Kagnew Station 1973

Tract F Navy Receiver Site

Tract B STRATCOM Receiver Site

Chapter 4

Kagnew Station: The Early Years

It strikes me as being typically American. The Army has set itself up on a self-sufficient, stateside basis.

Colonel Edmund O'Brien
September, 1956

In terms of American involvement in Eritrea, Kagnew Station was a latecomer. In fact, the war in North Africa which had prompted U.S. intervention was nearly over before Kagnew Station began operations. The turning point was the Battle of El Alamein where Montgomery's Desert Rats sent the *Afrika Korps* scurrying back into Libya. Eisenhower's invasion at Casablanca and Algiers cut off Rommel's escape route and resulted in what Churchill called «the beginning of the end.» Three days after communications activities got underway in Asmara, a victory parade was staged in Tunis. The first round was over.

Eritrea was the focal point of American participation in the early part of the war. The first American military advisors and contract civilians probably arrived in Asmara late in 1941. All these early support projects were implemented under the provisions of the Lend-Lease Act. Kagnew Station was not.

Kagnew Station's inception was in the War Department with a Disposition Form, dated January 26, 1943, Subject: «Establishment of a War Department Fixed Radio Station in Africa», which detailed operational objectives for what was to become the 4th Detachment of the Second Signal Service Battalion, Asmara, Eritrea (The Second Signal Service Battalion was redesignated the Army Security Agency September 15, 1945).

Second Lieutenant Clay Littleton arrived in Eritrea April 30, 1943 to begin a feasibility study as to whether or not Asmara would be suitable for a projected War Department fixed radio station. Upon his arrival, he arranged housing and rationing for six enlisted men who were following with the equipment to be used for the tests.

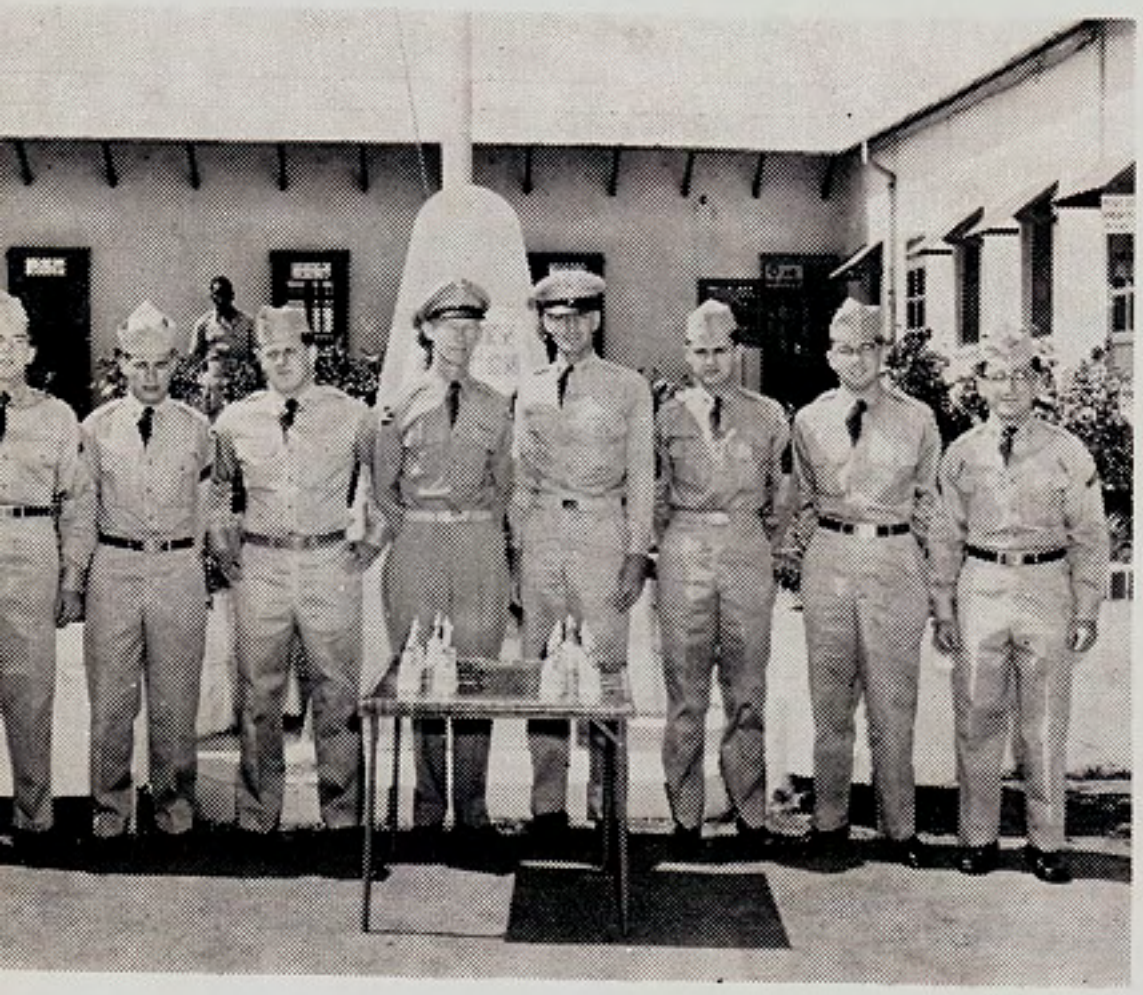
Asmara had been the site of an Italian naval radio station — Radio Marina — which was commanded by an Italian rear admiral until Asmara surrendered in April, 1941. The station was located in the Tract A building which now houses the Rod and Gun Club and the PX Beauty Shop.

The station used three steel towers as antennas which remained intact (with the exception of one whose top was sheared off by an Italian plane during the war) until 1957. Even under American occupation, the site was called Radio Marina or more officially, Asmara Barracks. «Kagnew Station» came with the signing of the Base Rights Agreement in 1953.

