SIGNIFICANT DATES

IN THE HISTORY OF

THE U. S. ARMY SIGNAL CORPS

1860: June 21 BIRTH DATE OF ARMY SIGNAL CORPS

The appointment of a Signal Officer for the Army was authorized by Congress.

1860: July 2 FIRST SIGNAL OFFICER: ALBERT J. MYER

Assistant Surgeon Albert J. Myer, who had patented a system of wigwag signaling in 1856, was appointed the first Army Signal Officer. His appointment dated from 27 June 1860, with the rank of major.

1861: March, April FIRST SIGNAL UNITS

In the spring of 1861 Major Myer began training a nucleus of signal personnel adept at flag and torch signaling, using the Myer system. This training was performed at Fort Monroe, Virginia.

At about the same time, Alexander -- a lieutenant in the Confederate Army, and a student of Myer prior to the war -- organized a handful of soldiers as a provisional Signal Corps. This unit -- using Myer's original system of signaling -- saw effective service with the Confederate Army at the battle of Manassas-Bull Run in July of 1861.

1861: June 12 FIRST COMBAT SIGNAL UNITS

For service with the Union Army, the first signal parties were detailed at Fort Monroe, Virginia.

1861: June 15 FIRST USE OF SIGNALS TO DIRECT GUNFIRE

By means of signal flags, fire of the battery at Fort Wool in Hampton Roads, Virginia, was directed on the Confederate works at Sewell's Point. One signal detail of three men was stationed at the battery. Another detail of four men, including Major Myer, observed the effect of the firing from a tugboat and reported their observations by signal flag to the shore battery.

1861: June 26 FIRST PERMANENT COMMUNICATION LINE IN WAR

Using flags and torches, the first permanent line of communication was established between Fort Monroe and Newport News, Virginia.

1861: July 10 FIRST SIGNAL SCHOOL

The first signal school was established at Fort Monroe, Virginia, by Major Albert J. Myer.

1861: July 21 FIRST USE OF MILITARY BALLOON

The first balloon built in the United States for military use was inflated in Washington, and an attempt was made to transport it to the headquarters of McDowell's Union forces in Virginia. The balloon and its handlers were under the command of Major Albert J. Myer, the Army Signal Officer. Along the line of march, however, the balloon was damaged and never reached the field of battle. Myer proceeded without it, reported to McDowell's headquarters, and served with distinction as a mounted messenger -- the only Signal Officer of the Union forces during the battle of Manassas-Bull Run. Subsequently, balloons were used occasionally by both sides during the war, but were provided and operated by civilians under temporary contracts.

1861: July 21 FIRST CONFEDERATE USE OF SIGNALS

Using flags, a Confederate signal party of four men maintained communications between a forward observation post and the main Confederate forces at the Battle of Manassas-Bull Run -- a major contribution to victory by the Confederacy in that engagement.

1861: July 21 FIRST MILITARY PHOTOGRAPHY IN WAR

During the Battle of Manassas-Bull Run, Mathew Brady, a civilian photographer, used wet-plate negatives and a portable darkroom to provide the first military photography of the Civil War.

1861: August -- CONFEDERATE BUREAU OF SIGNALS

In the fall of 1861, a Department of Signals -- later called the Signal Bureau -- was organized in Richmond by the Confederate Army. In addition to flag and torch signaling, this Bureau was also concerned with secret service work. It operated many clandestine communication networks between Confederate and Union points throughout the war. In April of 1862 it was formally called the Confederate Signal Corps.

1861: August -- FIRST SIGNAL TOWERS

On opposite sides of the upper Potomac, both the Union and Confederate forces began erecting lines of high wooden towers for use as signal stations. Using flags and torches atop the towers, these became the first fixed lines of signal communication.

1861: August -- FIRST MILITARY TELEGRAPH TRAIN

The War Department procured the first telegraph train for military use. Known as a "flying" train, it consisted of horse-drawn wagons equipped with Beardslee magneto-electric telegraph sets, field wire, flags, rockets, and other equipment -- much of it obtained from commercial telegraph companies. Army telegraph trains, using the Beardslee magneto-electric telegraph set especially procured by the Signal Corps, were first employed in the Peninsular Campaign in the spring of 1862.

The Beardslee magneto-electric telegraph set was the first electrical signaling device that was designed and developed specifically for use by the military in the field.

1861: August 30 FIRST PERMANENT SIGNAL SCHOOL

The Central Signal Camp of Instruction was formally opened at Red Hill in Georgetown, near Washington, D. C. This was the first permanent signal school for all detailed officers of the Army of the Potomac.

1862: January 1 FIRST UNION USE OF MYER CODE IN WAR

Using flags, the Union Army and Navy first employed Myer's code of signals during the combined land and sea attack on Port Royal Ferry, where Federal troops first touched the mainland of South Carolina. Signal flags were used both to direct fire from Union gunboats and to maintain communication between Union vessels and Army-Navy shore parties. As a result of its success, Myer's code of signals was adopted for instruction purposes by the Union Naval Academy at Newport, Rhode Island.

1862: February -- FIRST CONFEDERATE SIGNAL MANUAL

In the early spring of 1862, a confidential pamphlet of instruction describing Myer's system of signaling was published by the Confederacy. It was issued two years prior to Myer's publication Manual of Signals.

1862: March-July FIRST ARMY SIGNALING WITH MARINES

During the long Union campaign to capture and control the Mississippi River from New Orleans to Vicksburg, a Federal Army signal party served actively with the Marine Brigade and with elements of the Federal Navy. After the fall of New Orleans in April of 1862, the signal party continued such effective action that it was cited for service under fire during the attack and fall of Memphis in June of 1862 and the attack and fall of Vicksburg in July of 1863.

1862: March 9 FIRST ARMY SIGNALING WITH NAVY

During the naval battle between the Monitor and the Merrimac at Hampton Roads, a Confederate Army signalman aboard the Merrimac -- correctly known as the Virginia -- relayed messages by flag and torch to a signal shore party. This was the first use of an Army signalman on board a naval warship. Subsequently signal officers were used on almost all blockade runners of the Confederacy throughout the war. They were also used aboard Union warships during several expeditions and in blockading Southern ports during the war.

