

# Love, Just a War Ago

***More Lives Than One*, by Charles Bracelen Flood (Houghton Mifflin. 306 pp. \$4.95), updates the Enoch Arden theme to the Korean War. Herbert Mitgang, a journalist and critic who has been in Vietnam, is the author of the novel "The Return."**

By HERBERT MITGANG

**M**ORE than a century separates Charles Bracelen Flood's *More Lives Than One* and Tennyson's *Enoch Arden* (1864). The epic of the wandering sailor or soldier who returns home to find marital complications has been with us since the Greeks had a word for it. To this familiar theme Mr. Flood adds the twists and turncoats of the Korean War, weaving together a love story and a war story.

What all this adds up to—especially reading about the Korean War from a fresh angle while the United States is deeply involved in another Asian war—I am not sure, except this: there is a nagging feeling that something (Vietnam) is missing, or, at least, being evaded. The link between the two wars is remote.

But, for the moment, take the novel on its own terms. The protagonist, a college student, is called into service and almost instantly finds himself in a hole in the ground on the Korean Peninsula. The guns blaze, and the Chinese, sometimes referred to here as "the Chinks," overwhelm the rifleman's position. The ex-student and his friends are captured. In the course of imprisonment and attempted brainwashing, the usual lectures are heard about the failings of the American imperialists and the glories of Chinese Socialism. Some of the dialogue between the clever Chinese and the ex-Harvard student comes over like a translation from Mao Tse-tung by Charlie Chan.

Meanwhile, at the Cambridge Common, the faithful fiancée is waiting, frequently in the company of the prisoner's brother. By a plot twist, dogtags are mixed up and the prisoner is presumed dead. By another plot twist, he is not allowed to write home to family and fiancée to say that he's alive. The consoling brother and the pining fiancée, after a suitable period of elapsed story time, are married. The author has been leading up to this by various telegraphic signals, and the reader does desire to

pursue the story to its conclusion in order to see what sort of Domestic Relations Court decision will be rendered by the author.

*More Lives Than One* is unsatisfying on two counts. Although Mr. Flood, the author of *Love Is a Bridge* and other novels, knows how to construct a readable story, he has not figured out how to resolve his Enoch Arden tale. (When one is treading in the footsteps of literary giants, merely changing locale and updating will not do.) More seriously, Mr. Flood sheds no new light in terms of character or incident on the Korean

War. Admittedly, that war has not smiled kindly on the American novelist. Fiction about Vietnam, a war with a complex and dubious morality, has fared even worse so far; it is either farfetched or rah-rah. A note says that when *More Lives Than One* went to press, the author was in Southeast Asia working on a nonfiction book about the United States Air Force. There is plenty of reporting room there, but the time may not yet be ripe for the truths of fiction about Vietnam. (Graham Greene was prescient enough in *The Quiet American*, a novel that does not suffer from lack of credibility when reread today.) But why not Korea?



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and doves...

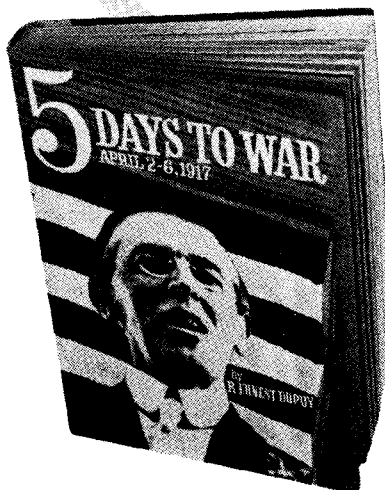
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## TV AND RADIO

### Chicago's FM War

**F**OR FIFTEEN YEARS the Chicago FM station WFMT has been synonymous with quality, maturity, and lively good taste. The station produces the nationally syndicated Chicago Symphony Orchestra broadcasts and was instrumental in starting U.S. syndication of world music festivals; it helped assure the live birth of such varied Chicago institutions as the Lyric Opera and the Second City Players (whose Mike Nichols once was a WFMT announcer); and it not only is the most profitable FM station in the nation (its 1966 gross revenue was some \$650,000) but also was the first FM outlet to win a Peabody Award (1962) and the first to win two Alfred I. duPont Awards (1957 and 1962). Some of its programs—including a Saturday night pastiche of folk music, satire, and show tunes called *The Midnight Special* — attract more adult listeners than do any competing Chicago AM programs and fully deserve rebroadcast elsewhere.

Last winter, however, an unexpected challenger stepped forth to contest WFMT's long-unrivaled reign: WEFM, which is owned by Zenith Radio Corporation. Advertised as the nation's oldest FM station (the late Commander Eugene McDonald of Zenith established it a quarter-century ago in his crusade to help promote FM), WEFM had restricted its programming to classical and semi-classical music, uninterrupted except for station breaks and Zenith institutional advertising. Now, lured by the profit potential that the colorful McDonald had foreseen for FM, WEFM intended to capitalize on its well-established audience position—second only to WFMT in many time periods—by giving its programming a facelift and selling advertising.

As its first move Zenith employed as manager a recently retired broadcasting pioneer, Jules Herbeuex, who had begun his radio career in 1922 as an orchestra leader and ascended to an NBC vice presidency and general managership of NBC's Chicago stations WMAQ and WMAQ-TV. Herbeuex's first act was to install as WEFM program director George Stone, a former WMAQ announcer, who in turn hired several other onetime WMAQ colleagues. Meanwhile, a promotion campaign promised metropolitan radio listeners new excitement and variety in FM programming.

Then WEFM unveiled its new format—and the sigh of relief at WFMT must

have resembled the deflationary hissing of a great balloon. WEFM's "facelift" amounted to little more than a somberly presented version of WMAQ's former news-and-music schedule (though with better music), including news on the hour, program-opening and closing chit-chat, and wordy weather reports and announcements of musical numbers—even commercials with sound effects. In contrast, WFMT offered infrequent newscasts of a length determined by the importance of news at the time; brief, maturely presented introductory announcements; no sound-effects or singing commercials; a maximum of four minutes' commercial time per hour, tastefully spaced; and a cultural sampling ranging from interviews by Studs Terkel, author of the recently published *Division Street: America*, to twenty-four music festivals and a half-dozen series of U.S. symphony orchestra concerts. Within six months, according to one major rating service, WEFM's total audience dipped to about half its competitor's total, and in the next few months it slipped more.

WEFM's biggest coups to date came last fall—the producers of the New York Philharmonic broadcasts, after three seasons of affiliation with WFMT, were persuaded to switch to WEFM; and the broadcast of opening night at the new Metropolitan Opera House, which had been contracted for and then released by the Chicago *Tribune's* station WGN, also was landed by WEFM. The Zenith station promptly negated part of the potential benefit to its image, however, by scheduling the Philharmonic concerts opposite WFMT's broadcasts of the Boston Symphony, forcing local listeners to miss one or the other.

**W**HO gains from this type of competition? Zenith's executives presumably think that their corporation will. Certainly Zenith, a respected innovator in broadcasting, deserves a commercially successful station, and surely any challenger to an established leader such as WFMT must scramble and sometimes err. But there is a serious question as to whether the attitudes and actions that have corrupted AM radio can benefit anyone in FM, either responsible broadcasters or listeners. For that reason Chicago's FM "war"—which thus far has been almost embarrassingly one-sided—is being watched by many with more than casual interest.

—ALFRED BALK.