By May 17, 1943, the seven man detachment had refurbished existing facilities, installed their own equipment and had mailed traffic samples to Washington. Eritrea's geographical location — 15 degrees north of the equator at an altitude of 7,600 feet — contributed to anomalous propagation of radio signals. (An example of the propagation is Kagnew's 1,000 watt AM radio station which has been received as far away as Finland, Australia and Brazil). The quality of the samples collected by the Eritrean detachment attested to this propagation phenomenon and prompted the War Department to expand operations forthwith.

On June 1, 1943, two officers, one warrant officer and 44 enlisted men began intensive training at Vint Hill Farms to man the new station. The training went on all summer while Lieutenant Littleton and his men continued operations in Asmara. By December, 4 officers and 50 enlisted men staffed Radio Marina.

Information regarding post-war developments at Asmara Barracks is sketchy at best. The center of activity was the area now known as Tract A adjacent to the American Consulate compound. The only original buildings remaining are the old Asmara Officers Club, which now serves as



The 1953 Kagnew bowling champs pose gamely in front of Post Headquarters in the Radio Marina Building. With all principal offices lined up door-to-door, clearing post was a cinch.

Command Sergeant Major's quarters, and of course, the former headquarters in the Radio Marina building. The boundaries of the tract were delineated with barbed wire.

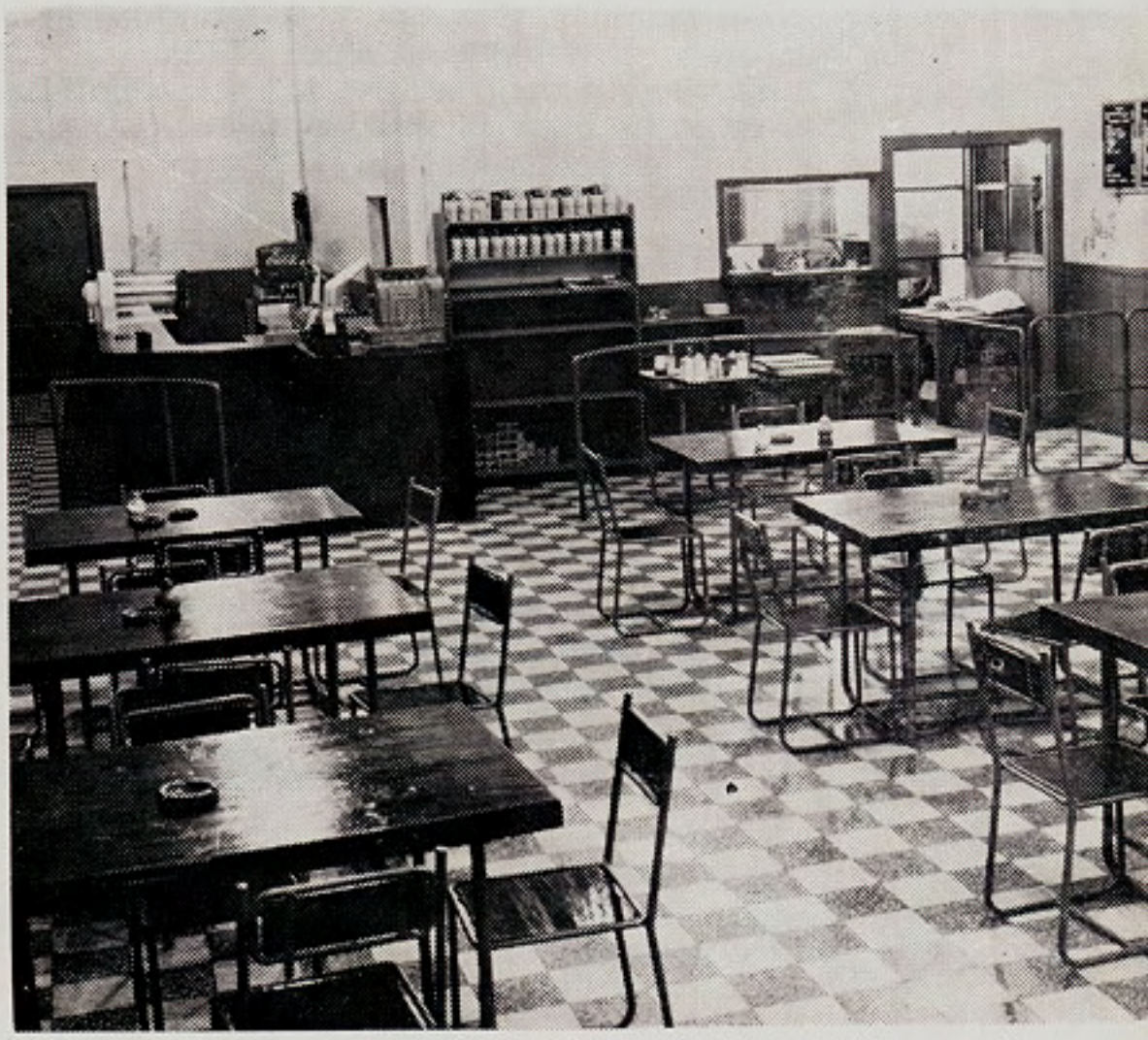
An extract from an FY 1945 Historical Report sheds a little light on life at Radio Marina:

> «Asmara Barracks was considered a model Army post at the beginning of the report period. Few changes were made during the fiscal year. A miniature golf course was constructed on the post in June, providing a popular diver-

sion for military personnel. By the end of FY 1945, a new indoor swimming pool was under construction in downtown Asmara, a few blocks from Asmara Barracks. At present, there are no swimming pools in the Asmara area due to the difficulty of obtaining sufficient water. Water is to be made available from artesian wells.

«For personnel who have served sufficient time overseas, short furloughs can be obtained, with permission to visit nearby points and even Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon or Italy.»