1862: April 19 ESTABLISHMENT OF CONFEDERATE SIGNAL CORPS

An Act organizing the Confederate Signal Corps was approved by the Confederate Congress. The Signal Corps was attached to the Adjutant and Inspector General's Department of the Confederacy. Not only concerned with military signaling by means of flag, torch, and telegraph, the Confederate Signal Corps also engaged in secret service operations, including scouting and espionage.

1862: June 1 FIRST AIR-TO-GROUND COMMUNICATIONS

Using a telegraph instrument aboard a captive balloon during the battle of Fair Oaks, a Union observer reported his aerial observations via a connecting line to his headquarters on the ground. This was the first use of telegraphy from a balloon, and the first air-to-ground communication during the war.

1862: June 29 FIRST COMBINED BALLOON AND TELEGRAPH TRAIN

Shortly after the battle of Mechanicsville on 27 June, a balloon train of the Topographical Engineer Corps and a field telegraph train of the Signal Corps were combined by the Union Army to provide a centralized means of both observation and communication. Although not a permanent arrangement, the combination was used to advantage during several battles in the ensuing year.

1863: March 3 OFFICIAL ESTABLISHMENT OF ARMY SIGNAL CORPS

Legislation established the Signal Corps as a separately distinct component of the Federal Army for the duration of the war. Albert J. Myer was promoted to colonel, and was designated the first Chief Signal Officer of the new Signal Corps. Although summarily removed some months later following a dispute with the Secretary of War, about three years after that Myer again became Chief Signal Officer -- a position he held until his death on 24 August 1880.

1863: July -- MILITARY SIGNALING AT WEST POINT

Military signaling and telegraphy were added to the curriculum of the Military Academy at West Point.

1863: July 3 SIGNALING AT BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG

During the battle of Gettysburg, Union signal stations strategically located on the mountain peaks, Big Round Top and Little Round Top, played crucial roles in observing Confederate forces and communicating this information to Federal troops. Although there were other factors which led to the defeat of Confederate forces during this major battle of the Civil War, the occupancy by signal troops of the stations on Big Round Top and Little Round Top was of singular and historic importance, and established beyond doubt the significance of signal communications toward victory in warfare.

1863: August -- FIRST USE OF SIGNAL CIPHER EQUIPMENT

During the fall of 1863, after continued interception of Federal messages by Confederate signalmen, a cipher disk invented by Myer was utilized for all Union messages. The code was subsequently broken through the efforts of Bryan, a Confederate secret service operator. This, in turn, led to the continued development of other cipher devices by both Union and Confederate forces.

1867: August -- FIRST RETRENCHMENT IN THE SIGNAL CORPS

Following the end of warfare, the Signal Corps of the Federal Army was diminished drastically because of mustering out and general apathy toward the Army in peacetime. During the summer of 1867, the strength of the Signal Corps was at its lowest ebb. Myer, with the rank of colonel, had a staff of one officer and two clerks.

1867: October -- FIRST POST-WAR SIGNAL COMPANY

A new type of signal company was organized by the War Department, consisting of four operating sections. Personnel included five officers and 134 enlisted men.

1867: October -- SIGNAL CORPS A SUPPLY AGENCY

Functioning as a supply agency, the Signal Corps furnished two full sets of signaling equipment and two copies of the Manual of Signals to every company and post of the Army. Telescopes and binoculars were also furnished on requisition. All signal equipment was accounted for by the Chief Signal Officer.

1868: August -- FIRST POST-WAR SIGNAL CAMP

A signal instruction camp was established at Fort Greble in the District of Columbia. In January of 1869, the school was transferred to Lincoln Barracks. In March of 1869, after expanding considerably, the school was transferred to Fort Whipple, Virginia, where it remained for several decades.

1870: February 9 SIGNAL CORPS WEATHER BUREAU

Congress assigned responsibility for forecasting storms on lakes and seacoasts to the War Department, which charged the Army Signal Corps with these new duties. Weather stations were erected throughout the nation, connected by telegraph lines, to provide meteorological data. This work continued until 1891, when all non-military meteorology was transferred to the Department of Agriculture; in 1940 it was transferred to the Department of Commerce. Thus, the original organization and operations of the Signal Corps led ultimately to our present-day Weather Bureau.

1870: May -- FIRST GRADUATING CLASS AT FORT WHIPPLE

In the first graduating class at Fort Whipple, Virginia, were 38 American officers -- including 31 from the Navy, and the first two foreign students, from Denmark and Sweden.

1870: November 1 FIRST WEATHER BULLETIN

The Signal Corps Weather Bureau began distributing a daily weather bulletin, compiled from simultaneous reports from many points in the United States and Canada reached by telegraph. The bulletin was published in many cities and towns throughout the nation.

1877: August -- FIRST HELIOGRAPH

After experimentation during the summer of 1877, the first military heliograph was developed at Fort Whipple, Virginia, by the Army Signal Corps. Although it had an effective range in clear weather of about 30 miles, it was not used extensively for nearly ten years, when it began to be employed during campaigns in the southwest to link isolated forts and outposts. One of these, Fort Huachuca, was connected into an elaborate network of heliograph communication stations.

1877: October -- FIRST USE OF TELEPHONE BY SIGNAL CORPS

Less than two years after Bell's invention of the telephone, the Army Signal Corps experimented with it successfully over an existing 10-mile field telegraph line at Fort Whipple, Virginia. In the spring of 1878, a 40-mile telephone line was constructed of two iron wires.

1878: July -- FIRST MILITARY USE OF PIGEONS

Homing pigeons, obtained and trained by the Army Signal Corps, were first used experimentally in the Dakota Territory with limited success. Flights were later attempted between Cuba and Florida during 1888, again without too much success.

1880: August 24 DEATH OF ALBERT J. MYER

Brigadier General Albert J. Myer died at the age of 52. In the following year Fort Whipple, Virginia, was renamed Fort Myer in his honor.

1881 to 1884: FIRST ARMY ARCTIC EXPLORATION

Participating in a joint international effort to obtain meteorological data in Arctic areas, the Army Signal Corps dispatched one expedition to Point Barrow under command of Lt. Phillip H. Ray and another to Grinnell Sound under command of Lt. Adolphus W. Greely. This was the first official peacetime enterprise in which the United States participated internationally. Collecting meteorological, magnetic, tidal, and natural history data, Greely's expedition penetrated the farthest north of any, at that time.

