

1ST SIGNAL COMPANY, 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION

History in File 277B
Grafenwohr, Germany
27 Jul 48

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
SIGNAL CORPS INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

4 Feb 1954

SIGIA-3
314.7

SUBJECT: History of First Signal Company and Company D, Signal Corps
(Field)

TO: Commanding General
Signal Corps Center
Fort Monmouth, New Jersey
ATTN: Historical Branch, ACoS, G-3

1. Inclosed are two copies of an unedited 1943 historical report of the First Signal Company, which briefly traces the Company's early history. This report forms the unclassified portion of a file on the First Signal Company in the Signal Corps Historical Section, Departmental Records Branch, AGO, 219 North Lee Street, Alexandria, Virginia. The still classified portion of this file deals exclusively with activities in 1943.

2. The inclosed copies are for retention in the historical archives at Fort Monmouth.

3. The Historical Division, Signal Corps Intelligence Agency, has recommended that the Office of Technical Liaison, Office of the Chief Signal Officer, forward to the historical archives at Fort Monmouth a printed item on Company D, Signal Corps (Field) - containing a picture of the Company, the menu for its first Christmas banquet (1908), and a brief history - together with a large photograph of the Company taken on the Fort Omaha parade grounds in 1909.

1 Incl
Copy 1st ind fr
1st Sig Co, 21 May 43
with attached ltr,
21 May 43 (in dupe)

/s/ John V. Mills
JOHN V. MILLS
Colonel, Signal Corps
Commanding

C
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SIGFM/GC-PO 314.7 (4 Feb 54) 1st Ind Miss Phillips/lg
SUBJECT: History of First Signal Company and Company D, Signal Corps
(Field)

HEADQUARTERS Signal Corps Center and Fort Monmouth, Fort Monmouth, New
Jersey 24 FEB 1954

TO: Commanding Officer, Signal Corps Intelligence Agency, Room 3054,
Main Navy Building, Washington 25, D. C. ATTENTION: Historical
Division

1. Receipt of history of Company A is acknowledged, ~~with receipt~~
2. This headquarters has not received history of Company D.

FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL:

1 Incl
w/d

W. W. RITTER
1st Lt AGC
Asst Adj Gen

Handwritten: military

SIGNAL BRANCH FILE COPY 63

HEADQUARTERS
US ARMY SIGNAL CENTER AND SCHOOL
FORT MONMOUTH, NEW JERSEY

SIGOAO-4

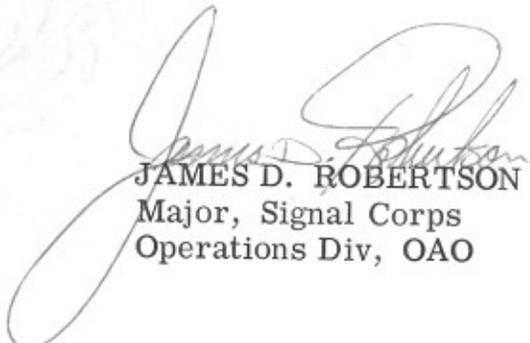
16 November 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Colonel McIntyre, Deputy Commandant

SUBJECT: 1st Signal Company's Guidon

1. As per our conversation of some time ago reference the 1st Signal Company's Guidon, I went to the Office of the Chief of Military History in Washington to determine the whereabouts of the organizational historical properties of the 121st Signal Battalion in order to withdraw the battle streamers.

2. I discovered that all historical properties have been stored at the Defense General Supply Center, Richmond, Virginia, but are being relocated to the Army Depot at New Cumberland. I was advised that at this moment it is virtually impossible to locate anything belonging to the 1st Division much less the 121st Signal, but that the military history department should have a complete set of inventory cards in about four months and to try again then.


JAMES D. ROBERTSON
Major, Signal Corps
Operations Div, OAO


Mr. Podluszky
Mr. Norris

F Y I


16 Nov 67

FIRST SIGNAL COMPANY

Despite a number of changes in its official designation and organization, the 1st Signal Company has had over fifty-five years continual service as a Signal Corps unit. Organized 27 July 1898 as Company A and B, Signal Corps, it soon saw action in Puerto Rico during the Spanish American War.