This brief excerpt is the keynote for development of Kagnew Station. The concern for recreational diversions continues unabated and there is hardly a year from 1944 to 1970 when a new facility does not appear. It



A 1949 interior view of Asmara Barracks' well-appointed snack bar.

seems that each commander has been mindful of the culture shock and/or the sense of isolation felt by American arrivals in Asmara. Millions of dollars have been spent to create a microcosmic American community in the Eritrean highlands replete with a dazzling array of recreational facilities sufficient to dispel anyone's sense of confinement. So it all started with a miniature golf course.

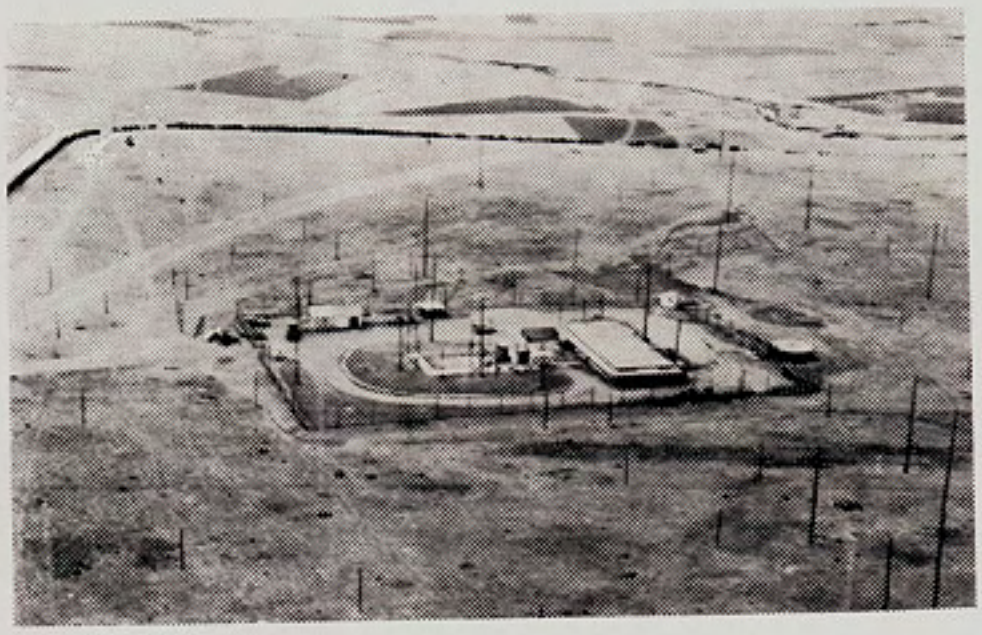
In the foregoing historical excerpt, Asmara Barracks is referred to as a «model» Army post. Perhaps that adjective is, in part, a reference to the organization of the tiny detachment. Post functions such as Unit Personnel, Civilian Personnel, Finance, Post Exchange, Commissary, Station Supply, Transportation, Motor Pool, Laundry and Purchasing and Contracting were operated. The functions were administered by officers of both the 4th Detachment, Second Signal Service Battalion and the 3176th Signal Service Detachment, the forerunner of the U.S. Army Strategic Communications Command (STRATCOM).

The end of the war had no immediate effect on the Eritrean detachment. In fact, the recorded events of 1945 are prosaic at best. The pig

farm which supplied at least a portion of the meat to the Americans lost 68 porkers to a cholera outbreak. The deaths resulted in closure of the farm in November. *Zero Beat*, the station newspaper, was unceremoniously discontinued September 30, and 29 bodies were disinterred from the station graveyard at Gura and moved to Heliopolis, Egypt. At least eight of these Gura graves were men of Project 19.

The first dependents arrived in Asmara September 11, 1946, and in order to accomodate them, four barracks were converted into quarters for married officers and NCO's. The first American birth recorded in Asmara was in July, 1948. All personnel arriving or departing Asmara travelled on the Military Air Transportation Service (which became the Military Airlift Command in 1966). The immediate connection was Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

On March 7, 1948, one U.S. Navy officer and five Navy enlisted men arrived as the first contingent of the U.S. Navy Communication Unit 3. At the time of their arrival, Army strength had topped 100 and the Navy moved in to share facilities with their Army counterparts.



The transmitter site was undergrcund and affectionately dubbed «the hole».

The 3176th Signal Service Detachment became the 9434 TSU Middle Eastern Signal Service Detachment December 1, 1948. It was a functionary of a worldwide communcations network. The location in Eritrea had been carefully selected because of its inherent ability to relay radio signals to the Middle East, Europe, North Africa and the Pacific Theater. The Asmara detachment maintained circuits to New Delhi, Tehran and Washington. The first transmitter and receiver sites were completed in September, 1943. Both of the operations buildings were underground, and the walls and roof were constructed of ten inch bombproof concrete. The transmitter and receiver sites were located at present day Stonehouse and Tract C, respectively.

The Facilities Control Section of the Asmara Barracks receiver site which was supplanted by Tract C.

At the close of World War II, all circuits were deactivated except a radio teletype circuit to Washington, which operated only six to eight hours a day. The excess equipment was crated and returned to the United States.

The Korean War introduced many changes in the Asmara communications routine. Circuits were again activated to Europe, the Middle East and the Phillipines, which, in turn, necessitated many physical expansions at the operations sites. However, the available space was never commensurate to the needs. Based on the Korean experience and the ever-increasing Army-Navy commitments, it was decided to build completely new sites and equip them with the most up-to-date communications equipment. Construction of the new installations began in March, 1955, but owing to the Middle East Crisis and closure of the Suez Canal, delivery schedules were interrupted and the sites did not become operational until

Asmara Barracks circa 1950

A Headquarters, S-1, 2, 3, 4; Investigations, Hq. Orderly Room, I&E, AFRS, Post Office
B Enlisted Barracks
C Mess Hall
D Day Room
E Post Exchange
F Special Services, Chaplain's Office, Theater
G Barber Shop
H Operations Orderly Room
I Photo Office
J Library
K Officers Club
L Dispensary, Dentist
M Infirmary
N Navy Orderly Room
O Supply Room
P Guard House
Q Officers Quarters
R Commissary
S Produce Market
T Post Engineers
U Engineer Shops
V Amateur Radio Shack
W Small Arms Room
X Motor Pool Office, Transportation Laundry
Y School
Z Reefers
1A Service Center
1B U.S. Consulate
1C Basketball and Tennis Court
1D Volleyball and Handball Court
1E Bowling Alley
1F Drill Field
1G Ball Field Gate
1H Main Gate
1I Motor Pool Gate
1J Gas Station
1K Motor Pool Area

In a 1954 inspection, Post Commander Colonel Orman Charles scrutinizes one of four armored cars polished for the occasion by the Recon Platoon.