1881: February 4 FORT NAMED FOR FIRST CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICER

Fort Whipple in Arlington, Virginia, was renamed Fort Myer in honor of Brigadier General Albert J. Myer, the Army's first Signal Officer, who had died the preceding August. This post continued as the home of the Signal Corps until 1885, when the signal school was closed. All signal instruction was then given by the various branches of the Army until the advent of the Spanish-American War.

1884: October -- ADOPTION OF STANDARD TIME ZONES

Uniform standard time meridians were adopted internationally. The Signal Corps Weather Bureau had long urged such standard time zones to remove confusion in continental weather reporting caused by varying local time systems.

1889: June -- FIRST MILITARY FIELD TELEPHONE KIT

A combination of the Bell telephone and a telegraph instrument, the first military field telephone kit, was developed by the Army Signal Corps.

1891: -- -- SIGNAL SCHOOL AT FORT RILEY

A school of instruction for signalmen was established at Fort Riley, Kansas. It continued in operation until 1899.

1891: July 1 TRANSFER OF METEOROLOGY TO WEATHER BUREAU

Non-military meteorology was transferred by Congress to the Weather Bureau which had been established in the Department of Agriculture in October 1890.

1892: -- -- FIRST BALLOON SECTION

A balloon section was established in the Office of the Chief Signal Officer in Washington. A balloon obtained from France became the first operable Army Signal Corps balloon.

1894: July -- WAR DEPARTMENT LIBRARY

Responsibility for the War Department Library was assigned to the Army Signal Corps. At that time the library contained about 30,000 volumes, including many photographs. A year later hundreds of other photographs were added to the library, including those taken by Brady during the Civil War. The library continued under the Signal Corps until 1904.

1897: July -- FIRST ELECTRICAL FIRE CONTROL

After considerable experimentation, the Army Signal Corps developed the first electrical fire control systems for the Coast Artillery.

1898 to 1902: FIRST SIGNAL CORPS SERVICE OVERSEAS

Serving ably in the first overseas campaigns of the Army during the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection, the Signal Corps not only received highest commendations but laid important foundations for a stronger future organization. During this period, the Army Signal Corps gained valuable combat experience both in Cuba and the Philippines. The first combat photography by a Signal Corps cameraman was taken during the battle for Manila in August of 1898. The Signal Corps also performed valuable intelligence functions. After hostilities ceased, the Army Signal Corps engaged in rehabilitation work that included the laying of cable systems linking all major islands of the Philippines.

1898: June -- FIRST SIGNAL CORPS BALLOON UNIT

The Army Signal Corps organized and equipped a balloon section at Fort Logan, Colorado. During the Spanish-American War, a Signal Corps balloon unit served at San Juan in July of 1898. Subsequently, in 1902 a balloon detachment was organized at Fort Myer, Virginia.

1898: July 27 GENESIS OF 1st SIGNAL COMPANY

Among the new Signal Corps organization were Companies A and D. After action in Puerto Rico during the Spanish-American War these two groups were reorganized as the Second Field Battalion, which subsequently served with the First Division during World War I. At Fort Dix in February, 1921, it was renamed the 1st Signal Company.

1899: April -- FIRST RADIO OPERATIONS OF ARMY SIGNAL CORPS

Radiotelegraph communication was established between Fire Island and the Fire Island Lightship, a distance of 12 miles. A year later radiotelegraph stations for controlling traffic were installed adjacent to New York Harbor and San Francisco Harbor.

1900: May 26 ALASKAN COMMUNICATIONS

To provide an extensive system of military telegraph lines and undersea cable for Alaska, the Army Signal Corps organized the Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System. After several years of construction, most of the principal towns of Alaska were linked with the United States and Canada by undersea cable and overland wire. Beginning in 1903, radio communication supplemented the wire and cable system. In 1936 the system was renamed the Alaska Communication System.

1902: July -- SIGNAL CORPS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The significance of research and development was emphasized by the establishment of the Electrical Division of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer in Washington, D. C. Several experimental laboratories were also established in Washington, and these continued in operation for nearly twenty years.

1903: -- -- FIRST LONG DISTANCE RADIO CIRCUIT

The Army Signal Corps installed a radio circuit spanning 110 miles between Nome and St. Michael, Alaska, to handle both military and commerical traffic.

1905: -- -- SIGNAL SCHOOL AT FORT LEAVENWORTH

The Army Signal School for officers was established at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

1905: July -- BOARD OF EQUIPMENT AND AWARDS

To insure steady improvement in equipment and economic administration of the Army Signal Corps, a Board of Equipment and Awards was established in Washington. This subsequently became the Signal Corps Board.

1907: August 1 FIRST ARMY AVIATION DIVISION

The Aeronautical Division of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer was established and charged with "all matters pertaining to military ballooning, air machines, and kindred subjects". Congress designated this the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps in July of 1914.

1907: December 23 FIRST MILITARY AIRPLANE

The Army Signal Corps issued the first specification and advertisement for a military flying machine. It stated that the machine had to carry a pilot, a passenger, and enough fuel for 125 miles; fly 40 miles per hour, make a sustained flight of one hour, maneuver in any direction, and alight without damage; and be capable of being dismounted and loaded into Army wagons. A contract was signed with Orville Wright on 10 February 1908 to build such a machine. The plane was delivered for testing at Fort Myer, Virginia, on 20 August 1908.

1908: May -- FIRST AIR-GROUND RADIO COMMUNICATION

By means of an antenna suspended below the basket of an Army Signal Corps free balloon over Washington, radio signals were received aloft from the Navy Yard at Washington and at Annapolis. This was the first military use of radio for air-ground communication.

1908: July -- FIRST RADIOTELEPHONE COMMUNICATION

The first radiotelephone communication was conducted by the Army Signal Corps over a distance of 18 miles between Sandy Hook, New Jersey, and Bedloe's Island, New York. Conversation and phonograph music were heard intermittently during transmissions.