The company packed their train in Guayama and started over the mountains to Cayey, on one of the finest roads these men had ever seen. For fifty years this road was under construction having on its turns breastwork built up sixty feet from the valley, with stone bridges and culverts at intervals for sixty miles. Next they camped at Caguas where the 4th Ohio had already hoisted American flags. Company A marched on to Rio Piedras and into San Juan to take part in raising the flag upon Merro, at noon, 18 October 1898. The Spaniards evacuated four days later. Lt. Colonel W. A. Glassford commanded Company A.

In 1904 it became a provisional signal company at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The organization was made permanent, and expanded three years later, when it was designated Field Company "A," and combined with another company, organized at Fort Omaha, Nebraska, in 1907, to form the 1st Field Signal Battalion.

The company was later moved to Fort Sheridan, where, in 1915, its designation was changed to Radio Company "A." In the same year it went to Panama for maneuvers, and upon its return, was assigned to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, to operate the radio station there. At the same time, the other company of the battalion participated in the border campaigns, and was in the expeditionary force to Vera Cruz.

In May 1917, under command of Captain P. M. Goodrich, the two companies were organized into the 2d Field Signal Battalion, which was expanded and assigned to the 1st Division. The Battalion served with this famous organization throughout the war, and for many years thereafter. In June, 1917, Company C landed at St. Nazaire, being among the first American troops to arrive. The other companies soon followed, and the Battalion installed the first American signal system in France, operating it until relieved. The Battalion participated in all the front line operations of the 1st Division in 1918: Lorraine, Meuse-Argonne, Picardy, Montdidier-Noyon, Aisne-Marne, and St. Mihiel. The Battalion was awarded the French Croix de Guerre with two Palms and a Gold Star, a number of other citations and commendations as a unit. In addition, its members received many individual citations and decorations.

Upon the return of the 1st Division to the United States, the Battalion participated in the parades of the Division, until it was assigned to station to Camp Taylor, Kentucky. In 1920 it was moved to Camp Dix, New Jersey, with the Division, where in February 1921 its designation and organization ^{were} ~~was~~ changed to the 1st Signal Company. The unit moved to Miller Field in May of that year, returned to Fort Dix for divisional maneuvers and then was permanently assigned to Camp Vail 22 October 1922, where it was stationed until 1941. Shortly after the return from Germany the organization existed almost solely on paper for some time. The entire roster consisted of two Master Sergeants in 1919.

After assignment to Camp Alfred Vail yearly maneuvers with the First Army and the Division furnished practical application for the

extensive schooling given the personnel during the remainder of the year. The 1st Signal Company was carrying out the training required of divisional troops and also participated to a more limited extent in garrison details. They were using pigeons for company problems. Some instructors were furnished for the Signal School.

In 1925, with Captain Archie A. Farmer, S. C., Commanding, there were in the company 2d Lieutenants Henry J. Hunt, Richard H. Dean, Francis E. Kidwell, and James S. Willis; one first sergeant, two master sergeants, two technical sergeants, six staff sergeants, twenty-three sergeants, twenty-eight Pfc's, and seven privates.

The company took part in summer maneuvers at Camp Dix, New Jersey, from April until July of 1926. They sent detachments during the year to handle such assignments as the Reserve Officer Training Program at Camp Blauvelt, New York, from July to September; the communications system at the Camp Perry, Ohio, Shooting Matches; and to man Signal equipment exhibits at the World's Radio and New York Electrical Shows.

At various times in 1927 the 1st Division had units at Camp Dix for training and the Signal Company provided detachments for these operations. In the summer the entire company took part in the divisional communication and staff maneuvers.

The 1st Signal Company went to Camp Dix in May 1928 for 70th Division exercises. While there it rebuilt the telephone system at the Target Range, and installed and operated a radio station and telephone system in the camp. In the following year the company was as busy as usual, engaging in the II Corps Area Maneuvers in July at Camp Dix. On 23 July 1929, Lt. G. L. Townsend relieved Captain

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The 1st Signal Company went to Camp Dix in May 1928 for 76th Division exercises. While there it rebuilt the telephone system at the Target Range, and installed and operated a radio station and telephone system in the camp. In the following year the company was as busy as usual, engaging in the II Corps Area Maneuvers in July at Camp Dix. On 23 July 1929, Lt. G. L. Townsend relieved Captain

Everett Hill as company commander.

