, Dan.

We always look forward to your provocative inquiries, ideas and suggestions. In addition, we welcome all old-time radio picture postcards, QSL cards and letters (good copies will do), station listings, memories, newspaper clippings and what-have-you. See you on the road to Radioville!

Rave Review  
Pop Comm  
April '96

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