1908: August 4 FIRST MILITARY DIRIGIBLE

A powered gas-filled dirigible was first tested by the Army Signal Corps at Fort Myer, Virginia, piloted by the builders, Glenn Curtiss and Thomas Baldwin. It was accepted by the Aeronautical Board of the Signal Corps, and designated Dirigible No. 1. Subsequently, more than a dozen airships of this type were procured by the Signal Corps for training purposes.

1908: September 3 FIRST FLIGHT OF FIRST MILITARY AIRPLANE

The first test flight of the Wright airplane was made by the Army Signal Corps at Fort Myer, Virginia. Tests continued until 17 September, when the plane crashed, killing the pilot, Lt. Thomas E. Selfridge. He was the first person ever killed in a crash of a heavier-than-air engine-driven craft. With similar planes, tests were continued by the Signal Corps during 27-30 July 1909. The official board of the Signal Corps approved purchase of the Wright machine for military purposes on 2 August 1909. This was the beginning of the era of powered flight for military purposes.

1909: March -- FIRST AVIATION CENTER

Established by the Army Signal Corps at Fort Omaha, Nebraska, the first aviation center was a balloon plant consisting of a steel hanger, hydrogen gas generator, and storage facilities. Training was discontinued at Fort Omaha in 1913. In 1916, however, it was reactivated as the principal balloon school of the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps, and continued in operation until after World War I.

1909: August -- FIRST TRAINING OF ARMY PILOTS

The first formal training of two Army pilots was conducted by the Signal Corps at College Park, Maryland. After three weeks, both students made solo flights. The airfield was closed when one of the two planes crashed, and the other was transferred to Fort Sam Houston, Texas. At this time the entire air force of the Army consisted of a single aircraft.

1910: September 18 FIRST WIRE-WIRELESS COMMUNICATION

Over a single twisted-pair wire telephone circuit between the Signal Corps Laboratory at the National Bureau of Standards and a small laboratory on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, two separate telephone conversations were carried simultaneously.

1912: June -- FIRST NIGHT FLIGHT OF ARMY AIRCRAFT

The first night flight of military aircraft was made by an Army Signal Corps plane from Annapolis to College Park, Maryland.

1913: June -- FIRST PERMANENT ARMY AVIATION SCHOOL

Using facilities of the Curtiss Aeroplane Company on North Island, San Diego, the Signal Corps established the first permanent school for training Army pilots. It was called the Signal Corps Aviation School, and continued as a training center until after World War I, when it was designated Rockwell Field.

1914: September -- FIRST ARMY AVIATION UNIT

The first Aero Squadron was organized at San Diego. Under command of Captain Foulois, the squadron consisted of 16 officers, 77 enlisted men, and 8 aircraft. This unit saw service against Villa in Mexico, but was used mainly for training purposes in San Diego.

1917 to 1919: FIRST SIGNAL CORPS PARTICIPATION IN A MAJOR WAR

In World War I, many important developments in military communications were introduced and battle-tested by the Army Signal Corps. In France the Signal Corps operated radio nets for combat troops, anti-aircraft, and artillery; intercept and goniometric stations; a pigeon service; a photographic service; meteorological stations; and a research and inspection laboratory. The principal source of Signal Corps pride was the extensive wire system in France, comprising about 50,000 miles of administrative lines and 40,000 miles of tactical lines. In the field of France were 48 field battalions and 11 telegraph battalions of the Army Signal Corps during World War I.

Trench warfare with large, closely-manned forces was something far different from past experience with small forces in open, fast-moving situations. Signal doctrine, tactics, organization, and equipment were forced to undergo rapid and drastic changes for integration with the forces of allies. This resulted in a homogeneous system, with a multiplicity of equipment and channels, but fully coordinated with the systems of allies. In a year and a half of active participation, the Signal Corps built a tremendous network of communications. It erected 2,000 miles of pole line carrying 28,000 miles of French circuits, and provided 40,000 miles of combat lines. In this system were 134 telegraph offices, 273 telephone exchanges, and 9,000 telephone instruments. In July of 1918, Signal Corps traffic was fifty percent more than that of the British forces.

Although Signal Corps troops comprised only about four percent of the total troop strength, they provided communications far more extensive, reliable, and efficient than those known by any previous Army. While doing so, the Signal Corps sustained battle casualties second only to those of the Infantry by percentage: 301 killed and 1,721 wounded.

1917: May 16 SIGNAL CORPS TRAINING CAMPS

The establishment of signal training camps was authorized by Congress.

The first and principal installation was located near Red Bank, New Jersey. Officially opened on 17 June 1917, it was named the Signal Corps Camp, Little Silver, New Jersey. On 15 September 1917 it was re-named Camp Alfred Vail. In 1925 it was established as a permanent Army post and redesignated Fort Monmouth, New Jersey.

Other signal training camps were established during 1917 at Camp Samuel F. B. Morse in Texas, at Fort Leavenworth in Kansas, and at Monterey in California. The Signal Corps Radio School was activated at College Park, Maryland, during this period in 1917.

1917: July 12 51st SIGNAL BATTALION

Activated originally as the 5th Telegraph Battalion, the unit was redesignated the 51st Signal Battalion in October of 1917 at Camp Alfred Vail, New Jersey. During World War I it saw service in France with the 3rd and 5th Army Corps. During World War II, it saw service in Morocco and Tunis, and in Italy. The unit also served with distinction in Korea.

1918: April -- ESTABLISHMENT OF RADIO LABORATORY

To conduct research and development of new communications equipment for the Signal Corps, the Radio Laboratory was established at Camp Alfred Vail, New Jersey.

1918: May -- SEPARATION OF AIR SERVICE

The activities of the Air Service were separated from the Signal Corps. Subsequently this service became a separate corps of the Army and ultimately, the United States Air Force.

1918: October 4 HERO PIGEON: "CHER AMI"

The homing pigeon "Cher Ami" saved survivors of the "Lost Battalion" when they were surrounded by the enemy and raked by fire from their own Army. A message carried by the Signal Corps pigeon stopped the barrage, and led to the rescue of the surrounded men by a detachment of the 77th Infantry Division.

1919: August 24 FIRST PUBLIC RADIO BROADCAST

The first Signal Corps radio broadcast for the general public was a service from Trinity Church in Washington.