During the period immediately preceding the industrial displacements of 1929-1934, the 1st Signal Company had been able to carry out extensive annual field maneuvers with the 1st Division and other headquarters. By 1930 the organization had settled into a well defined pattern of operation and was functioning in its prescribed role as a division communications unit. In the summer the company engaged in the Air Corps Exercises at Aberdeen, Maryland, and the 1st Division problem at Camp Dix, where it was attached for that purpose. Arriving on 27 June, the company laid wire from III Corps to five infantry divisions and one cavalry division and one cavalry brigade. All switchboards were handled by the company personnel. Officers and men of the ROTC and GTC, together with students of the Signal Corps School, were attached to the company for the maneuvers. Equipment was maintained in excellent condition, while the state of training and morale of the men continued highly satisfactory.

A series of annual maneuvers, beginning in 1934, kept the tactical units of the Signal Corps in the field much of each summer. These operations involved three or more weeks of line construction and other preparations prior to the arrival of the main forces. Unusually large motor movements were required and the units were away from camp for two to four months each year. As a proving ground for problems in modern warfare, these maneuvers were of great value to all branches of the Army.

This expanded program began in 1934 with General MacArthur's GHQ Command Post Exercise which centered in the Fort Monmouth - Camp Dix - Raritan Arsenal triangle. The First Army, I, II, and III Corps

command posts were at Camp Dix; Second Army, V, VI, and a Provisional Cavalry Corps headquarters at Fort Monmouth. GHQ and Air GHQ were at the arsenal at Haritan, New Jersey.

Signal services for the exercises had been assigned the 51st Signal Battalion, with the 1st Signal Company attached. Nearly four times the available personnel were required to man the scattered message centers at each of the command posts. To meet this need it was necessary to train personnel in a minimum of time. Despite this handicap, 27,269 messages were handled in seven days and only three messages were lost or misdirected, an unusually brilliant record. In addition, radio intelligence, radio, wire, and meteorological functions were handled successfully. Following the conclusion of the exercises, General MacArthur made his critique at the theater at Fort Monmouth, covering all phases of the operation.

The largest Army maneuvers since the war were held in the Pine Camp area of upper New York state in 1935. Commanded by Lt. Colonel Harry C. Ingles, the 51st Signal Battalion, and the 1st Signal Company attached, installed all communications. Actual operations came under the command of Major Stephen H. Sherrill, who took over on 16 August, just prior to the beginning of the maneuvers and continued in command until 30 June 1938. The Army, Corps, and umpire nets were installed, using 177 miles of bare copper, 126 miles of twisted pair field wire, and 8260 feet of lead-covered, multiple pair overhead cable. Colonel Alvin C. Voris, as Signal Officer, directed the communications, which included radio intelligence work at three different intercept locations.

The Second Army maneuvers in 1936 were in two sections. The V Corps, at Fort Knox, Kentucky, operated independently of VI Corps

at the Allegan - Camp Custer, Michigan, area. The 1st Signal Company provided signal functions in Kentucky, with operations proceeding smoothly. They made considerable open wire installation, using commercial facilities where feasible. The 51st Signal Battalion fulfilled signal requirements in Michigan.

Minnesota was the scene of the 1st Signal Company's activities in the summer of 1937. The entire unit went to Camp Ripley, Little Falls, Minnesota, where signal communications were installed, operated, and maintained for a phase of the Fourth Army maneuvers. This assignment followed closely ROTC duties at Camp Custer, Michigan.

In 1938 the 1st Signal Company worked with the Army War College Command Post Exercise at Washington, D. C. In 1939, when First Army maneuvers were again held in New York, the company made installations in the Plattsburg area, and received a commendation from Lt. General Hugh Drum for meritorious service.