February, 1958. A local contract provided for assembly and installation of 689 antenna towers. The transmitter site moved to Tract D, and new facilities at Tracts B and C provided receiver capability.

By mid-1949, the arrival of the first three Army nurses boosted officer strength to 13 with a complement of 114 enlisted men representing both Army and Navy. During 1949, hospital bed capacity increased from four to nine, and the staff was comprised of one doctor, three nurses and two corpsmen. Owing to the limited facilities, all dental work, surgery, eye exams, cultures and serologies were accomplished in Asmara hospitals. Dependents paid for their treatment.

Quarters were a continual problem. The eight one-story barracks located in the Radio Marina compound were spartan and heated with coal stoves and oil space heaters. In September, 1951, a warehouse was converted to accomodate Security Guard personnel, and on several occasions over the years, local hotels were leased to house overflow personnel. Off-post quarters for families were equally austere. Some of the more ingenious downtown residents obviated the cold-water-only facilities with wood burning water heaters. Water was trucked to Asmara Barracks until 1951 when permanent water lines were installed.

As might be expected, Special Services was the focal point of off-duty activity. Kagnew's AM radio station started out with Special Services July 1, 1951 and then moved to a more well-appointed studio (soundproofed with heavy cloth) above the Finance Office in December. There was also a post theater, bowling alley, library, swimming in the Consulate pool and the African Knights Motorcycle Club. Softball was second only to hunting as the favorite off-duty pursuit. Special Services saw to the nimrod's every need with ammunition and a complete array of camping gear, and the Army Motor Pool provided vehicles for an average of 500 hunting

The Asmara Barracks Post Exchange figured prominently in the daily routine and sponsored a variety of contests which included the Big Pig Contest.

trips a year. The PX-sponsored «Big Pig Contest» came at the end of each season and at least some of the entries approached Boone and Crockett records. There were, at the time, three clubs — the Oasis Club, the Top 3 Graders and the Officers Club.

When dependents first arrived in Asmara, school age children were enrolled at the British School in downtown Asmara. Then, April 1, 1951, the Radio Marina School began its first academic year. The school had one room, one teacher (a dependent wife), 13 students in grades one through five, no books and no supplies. The curriculum was designed for an 11 month academic year with September set aside as vacation. As the dependent population increased, the school enrollment mounted proportionately and rapidly outgrew the one-room facility. When the school's first teacher departed, a security guard took over. In January, 1952, a supply building was converted into a two-room school and another dependent wife was hired. The security guard taught the first three grades in the morning, and the fourth, fifth and sixth grades received distaff attention in the afternoon. The first civilian contract teachers arrived September 16, 1953. The enrollment at the time was 75 students in eight grades.

While Eritrea's fate was debated at the United Nations, political feelings ran high in Eritrea. Problems of land ownership and contention between Christians and Muslims contributed to an acute *shifta* problem throughout the province. In July, 1951, all U.S. military vehicles leaving the Asmara city limits were escorted by military police with jeep-mounted machineguns. The *shifta* problem was greatly reduced by a general amnesty offered by the British Administration, but isolated incidents continued to involve Americans. In 1955, the *Kagnew Gazelle* issued this editorial caveat:

> «The *shifta* attacks most commonly take place on dark, relatively untravelled roads just beyond the bend of of a curve. Here these bandits place a road block usually composed of piled rock. The unsuspecting motorist has great difficulty recognizing the road block, and thus the ensuing attack until he is upon his assailants. Occasionally, the *shifta* have used the guise of a police uniform or military jacket to affect the appearance of a legitimate law officer; however no particular uniform or mode of dress is typical.
>
> «Most *shifta* bands range from three to fourteen men. They carry any available weapon — clubs, knives, swords, firearms. The *shifta* are thieves and are mainly interested in relieving the victim of his valuables.»

In 1959, the *Gazelle* covered the presentation of a Soldiers Medal for heroism to Specialist Four Kenneth W. Hohe. SP4 Hohe was a passenger in a jeep carrying mail from Massawa to Asmara. The first of the two vehicle convoy was stopped by five armed *shifta* and by the time SP4 Hohe's jeep rounded the curve, the driver of the first vehicle had been ordered out and relieved of his valuables. Hohe's jeep stopped abruptly 75 feet away:

> «The bandits then approached the jeep and when they were within approximately 15 feet, the driver raised and fired a .45 caliber automatic pistol, hitting the lead bandit in the abdomen and knocking him to the ground. Without hesitation or concern for his personal safety, SP4 Hohe immdiately drew his .32 caliber Beretta pistol and began firing at the bandits who attempted to return the fire, getting off only one round, and fled over the roadside.»

The signal event of 1952 was Eritrea's federation with Ethiopia. Upon the implementation of that U.N. Resolution, the legal currency changed from the East African Schilling to the Ethiopian dollar at an exchange rate of 2.48 Ethiopian to one U.S. dollar. At almost the same time,

with the addition of two new alleys in 1953, Kagnew keglers kept twice as many pinboys busy.

Kagnew became fiscally independent from the Dispersing Office in Cairo which had managed military pay records since 1949.