1919: September 4 CONSOLIDATION OF SIGNAL SCHOOLS

Consolidating a number of signal and communication schools throughout the United States, the Army Signal School was established at Camp Alfred Vail, New Jersey.

1921: March 12 WAR DEPARTMENT RADIO NET

The War Department Radio Net was established as a responsibility of the Army Signal Corps. A control station in Washington was designated WVA; it was operated by the 17th Service Company, later named the 17th Signal Service Company of the Signal Corps.

1923: March 1 WAR DEPARTMENT MESSAGE CENTER

The establishment of the War Department Message Center by the Signal Corps resulted from a merger of the War Department Radio Net (operated by the Signal Corps) and the Telegraph and Wire Message Center of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer in Washington. In August of 1942, this activity was renamed the War Department Signal Center.

1924: June 2 THE SIGNAL BOARD

The Signal Board was established at Camp Alfred Vail, New Jersey, and assumed most of the functions of the Board of Equipment and Awards of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer.

1925: August 6 FORT MONMOUTH, A PERMANENT POST

Camp Alfred Vail was redesignated Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, and established as a permanent Army post.

1928: November 30 RADIO STATION: WAR

The call letters of the radio station WVA in Washington were changed to WAR. It remained the key control station of the War Department Radio Net, but by this time it had transmitters at Arlington, Bolling Field, Washington Barracks, and Annapolis. There were over 150 stations, domestic and overseas, in the War Department Radio Net by the end of 1928.

1929: August 12 SIGNAL CORPS LABORATORIES, FORT MONMOUTH

The several research and development activities at Fort Monmouth were consolidated as the Signal Corps Laboratories.

1935: March 1 LABORATORY AT FORT MONMOUTH

A permanent laboratory building was dedicated at Fort Monmouth in honor of Major General George O. Squier, a former Chief Signal Officer. The building was called the Fort Monmouth Signal Laboratory.

Ten years later, on 10 July 1945, the laboratory was redesignated the Squier Signal Laboratory.

In September of 1954, the research and development facilities were relocated at the large hexagon building of the Signal Corps Engineering Laboratory, west of Fort Monmouth, New Jersey.

1937: May 18 FIRST ARMY RADAR

An experimental model of the first Army radar set, designed and developed by the Signal Corps, was successfully demonstrated at Fort Monmouth. Known as the SCR-268, it was used to detect and locate aircraft and to direct searchlight beams for anti-aircraft batteries. It was the progenitor of many Army radar sets developed by the Signal Corps Engineering Laboratories. Chief among these were the SCR-270 and SCR-271 long-range aircraft detection radar sets.

The first overseas installation of radar sets -- SCR-270 and SCR-271 -- was at Fort Sherman in the Canal Zone, early in 1940.

The first SCR-268 radar set was installed in Iceland during September of 1941. Seven of these sets were installed in gun battery positions in Panama by October of 1941.

1941 to 1945: SIGNAL CORPS IN WORLD WAR II

Technical contributions of the Army Signal Corps during World War II included the development and introduction of carrier equipment, spiral-four cable, facsimile equipment, frequency-modulated radios, crystal-controlled radios, microwave radar sets, and other equipment and facilities. Through construction of new installations around the world, the Army Command and Administrative Network acquired global proportions. Radio relay equipment was developed and used in North Africa in 1943 and in Normandy in June of 1944.

The peak strength of the Signal Corps was reached in June of 1944 with nearly 355,000 officers and enlisted men. This constituted 4.4 percent of the total strength of the Army.

Procurement activities expanded to multi-billion-dollar proportions.

1941: June 2 FIRST MILITARY RADAR TRAINING

At the Signal Corps School, Fort Monmouth, the Aircraft Warning Department was activated for training in radar.

1941: October 13 PHILADELPHIA SIGNAL DEPOT

To expedite procurement of Signal Supplies and Equipment, the Philadelphia Signal Depot was activated.

1941: December 7 ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR

Personnel operating a Signal Corps radar set at Opana, Hawaii, reported a large flight of unidentified aircraft approaching the Island. Their warning was ignored, and almost an hour later the surprise attack by Japanese aircraft was successful.

1942: January -- CAMP CROWDER

To accomodate the influx of inductees, Camp Crowder was activated near Neosho, Missouri.

1942: February 1 FIRST SIGNAL INSTALLATION IN AUSTRALIA

A detachment of 19 men disembarked at Melbourne, Australia, and installed the first American Army radio installation in Australia. This was part of the Army Command and Administrative Network.

1942: March 30 SIGNAL CORPS PHOTOGRAPHIC CENTER

To produce the vast amount of training films and other motion pictures required for the expanding Army, the Signal Corps Photographic Center was activated in Long Island City, New York.

1942: April -- FIRST USE OF ARMY AIRBORNE RADAR

The SCR-517 radar set was first put to use in aircraft to search the Atlantic sea lanes for enemy vessels. This was the first microwave radar set developed by the Army Signal Corps for use in aircraft.

1942: May 30 LEXINGTON SIGNAL DEPOT

To provide needed additional signal supply and storage facilities, the Lexington Signal Depot was dedicated at Lexington, Kentucky.

1942: July 5 CAMP MURPHY

Camp Murphy in Florida was established primarily for training in aircraft warning (radar) equipment by the Army Signal Corps.

1942: July 14 CAMP CHARLES WOOD

Camp Charles Wood was established as part of Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, primarily for the training of Signal Corps units. It was redesignated the Charles Wood Area on 1 February 1958.

1942: August 26 SIGNAL CORPS INSPECTION AGENCY

The Signal Corps Inspection Agency was established at Dayton, Ohio.

1942: September 1 CAMP KOHLER

As a western site for training Army Signal Corps personnel, Camp Kohler was activated near Sacramento, California.

1942: November -- WASHINGTON--MOROCCO COMMUNICATIONS

Using equipment of the Army Signal Corps, the first radioteletype circuit was established between Washington and Casablanca, Morocco.

1943: January 1 SIGNAL CORPS STANDARDS AGENCY

The Signal Corps Standards Agency was established at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. On 9 April 1945, it was redesignated the Army Electronics Standards Agency.

1943: January 23 PLANT ENGINEERING AGENCY

The Plant Engineering Agency was established at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

1943: January -- MILITARY RADIO RELAY SYSTEM

Engineers of the Army Signal Corps arrived in Algiers with mobile FM radio equipment and built the first radio relay system used in combat.