The following year the company gave a demonstration of a divisional signal company in field operation for first-year men at West Point. Then on 17 October 1939, after World War II had broken out in Europe, the 1st Signal Company departed from Fort Monmouth, joining the remainder of the 1st Division on the highway near Philadelphia for the march to Fort Benning, Georgia. During the remainder of 1939 the company participated in the building of the 1st Division's encampment on the Fort Benning reservation. Included in the missions performed were construction of a 2-10 pin arm open wire line from Columbus, Georgia, using poles cut and trimmed by troops of the 1st Division. Also constructed was an additional 2-16 pin arm lead from the main post to Harmony church, where a large telephone switchboard

with lead cable distribution into the three division area was set up. A power distribution system was installed in the entire three division area. All of this work in Georgia was preliminary to various maneuvers terminating with full scale Army maneuvers in the Sabine River area of Louisiana and Texas in May 1940.

The 1st Signal Company returned to Fort Monmouth in July 1940 and started amphibious training on a small scale, maintaining liaison with the Atlantic Fleet Amphibious Force at Norfolk, Virginia. Preparations began for First Army maneuvers which were held in northern New York.

On 17 January 1941 the 1st Signal Company, after 19 years at Fort Monmouth, departed to join the 1st Division at Fort Devens, Massachusetts. The first unit to move into the new permanent station of the Division, it was admirably prepared, both in training and equipment, for field service. Meeting difficult maneuver problems with deftness and precision, the company had demonstrated that the Signal Corps was prepared to meet even the fluid conditions accompanying mechanized warfare.

At Fort Devens, 10 February 1942, the command of the 1st Signal Company passed from Captain David P. Gibbs to Lt. George E. Pickett, who took the unit overseas as Division Signal Officer, and so served until after the war. Subsequent history of the company includes participation in the North African invasion, the D Day landing at Oran and operations in North Africa; D Day landing at Sicily, Sicilian operations; D Day landing at Normandy, and throughout the European campaign.

The 1st Signal Company, at this writing, (December 1953) is assigned to the 1st Infantry Division and stationed in Germany.

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FIRST SIGNAL COMPANY
1st U.S. Infantry Division
A.P.O. #1, New York, N. Y.

21 May 1943.

Subject: Historical Record, First Signal Company.

TO: Chief Signal Officer, Washington, D. C. (Thru Channels)

1. a. The First Signal Company was originally organized on 27 July 1898 as Companies "A" and "D", Signal Corps., and as Companies "A" and "D" saw service in Porto Rico during the Spanish-American War. Companies "A" and "D" subsequently became Companies "A" and "B" second Field Signal Battalion on it's organization, and served in France such during the World War. The Second Field Signal Battalion as a unit of the First Division participated in the following battles while in France: Lorraine, Meuse-Argonne, Picardy, Montidier-Noyon, Aisne-Marne, and St. Mihiel. During the World War, the Second Field Signal Battalion was awarded the French Croix De Guerre with two Palms and a Gold Star.

b. On February 10, 1921, the Second Field Battalion while stationed at Camp Dix, New Jersey, was re-designated the First Signal Company. About 140 men were transferred from the company to other units of the Division leaving about 150 men in the company.

c. Under the provision of General Orders No. 16, War Department dated 1921, as amended, the First Signal Company is entitled to bear on it's Company Pike, silver bands with the following inscriptions:

Spanish-American War; Porto Rico.
World War; Lorraine, Picardy, Montidier-Noyon, St.
Mihiel, Aisne-Marne, and Meuse-Argonne.

d. Under provisions of Circular No. 1, War Department dated 1927, The First Signal Company is entitled to bear streamers on it's company Pike in colors of the ribbon of the French Croix De Guerre with the following inscriptions:

Lorraine, Aisne-Marne, Meuse-Argonne, and Picardy.

2. a. In May 1921, the Company changed station, moving to Miller Field, Staten Island, New York during the summer. The Company returned to Camp Dix, New York for a Division maneuver.

b. In October 1922, the Company was permanently stationed at Camp Alfred Veil, New Jersey. The camp being changed to Fort Monmouth on August 6, 1925.

c. During the period 1922 to 1941, the Company remained at Fort Monmouth and participating in maneuvers.

d. On January 17, 1941, the First Infantry Division re-assembled at Fort Devens, Mass. During the period following, it went into extensive

training including field maneuvers in North Carolina in October and November 1941, landing maneuvers of North Carolina in July and August 1941 and a practice landing at Fort Story, Va. in January 1942.