With the signing of the Base Rights Agreement May 22, 1953 came the appellation, Kagnew Station. The official designation was the United States Army Radio Station: Kagnew Station. 1953 also was the year of the first University of Maryland courses, two new bowling alleys (total of four) and the beginning of negotiations to acquire the CINTIA area of Asmara which would eventually become Tract E.

The Base Rights Agreement gave Kagnew Station legal status in Eritrea. While working in G-3 at Arlington Hall Station, Lieutenant Russell B. Jones, Jr. was tasked with writing the agreement for Kagnew Station. Hampered by a lieutenant's unfamiliarity with the drafting of international treaties, he prepared a draft by excerpting the best parts of existing status of forces agreements which then governed U.S. military residency in other foreign countries. The draft won wholesale acceptance and he subsequently presented it personally to the Army Chief of Staff. Twenty years later, Colonel Jones assumed command of Kagnew Station.

On March 17, 1955, Kagnew's single 600 man company was divided into a headquarters company, a security detachment and an operations detachment. (The operations datachment was divided into A and B companies in 1966). The men of these organizations were housed in 12 barracks and five squad tents, and the Consolidated Mess served 1,600 meals per day including a midnight meal.

The formal lease for the CINTIA site was signed February 21, 1955. The origin of the term CINTIA is obscure, but the northern end of what is now Tract E was an Italian heavy equipment and vehicle assembly complex and motor pool until 1942. The British used the buildings briefly until 1952 when the area was abandoned. The U.S. Army then used CINTIA for training exercises including nocturnal field problems replete with mortar flares and blank-firing aggressors. After the lease was signed, renovation, rehabilitation and new construction got underway. To make the old buildings serviceable, the U.S. Army planned to spend in excess of eight million dollars. The process was directed by the Corps of Engineers and actual construction was contracted to the Crow-Steers-Shepherd Company who had played a major role in the construction of Wheelus Air Force Base in Libya. The new site was to be ready for occupancy by the end of 1956.

The Kagnew Station Honor Guard was featured at parades and ceremonies which were staged monthly during the fifties. This 1956 photo was taken at the first ceremony held at Tract E.

By the summer of 1955, the $60,000 Robert E. Lee Dependent School was nearly finished and the perimeter wall was halfway completed. The school and three air force type barracks had been given priority. (These three barracks are the STRATCOM Support Company, Headquarters Company and the barracks adjacent to the bowling alley occupied by the military police until 1971.) The school was remodeled from an Italian building and had five classrooms, a science lab and a library. The school was affiliated with the U.S. Army Dependents Education Group in Europe July 1, 1959. In order to become accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, Kagnew's school had to add 12 new classrooms by the end of FY 1961.

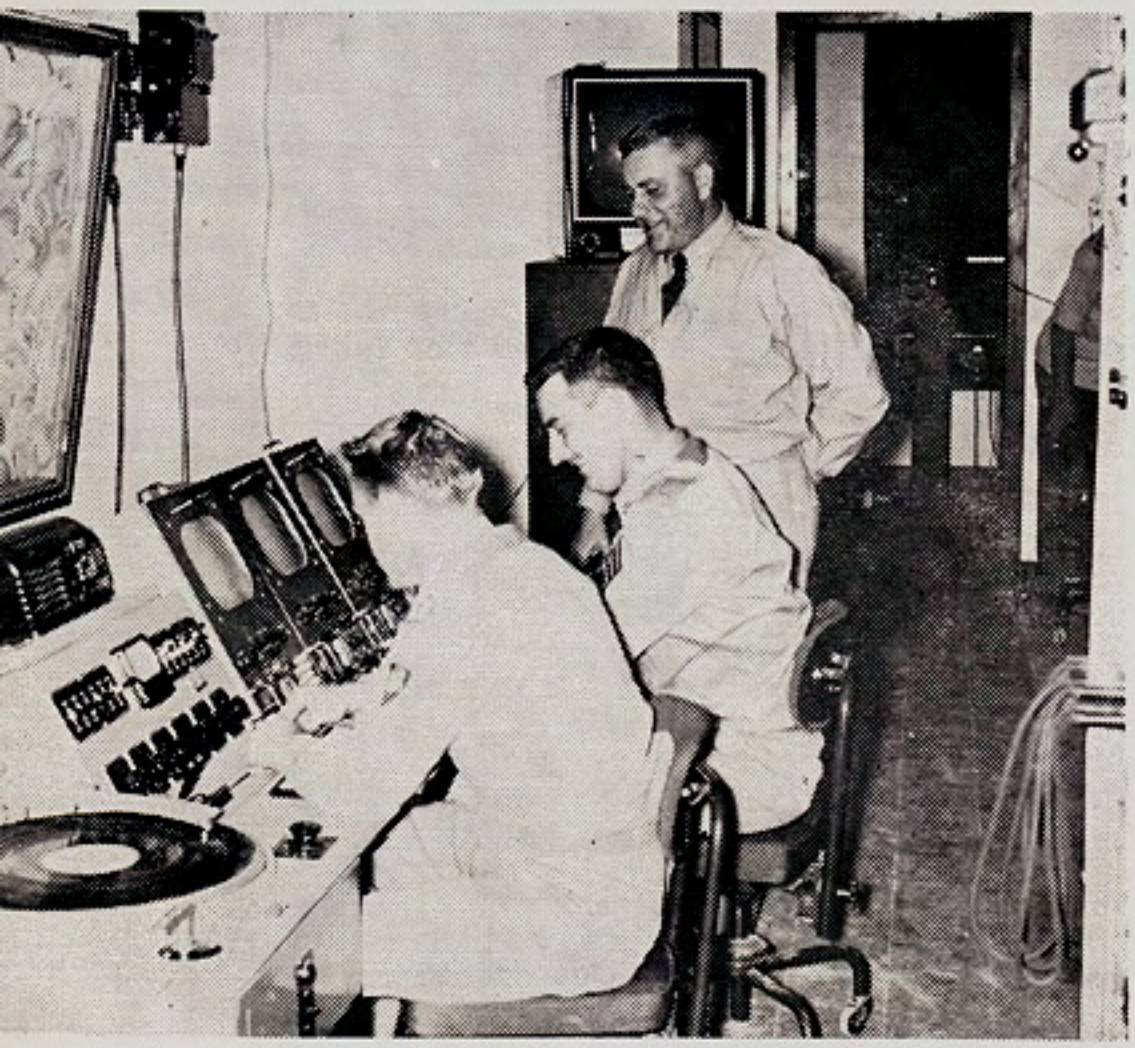
The Post Chapel was also nearing completion. The theater at the Radio Marina site had done double duty as a chapel with services conducted by missionaries from the Swedish Mission. The Tract E Chapel had been a light vehicle garage for the Ethiopian Highway Authority. The art glass windows were made in Heidelberg and paid for by various stateside religious organizations.