1943: March 17 HERO PIGEON: "YANK"

The homing pigeon "Yank" carried the first news of the American advance, II Corps, and occupation of Gafsa in Tunisia.

1943: May 9 HERO PIGEON: "CAPT. FULTON"

The homing pigeon "Capt. Fulton" brought the first news of surrender of the German 10th and 15th Panzer divisions to II Corps headquarters.

1943: June 1 SACRAMENTO SIGNAL DEPOT

The Sacramento Signal Depot was established in California.

1943: June 30 LA PLATA RECEIVING STATION

The receiving station of the Army Command and Administrative Network was established by the Signal Corps at La Plata, Maryland, with probably the greatest concentration of radio antennas ever assembled to receive signals simultaneously from any part of the world.

1943: June -- HIGH-SPEED COMMUNICATION CIRCUITS

High-speed teletypewriter communication circuits were established between Washington, Cairo, and Teheran.

1943: July, August SICILIAN INVASION

Army Signal Corps innovations in the Sicilian campaign included SIAM (Staff Information and Monitoring Service), and ADLS (Air Dispatch Letter Service) utilizing small liaison aircraft to carry messages between Corps and Army message centers. Signal supplies for the Sicilian invasion totalled over 19,000 tons, about one-sixth of all supplies used in the operation.

1943: August 11 to 24 QUEBEC CONFERENCE COMMUNICATIONS

The Army Signal Corps provided all communication facilities for the Quebec Conference attended by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill.

1943: October -- BALTIMORE SIGNAL DEPOT

The principal Army Signal Corps depot in the eastern United States was activated. It was deactivated on 31 December 1954.

1943: October 18 ALASKA COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

The construction of an overland wire line along the Alaska Military Highway was completed by the Army Signal Corps.

1943: October 18 HERO PIGEON: "G. I. JOE"

The homing pigeon "G. I. Joe" saved the lives of hundreds of troops at Colvi Vecchia, Italy, when it flew 20 miles in as many minutes carrying an order to cancel the scheduled bombing of the city. This action of the U. S. Army Signal Corps pigeon saved a British brigade which had entered the city ahead of schedule.

1944: February 24 FIRST COMBAT USE OF SCR-584 RADAR

The newly developed microwave gun-laying SCR-584 radar set was rushed into position near Anzio, Italy, and broke a sustained German air attack. In its first use, 5 of 12 German junkers were dropped with the first radar-directed salvo. From this time, enemy high-level night bombing attacks diminished sharply.

1944: June 6 SIGNAL CORPS LANDINGS IN FRANCE

The first U. S. Army Signal Corps troops to land in the great D-Day invasion of Normandy were 28 men of the 101st Airborne Signal Company. They parachuted with the division headquarters group and landed near Hiesville.

First Signal Corps troops to come ashore afoot in France were personnel of the 294th Joint Assault Signal Company at Omaha Beach. Within a few minutes personnel of the 286th Joint Assault Signal Company landed at Utah Beach.

The 165th Signal Photographic Company landed with the first infantry elements at Omaha Beach. The commanding officer, Captain Herman Wall, was the first Army Signal Corps casualty of the Normandy invasion on 6 June 1944. His pictures were the first photographs of the invasion to reach England and be reproduced.

1944: June 8 FM MULTI-CHANNEL RADIO RELAY

The first use of FM multi-channel radio relay equipment in Europe, was between England and the Omaha Beach in Normandy.

1944: October 19 INVASION OF THE PHILLIPPINES

The most elaborate network arrangement in the history of radio broadcasting was operated by the Army Signal Corps for the release of information on the invasion of the Philippines and General MacArthur's first official communique.

1944: December 16 to 24 OPERATIONS DURING BATTLE OF BULGE

During the Battle of the Bulge, Army Signal Corps troops rerouted and installed more than 2,000 miles of new communication circuits in only seven days.

1945: February 1 TRANSFER OF SIGNAL CORPS FUNCTIONS

Responsibility for the research and development of airborne, radar, and certain other electronic equipment "peculiar to the Army Air Forces" was transferred from the Army Signal Corps to the Army Air Forces.

As a consequence, the Eatontown Signal Laboratory, a part of the Signal Corps Ground Signal Agency at Fort Monmouth, was transferred from the Army Signal Corps to the Army Air Forces. It was redesignated Watson Laboratories.

The Aircraft Radio Laboratory at Wright Field was also transferred from the Army Signal Corps to the Army Air Forces.

1945: April 1 CAMP COLES AND CAMP EVANS, NEW JERSEY

Camp Evans, including the Camp Evans Signal Laboratory, was redesignated the Evans Signal Laboratory, Belmar, New Jersey, by the Signal Corps Ground Signal Agency.

Camp Coles, including Camp Coles Signal Laboratory, was redesignated the Coles Signal Laboratory, Red Bank, New Jersey, by the Signal Corps Ground Signal Agency.

1945: April 28 FASTEST MESSAGE AROUND THE WORLD

Through facilities of the Army Signal Corps, a nine-word radioteletype message was transmitted around the world in 9.5 seconds to set a new record for speed. This broke a previous record of 3.5 minutes set in May of 1944.

1945: July 10 SIGNAL CORPS ENGINEERING LABORATORIES

The Signal Corps Ground Signal Agency was redesignated the Signal Corps Engineering Laboratories. At this time, headquarters was located at Shark River Hills, New Jersey.

At the same time, the Fort Monmouth Signal Laboratory was redesignated the Squier Signal Laboratory, Fort Monmouth, New Jersey.

In October of 1947, headquarters of the Signal Corps Engineering Laboratories was relocated from Shark River Hills to the Squier Signal Laboratory at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey.

1945: August 4 FIRST RADIO TRANSMISSION OF COLOR PHOTO

The first news color photo transmitted over facilities of the Army Signal Corps was released for publication. This was a picture of notables attending the Potsdam Conference.

1945: December 1 DISCONTINUANCE OF FACILITIES

The Detroit Signal Laboratory was discontinued, and its functions transferred to the Coles Signal Laboratory, Red Bank, New Jersey.