2. (cont'd)

e. In February 1942, the Division moved to Camp Blanding, Florida. The Signal Company moving by motor. In June 1942 the First Division participated in a combined demonstration of Infantry, Tank, and Air warfare and upon completion, moved by train to Indiantown Gap, Pa., staging for over seas.

f. On August 2, 1942, the Company and First Division embarked on Queen Mary and arrived in Scotland five (5) days later taking up camp at Tidworth, England.

3. During the following period till October, the First Signal Company trained and prepared for the invasion of Oran, North Africa which took place November 8, 1942, to November 10, 1942. The following casualties resulted:

Dead - NONE

Wounded - NONE

Injured - One officer (boat landing accident)

4. a. Following the Oran Battle, the Division with the Signal Company moved to vicinity St. Barbe du Tlelat where it remained till January 22, 1943. On this date, the First Signal Company moved up to the battle area at Maktar, Tunisia. On the 29-30 January, from February 1 to February 18, the First Signal Company furnished communications in the Vic Ousseltia Valley for the Division which was comprised of 16th CT and Seven (7) French Battalions and operated under French XIX Corps.

b. From 18, 1943 till the end of the Tunisian campaign, May 14, 1943, its movements area follows:

19-20 February 1943	vic Kessra, Tunisia, Combat Zone.
20-25 February 1943	Keserine Pass, Tunisia, Combat Zone.
25- February 1943	
9 March 1943	Bou Khadra, Algier, Rest camp.
10-16 March 1943	Bou Chebka, Algier, Concealed Bivouac.
17-20 March 1943	Gafsa, Tunisia, Assault and occupation.
21- March 1943	
8 April 1943	El Guettar, Tunisia, Battle of El Guettar.
9-17 April 1943	Bou Khadra, Rest Area.
18-22 April 1943	Vic Beja, Tunisia, Defensive sector
23- April 1943	
10 May 1943	Between Beja & Mateur, Combat Area.

c. During the Tunisian Campaign, the battle casualties were;

Dead - Tech. 5th Grade Natoli, Giovanni, Radio Section.
Private Clymer, Russell, Construction Section.

Missing - NONE

Wounded - 2nd Lt. ARTHUR E. DICKS	Seriously
Pvt. Johnson, D.S.	Seriously
Pfc. Johnson, W.V.	Seriously
1st Lt. LEO ROSENMAN	Slightly
Sgt. Weatherford, H.E.	Slightly
Tech. 5th Grade Colangelo, S.	Slightly
Tech. 5th Grade Kidd, J.	Slightly
Pfc. Layne, O.	Slightly

All casualties occurred from enemy dive bombing attacks on May 17. The company returned to vic Oran, Algiers.

5. Officers commanding First Signal Company:

Capt. DAVID P. GIBBS	August 1940 - Feb. 15, 1942.
Capt. GEORGE E. PICKETT	Feb. 15, 1942 - April 11, 1942
Capt. GLEN S. WATERMAN	April 11, 1942 - May 21, 1943

6. Commendation for the First Signal Company on 27 February 1943 from Maj. Gen. TERRY ALLEN, Commanding General, First Infantry Division "For the splendid manner in which you have performed your duties since arrival in Africa."

7. Silver Star awards were made to the following men for gallantry in action in holding off an enemy air attack:

Pfc. Daniel S. Johnson
Pvt. Arthur S. Lokos

/s/ Glen S. Waterman

GLEN S. WATERMAN,
Capt., 1st Signal Co.,
Commanding.

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FIRST SIGNAL COMPANY

Despite a number of changes in its official designation and organization, the First Signal Company has had over fifty years' continual service as a Signal Corps unit. In 1904 it was first organized as a provisional signal company at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The organization was made permanent, and expanded three years later, when it was designated Field Company "A," and combined with another company, organized at Fort Omaha, Nebraska, in 1907, to form the First Field Signal Battalion.