1955 was also the year for the adoption of the Kagnew Station shoulder insignia, the beginning of the first Army operated television station in the world and for the first edition of a monthly letterpress newspaper, the *Kagnew Gazelle.*

SP3 Walt Reardon's design won a local contest and was eventually accepted by the Department of the Army. The insignia, like Kagnew Station itself, was the exception to the rule since Kagnew is not the type of unit authorized a separate shoulder sleeve insignia under previous or existing Department of the Army regulations and policies. The official description from the Institute of Heraldry reads:

> «On a white escutcheon two inches wide, a red gazelle's head within a pair of greater kudu horns. The shape of the escutcheon is determined by the greater kudu horns. Both the kudu and the gazelle are native to and plentiful in the area surrounding Kagnew, the gazelle in particular having become a part of the life of the station.»

The long-awaited initial broadcast of KANU-TV came December 1, 1955. KANU-TV was among the first occupants of Tract E in newly-constructed studios. The station broadcast 11 hours a day and offered a sampling of current stateside favorites like «Toast of the Town», «The Eddie Cantor Show» and «Burns and Allen». During the fifties, amateur talent ran rampant at Kagnew. The NCO Club not only sponsored a series of amateur nights, but «Kagnew Kapers» offered 30 televised minutes of music and variety. One notable contribution to Kagnew's burgeoning music scene was made by Reggie Young and his crowd-pleasing ability to play «Dixie» and «Yankee Doodle» simultaneously on his electric guitar. Coverage of this musical feat in the *Gazelle* referred to the «wizard like touch» of the «classy professional». The PX also tapped local talent with a series of photo contests and the East African Bubble Gum Blowing Championship. AM radio moved to Tract E May 11, 1956 and shortly thereafter, a nightly news wrap-up was simulcast on radio and television.



KANU-TV, the first Army operated television station in the world, was among the first occupants of Tract E. H.I.M. Haile Selassie made a televised speech during his 1956 visit to the new tract.

The first issue of the *Kagnew Gazelle* is interesting for a number of obvious reasons. The following excerpt details the selection process of the name:

> «The name Kagnew Gazelle was chosen for the paper after much debating and studying. We dug through the history of Ethiopia and Eritrea and found the true meaning of Kagnew which left no doubt on our minds that the paper should be named as such.
>
> «After receiving the following facts, we are sure you will agree that Kagnew Gazelle is an appropriate title for this publication. Kagnew is the Ethiopian word meaning «to bring into harmony» and «to bring order out of chaos». The word Kagnew first appeared in Ethiopian history during the Battle of Adowa in 1896. Kagnew was the name of an Ethiopian general's horse that, riderless, galloped towards the attacking Italians heartening the Ethiopians into repulsing them. Successive attacks by the Ethiopians

led by the general mounted on Kagnew defeated the Italians. Ethiopian legend states that St. George rode the horse in the first charge.

«In 1936 when Ethiopia was again invaded by the Italians, an airplane named Kagnew flown by an Ethiopian, inflicted considerable damage before being destroyed. After the war, the name was given to a battalion of the Imperial Body Guard of H.I.M. Haile Selassie I. This was a select battalion manned by picked personnel and considered to be the best in the Army.

«In 1951, the Kagnew Battalion was sent to Korea as a part of Ethiopia's support of the United Nations where it distinguished itself in the field. The Battalion boasted that its men were never taken prisoner, but preferred to die fighting.

«And that's the motto of the *Kagnew Gazelle* — to die fighting giving you the best possible news available.»