The Long Branch Signal Laboratory was discontinued; its functions were transferred to the Squier Signal Laboratory, Fort Monmouth, New Jersey.

1946: January 10 FIRST RADAR CONTACT WITH THE MOON

Using a modified SCR-271 long-range radar set, engineers of the Army Signal Corps at Belmar, New Jersey, succeeded in making radio contact with the moon. This was known as Project Diana.

1947: May 6 FOREIGN AID PROGRAM

The Army Signal Corps for the first time participated in the foreign aid program.

1947: August 19 TRANSFER OF ENGINEERING AGENCY

The Plant Engineering Agency was transferred from Philadelphia to Washington, D. C.

1948: August -- ELECTRONIC COUNTERMEASURES

The Army Signal Corps was assigned responsibility for the entire Army Electronic Countermeasures Program.

1948: October 1 TRAINING CENTER AT CAMP GORDON

The Signal Corps Training Center was established at Camp Gordon, Georgia. It was redesignated the U. S. Army Signal Training Center on 31 January 1957.

The Signal Corps Replacement Training Center was established at Camp Gordon in September of 1950, and discontinued in November of 1954.

Camp Gordon was redesignated Fort Gordon on 21 March 1956.

1949: January 1 FIELD STATIONS AT WHITE SANDS

A field station of the Signal Corps Engineering Laboratories was activated at Fort Bliss, Texas, for participation in guided missile experiments at the White Sands Proving Ground in New Mexico. This element later formed the nucleus for the White Sands Signal Corps Agency, when it was activated in July of 1952.

1949: March 26 INSTALLATION AT FORT MONMOUTH

The Signal Corps Center was established at Fort Monmouth, and designation of the permanent post changed to: Signal Corps Center and Fort Monmouth.

1949: August 21 SIGNAL CORPS INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

The Signal Corps Intelligence Agency was established by the Army Signal Corps in Washington, D. C. On 31 January 1957 it was redesignated the U. S. Army Signal Intelligence Agency.

1949: September 26 ARMY SIGNAL CORPS AUTOMATION

The "Auto-Sembly" system of automation, promising high-speed manufacture of sub-assemblies, was announced by the Signal Corps Engineering Laboratories. The new process combined the best features of printed circuitry and conventional component usage.

1949: September 28 HIGH ALTITUDE BALLOON RECORD

A record height of 140,000 feet was set by a high-altitude balloon of the Signal Corps Engineering Laboratories at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey.

1950: June 28 FIRST AMERICAN CASUALTY IN KOREA

Shortly after landing at the Suwon airstrip from a cargo plane carrying personnel and equipment of the 71st Signal Battalion, Private Frederick L. Walsh, Signal Corps, was wounded by enemy fire from Yak planes strafing the field.

1950: July 31 ELECTRONICS WARFARE CENTER

The Signal Corps Electronics Warfare Center was established at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey.

1951: December 1 TRAINING CENTER IN CALIFORNIA

Camp San Luis Obispo was established by the Army Signal Corps as a training center in California. This became known as the Southwestern Signal Corps Training Center. The installation was inactivated in November of 1953.

1952: January 1 SIGNAL CORPS SUPPLY AGENCY

The Signal Corps Supply Agency was established in Philadelphia by merging two formerly separate activities, the Procurement Agency and the Stock Control Agency. On 1 March 1956 it was redesignated the Army Signal Supply Agency. On 31 January 1957 it was redesignated the U. S. Army Signal Supply Agency.

1952: March 3 FIELD STATIONS AT YUMA AND MILWAUKEE

A field station of the Signal Corps Engineering Laboratories was established at Yuma, Arizona, to provide a central meteorological service within the Yuma Test Station, and also to serve as the Signal Corps Test Team in connection with desert testing activities.

A field station of the Signal Corps Engineering Laboratories was established at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in connection with radio interference suppression tests and experiments.

1952: March 7 FIELD STATION AT FORT GEORGE G. MEADE

A field station of the Signal Corps Engineering Laboratories was established at Fort George G. Meade in Maryland to install equipment and conduct engineering tests of the MISSILE MASTER electronic air defense system.

This field station was redesignated the Army Signal Air Defense Engineering Agency on 15 May 1956.

1952: May 19 WOODBRIDGE TRANSMITTING STATION

A radio transmitting station at Woodbridge, Virginia, was activated by the Army Signal Corps as an integral part of the global Army Command and Administrative Network. This station replaced the old Fort Myer and Battery Cove transmitting stations.

1952: July 1 ARMY AVIATION CENTER

The Signal Corps Army Aviation Center was established at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey.

1952: July 2 WHITE SANDS SIGNAL CORPS AGENCY

The White Sands Signal Corps Agency was established to participate in guided missile experiments at the White Sands Proving Ground, New Mexico. The Agency embraced all Army Signal Corps activities located there, including the Signal Corps Engineering Laboratories Field Station No. 1 (activated in 1949) and the White Sands Ionosphere Station (activated in 1951). On 31 January 1957 it was redesignated the U. S. Army White Sands Signal Agency.

1952: October 28 COLD SPRING BATTERY PLANT

The Cold Spring Battery Plant was established by the Army Signal Corps at Cold Spring, New York. It was the first Signal Corps government-owned but industry-built and industry-operated facility.

1952: December 17 FIRST AUTOMATIC TELETYPEWRITER SYSTEM

At 5th Army Headquarters in Chicago, the first automatic teletypewriter relay system was established by the Army Signal Corps.

1953: February 1 TOBYHANNA SIGNAL DEPOT

The Tobyhanna Signal Depot was established at Tobyhanna, Pennsylvania.

1954: February 1 ARMY ELECTRONIC PROVING GROUND

The Army Electronic Proving Ground was established as a Signal Corps activity at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. Fort Huachuca was designated a permanent Army post in August of 1954.

1954: February 23 FLIGHT INFORMATION PROGRAM

The Army Signal Corps was assigned responsibility for the Flight Information Program.

1954: May 1 WHITE HOUSE ARMY SIGNAL AGENCY

The White House Army Signal Agency was established as the Signal Corps activity responsible for all communications for the White House. This responsibility had formerly been shared by one or more other activities of the Army Signal Corps since 1941.