Articles written in 1925 said "twenty years"

The company was later moved to Fort Sheridan, where, in 1915, its designation was changed to Radio Company "A." In the same year it went to Panama for maneuvers, and upon its return, was assigned to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, to operate the radio station there. At the same time, the other company of the battalion participated in the border campaigns, and was in the expeditionary force to Vera Cruz.

(under command of Capt P.M. Goodrich - my PAPPY - in - law)

In May, 1917, the two companies were organized into the Second Field Signal Battalion, which was expanded and assigned to the First Division. The Battalion served with this famous organization throughout the war, and since. In June, 1917, Company C landed at St. Nazaire, being among the first American troops to arrive. The other companies soon followed, and the Battalion installed the first American signal system in France, operating it until relieved. The Battalion participated in all the front line operations of the First Division in 1918, for which it received a number of citations and commendations as a unit. In addition, its members received many individual citations and decorations.

This history was written in 1925

Upon the return of the First Division to the United States, the Battalion participated in the parades of the Division, until it was assigned to station at Camp Taylor, Kentucky. In 1920 it was moved to Camp Dix, New Jersey, with the Division, where its designation and organization was changed to the First Signal Company. In 1922 it was moved to Miller Field, and later, to Camp Alfred Vail, where it has since been stationed.

until 1941. In 1925, with Captain Archie A. Written in 1925.

November 1953

The first Signal Company remained at Fort Monmouth until January 1941. For several years during the period between world wars the First Signal Company was the only tactical Signal Corps unit east of the Mississippi River. As such it participated in many maneuvers often several at the same time. For example during the summer of 1938 there were detachments at Fort Knox, Camp Perry, Pine Camp, Fort Dix and the Army War College. During the latter years of the 1930's the 51st Sig Bn, which had been associated directly with the Sig C School was reorganized and equipped to where it took over a good portion of the maneuver load which formerly fell on the 1st Signal Co.

After World War II broke out in Europe, specifically on 17 Oct 1939, the 1st Signal Co departed from Fort Monmouth, joining the remainder of the First Division on the highway near Philadelphia for the march to Fort Benning, Georgia. The company was absent from Fort Monmouth until the following July (1940). During the remainder of 1939 the Company participated in the building of the First Division's encampment on the Fort Benning reservation. Included in the missions performed by the company at this time were construction of a 2-10 open arm open wire line from Columbus Georgia using poles cut & trimmed by troops of the First Division. Also constructed was an additional 2-16 pin arm lead from the main post to Harmony church. In addition a power distribution system was installed into the entire three division area and a large telephone switchboard was installed at Harmony Church with lead cable distribution into the three division area. All of the above was preliminary to various maneuvers terminating with full scale Army maneuvers in the Sabine River area of Louisiana and Texas in May 1940.

After returning to Fort Monmouth in July 1940. The Company started amphibious training on a small scale, maintaining liaison with the Atlantic Fleet amphibious Force at Norfolk, Virginia. Almost immediately after the return from Georgia preparations began for First Army maneuvers which were held in Northern New York.

In January 1941, the Company was the first unit to move into the new permanent station of the First Division at Camp Devens, Mass. During the following year there was one exercise after another as the Division was assigned to train both with the First Army and the Atlantic Fleet Amphibious force. The latter training culminated in the landing of the entire division at Fort Story, Virginia during January 1942, (following Pearl Harbor) at which time enemy submarines were active in the area.

In February 1942 the 1st Signal Company moved as part of the First Division to Camp Blending, Florida. The command of the First Signal Company passed at Fort Devens, Mass on 10 Feb 1942 from Capt David P. Gibbs to Lt Geo E. Pickett. The latter took the unit overseas as Division Signal Officer, and so served until after the war. The Company participated in the D-Day landing at Oran, operations in North Africa, D-Day landing at Sicily, Sicilian operations, D+Day landing at Normandy and throughout the European Campaign. The first Signal Company, assigned to the First Infantry Division is still in Germany at this writing. APO 1, 7.3.53