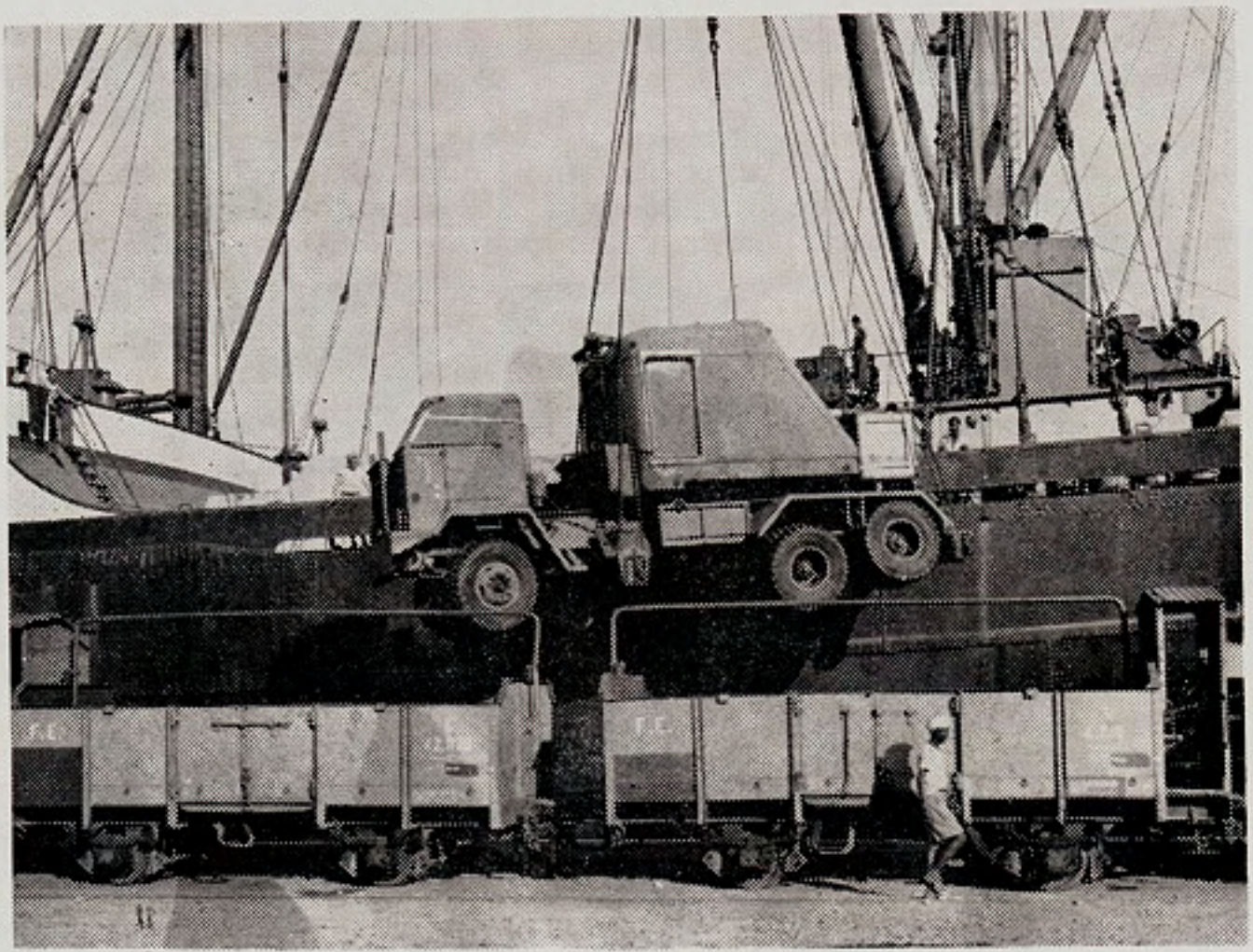
The careful reader will note that «gazelle» is never justified, which leads one to believe that the selection was arbitrary and the paper could just as easily have been the *Kagnew Baboon*. Judging from the Institute

The season opener at the Asmara Barracks softball field in 1953. The steel tower in the background was one of three used by the Italian naval communication station as antennas.

of Heraldry's reference to the gazelle as being a part of the life at Kagnew Station, however, one may infer that gazelle were indeed plentiful at the time and were killed off during Kagnew's 20 years of hunting.

Even with the anticipation and interest in the CINTIA construction, life was routine at Radio Marina where the predominant interest seems to have been athletics. Field days and track meets saw Kagnew thinclads determined to better post records, and the softball seasons lasted six months for the 250 indefatigable participants. Judging from the early issues of the *Kagnew Gazelle,* softball was the most important of all sports. The first no-hit game got banner headlines. For those less athletically inclined, a model shop, a radio repair shop and a wood shop were available to accomodate the tinkerer's every whim.

If one were to cull the recurring laments from Kagnew's 30 year history, the logistical snarls of the 10,000 mile supply line would certainly find a place at the top of the list. But that long-lamented supply line didn't really become «extended» until the Suez Canal was closed in 1956. Monthly ships and weekly airplanes were pretty much the rule for the fifties. December 12, 1955 marked the end of Kagnew's reliance on CONUS supply lines, and the first quartermaster requisition submitted to the Commander in Chief, U.S. Army, Europe took nearly a year to arrive.



During the fifties, monthly supply ships ferried equipment and provisions from the States to the Eritrean outpost. The first ship to arrive in the late forties carried nothing but wood. A good portion of Asmara Barracks was built from packing crates for wood has always been a dear commodity in Eritrea.

As 1956 progressed, it became apparent that CINTIA would not meet the anticipated date originally set for «beneficial occupancy». Basically, the delay was caused by increasing requirements. The chapel, school and television studios had been put into use in 1955, and by September, 1956, the gymnasium (including a boxing ring and 6 bowling lanes), the Top Three Club and 17 housing units were nearing completion. The new post laundry was dedicated September 11, 1956, and plans were underway for four additional eight-unit apartments and 11 four-plexes.

The Judge Advocate Office was created August 15, 1956. Prior to that, legal advice was dispensed from the resident S-2 Legal Advisor.

The perimeter wall around Tract A, the Provost Marshal's Office, the BOQ, the Transportation Warehouse, nine duplex houses, 11 four-unit apartments and four eight-unit apartments were completed in 1957, the year of the M-14 rifle. Concomitantly, the Officers Club, the Oasis Club, swimming pool and hospital addition were begun. Special Services opened the six lane bowling alley, a picnic area, a softball diamond and an auto hobby shop, and cinemascope came to the post theater.

The 4th Detachment of the Second Signal Service Battalion was re-designated Field Station 8604 Administrative Area Unit May 15, 1949. and

the designation stuck, with a few variations, until Kagnew officially became the 4th U.S. Army Security Agency Field Station in 1958. The post organization at the time was comprised of a headquarters company, an operations company, a guard company and the medical detachment of the U.S. Army Hospital. During that fiscal year, the Guest House, the Oasis Club, commissary warehouse and swimming pool were completed. A new 222 man barracks and 50 NCO housing units were planned for FY 1960.

Rest and relaxation centers in Keren and Massawa were also established. The C.I.A.A.O. Hotel in Massawa offered army cots and free rooms to enlisted barracks dwellers and free transportation was provided by Special Services. The Koral House accomodated officers and civilians. These facilities were closed in 1963 because of financial difficulties. The Red Sea Rest Center was opened November 4, 1967.