1954: September 30 HEXAGON FOR ENGINEERING LABORATORIES

A new hexagon building was dedicated for the Signal Corps Engineering Laboratories at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. Headquarters and the Squier Signal Laboratory moved into the new building in October, at which time Squier Signal Laboratory ceased to exist as a separate entity. About a year later, Coles Signal Laboratory was also merged as part of the Signal Corps Engineering Laboratories in the hexagon building at Fort Monmouth.

1954: December 22 ARMY AVIATION SECTION

Established near Fort Monmouth was the Army Aviation Section at Monmouth County Airport in New Jersey.

1955: October 20 ARMY SIGNAL CORPS COMMUNICATIONS SECURITY SERVICE

The Army Signal Corps Communications Security Service was established at Arlington Hall, Virginia. On 31 January 1957 it was redesignated the U. S. Army Signal Communications Security Service. On 21 February 1957 it was redesignated the U. S. Army Signal Communications Security Agency.

1956: February 1 ARMY PICTORIAL CENTER

The Signal Corps Pictorial Center was redesignated the Army Pictorial Center in Long Island City, N. Y.

1956: March 1 INSTALLATION AT FORT MONMOUTH

The Signal Corps Center at Fort Monmouth was discontinued, and this part was omitted from the title of the post.

1956: April 1 — ARMY PHOTOGRAPHIC AGENCY

The Signal Corps Photographic Library and Laboratory were merged and designated the Army Photographic Agency in Washington, D. C. It was redesignated the U. S. Army Photographic Agency on 31 January 1957.

1956: April 1 — ARMY SIGNAL COMMUNICATIONS ENGINEERING AGENCY

The Signal Corps Plant Engineering Agency in Washington, D. C., was redesignated the Army Signal Communications Engineering Agency.

1956: May 15 — SIGNAL EQUIPMENT SUPPORT AGENCY

A new agency was established at Fort Monmouth, centralizing a function formerly of the Signal Corps Engineering Laboratories. The new agency: the Signal Equipment Support Agency.

1956: May 15 — ARMY SIGNAL AIR DEFENSE ENGINEERING AGENCY

A field station of the Signal Corps Engineering Laboratories established in March of 1952 at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, was redesignated the Army Signal Air Defense Engineering Agency. This agency was primarily concerned with the testing and development of the MISSILE MASTER electronic air defense system for the Army.

1957: January 1 — DESIGNATION CHANGES OF MAJOR INSTALLATIONS

Many of the major Army Signal Corps installations were changed in designation, usually with the prefix addition of "U. S.":

Old designation	New designation
Fort Monmouth, New Jersey	U. S. Army Signal Garrison Fort Monmouth, New Jersey
The Signal School	U. S. Army Signal School
The Signal Corps Publications Agency	U. S. Army Signal Publications Agency
Armed Services Electro-Standards Agency (Army Portion)	U. S. Army Element, Armed Services Electro-Standards Agency
The Signal Corps Board	U. S. Army Signal Board
Signal Patent Agency	U. S. Army Signal Patent Agency
Signal Equipment Support Agency	U. S. Army Signal Equipment Support Agency

Signal Corps Radio Propagation Agency	U. S. Army Signal Radio Propagation Agency
Signal Corps Survey Team	U. S. Army Signal Unit Survey Team
Fort Monmouth Ionosphere Station	U. S. Army Signal Ionosphere Station Fort Monmouth, New Jersey
Signal Corps Electronic Research Unit	U. S. Army Signal Electronic Research Unit
U. S. Army Signal Communications Security Service	U. S. Army Signal Communications Security Agency
Army Aviation Center	U. S. Army Aviation Center

1957: January 15 ARMY COMBAT SURVEILLANCE AGENCY

The U. S. Army Combat Surveillance Agency was established in Washington, D. C.

1957: January 31 DESIGNATION CHANGES OF MAJOR INSTALLATIONS

Many of the major Army Signal Corps installations were changed in designation, usually with the addition of "U. S. Army":

Old Designation	New Designation
Army Command and Administrative Communication Agency	U. S. Army Communication Agency Fort Myer, Virginia
Army Signal Communications Engineering Agency	U. S. Army Signal Communications Engineering Agency Washington, D. C.
Alaska Communication Systen	U. S. Army Alaska Communication System Seattle, Washington
Army Signal Corps Communications Security Service	U. S. Army Signal Communications Security Service Washington, D. C.
Army Photographic Agency	U. S. Army Photographic Agency Washington, D. C.
Signal Corps Aviation Test and Support Activity	U. S. Army Signal Aviation Test and Support Detachment Fort Rucker, Alabama

Signal Company Special	U. S. Army Signal Company Special Fort Riley, Kansas
Signal Corps Intelligence Agency	U. S. Army Signal Intelligence Agency Washington, D. C
Army Electronic Proving Ground	U. S. Army Electronic Proving Ground Fort Huachuca, Arizona
The Army Signal Supply Agency	U. S. Army Signal Supply Agency Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
White Sands Signal Corps Agency	U. S. Army White Sands Signal Agency White Sands, PG, New Mexico
Army Signal Air Defense Engineering Agency	U. S. Army Signal Air Defense Engineering Agency Fort Meade, Maryland
Signal Corps Engineering Laboratories	U. S. Army Signal Engineering Laboratories Fort Monmouth, New Jersey
Signal Corps Training Center	U. S. Army Signal Training Center Fort Gordon, Georgia
Southeastern Signal School	U. S. Army Southeastern Signal School Fort Gordon, Georgia
Signal Corps Unit Training Group	U. S. Army Signal Unit Training Group Fort Gordon, Georgia.

1957: December 5 MISSILE MASTER AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM

The first fully operational electronic air defense system in the United States, designed and developed by the U. S. Army Signal Air Defense Engineering Agency, was formally placed in operation at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, by the U. S. Army Air Defense Command.

1958: April 1 ARMY SIGNAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY

The U. S. Army Signal Engineering Laboratories at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, were redesignated the U. S. Army Signal Research and Development Laboratory.

1958: April 29 U. S. ARMY SIGNAL ENGINEERING AGENCY

The U. S. Army Signal Communications Engineering Agency in Washington, D. C., was redesignated the U. S. Army Signal Engineering Agency.