The Red Sea Rest Center has been Kagnew's maritime retreat since 1967. A new boat dock and heliport were added in 1971.

The grand opening of the Keren Rest Center received in-depth *Gazelle* coverage June 13, 1959. The Rest Center was located in a private villa leased from an Italian. In addition to its genteel surroundings, there was a small swimming pool, horseshoe pits, croquet courts, volleyball, tennis and badminton courts and a shuffleboard. The *Gazelle* offered this caution:

> «The drive (to Keren) is wonderful. However, there is one section which will remind you of the Massawa road. It is from the 40 to the 60 kilometer mark. In this 20 kilometers, you drop almost 3,000 feet. If you don't drive

The Keren Rest Center was a tranquil hideaway and a popular base camp for hunting trips into the hinterland.

carefully, some member of your party may get sick from the drop in altitude. After you are beyond the 60 kilometer mark, you will begin to feel better.»

Alaska became the 49th state in 1959 and once again from the *Gazelle* comes «Across the Commanders Desk» by Post Commander LTC Robert Harris:

«During an eight day conference in Washington, I attempted to secure additional money to build more recreational facilities on Kagnew Station. My request for funds to build a wading pool for our children and a snack bar and steam bath at the swimming pool was turned down. Our plans for a miniature golf course have been postponed too, pending the discovery of a source of funds to pay for its construction.

«We have been assured that there will be 50 new dependent quarters built plus a new barracks this year. Construction on the dependent quarters will begin in November. Construction on the new barracks will begin in the latter part of October. We are programmed for 61 new dependent quarters during the next fiscal year. We are also working on plans for a 50 house private rental subdivision adjacent to Kagnew Station.

«The two Chris Craft cruisers arrived in Massawa on the 19th of August and will be available for use in fishing, water skiing and cruises along the Red Sea.

«Special Services is planning to get more tours into South Africa especially in Kenya for hunting and photographic tours.

«Arrangements have been made with the 2nd Air Division at Dhahran for flights to Italy, Germany, Beirut, Jerusalem, India and other places for leave.

«Midnight movies were started on 17 August for the benefit of those trick workers who get off work at midnight. Movies start at 0130. The PX Snack Bar is also open now until 0400. We are also trying to get a juke box in the Snack Bar. Also the new PX Annex, Recreation Room and Top 5 Snack Bar were opened at Tract A on 17 August.

«A word or two on the subject of RUMORS. These can be very dangerous. They can hurt you, your buddies, your unit and your families if they are not stopped. On a small post like this, rumors start very easily. If you are not sure of something that was said, find out the truth, if it is wrong, get the rumor stopped as quickly as possible.

«Our water situation has improved in the last few months. We were getting only 45% of the water normally required for a post our size. Now we are getting about 65% of the normal requirement. Keep up the good work on water conservation. We hope to have all we need soon.»

It is noteworthy that even though this article was written in 1959, it could just as easily have come from any of the 20-plus commanders who have presided over 30 years of development at Kagnew Station.

The first consideration has always been recreation. The culture shock of Africa has historically exacted a toll on neophyte Kagnewites. Further, what has come to be the American standard of high speed travel and untrammeled mobility is frustrated in Asmara. Travel restrictions imposed to reduce the exposure of Americans to the bands *shifta* exacerbated the fact that there just aren't enough roads in Ethiopia. Forays south,

to Addis Ababa, require stout vehicles, a pioneering spirit and some degree of expertise in auto mechanics.

So, over the years, Kagnew commanders channeled funds and energies into recreational diversions, the underlying rationale being that if you could keep everyone busy doing something he enjoyed, the peripheral problems would work themselves out. With the influx of dependents throughout the fifties and sixties, there was an added element to cater to, and in the long run, Kagnew was rarely wanting.

The next concern was quarters for there were never enough. Eritrea's post-war economy couldn't cope with the insatiable American demand for housing, and for the two decades between 1950 and 1970, Kagnew busily installed set-upon-set of family quarters and Asmara entrepreneurs took advantage of the lucrative situation. In the spring of 1972, however, the 20 year housing problem came to an abrupt end with the Army Security Agency's phaseout from East Africa.

Although LTC Harris doesn't touch on the nettlesome supply line, he does comment on two other major problems which have complicated life at Kagnew Station for 30 years—water and rumors.

Flushing a toilet is something that Americans have come to take for granted, but at Kagnew Station, flushing has oftentimes been a privilege reserved for only certain hours of the day. Like most other countries situated a scant 15 degrees off the equator, Ethiopia relies on a capricious rainy season to deposit a year's worth of water each summer. Unhappily, the rain isn't guaranteed and water rationing has occurred about every three years. The rain is a product of the Intertropical Convergence Zone — a turbulent confluence of the cool trade winds of the Northern Hemisphere and the warmer winds from the south. As the sun moves toward Summer Solstice, this moisture-laden zone moves with it reaching 15 degrees North by July. Some years the Zone covers 2,000 square miles, while some years, only 200. In short, when the Zone is small, Kagnew's toilets don't flush. The most severe shortage began in 1969 when Kagnewites husbanded water for 18 months.

Finally, or last but not least, the rumors that have pervaded Kagnew Station merit at least passing mention. It's probably the small town atmosphere that has spawned the endless rumors, but since they have been so commonplace, Kagnewites have learned to cope with them. Early in 1972, when rumors predicted the Army Security Agency's withdrawal, the reaction was varied. Some worried, some discounted them and some began packing.

H.I.M. Haile Selassie has been a frequent visitor to Kagnew Station over the years. Langston Hughes, Van Heflin, Richard Roundtree, William Westmoreland and a bevy of congressional visitors have also sampled Kagnew hospitality. Lesser luminaries have included a boa in the commissary, a mongoose in the PX and a jackal who unwittingly held Tract A at bay.