

HISTORICAL REPORT
After Action Report
of
570th Signal Company
for
1 February 1945 to 1 March 1945

GENERAL

During the month of February, 1945, 570th Signal Company under the command of Capt Myron M. Leszynski made a long trip by motor convoy from the vicinity of Marseilles, France to St Jean Rohrbach in Lorraine where 70th Infantry Division forward division headquarters was located. It there relieved 250th Signal Company and took over the communications of the division. Existing lines were policed and extended; forward and rear message centers and message center service were established and maintained; the radio section took over and operated the division Net; teletype communication with division rear command post and with corps headquarters was maintained; and considerable wire was picked up within the division area. Several pieces of captured electrical communications equipment were adapted to the use of the division.

ADMINISTRATION

On the first day of February, the task of equipping the company for combat service and of preparing it for an extended motor convoy was completed. On 2 February the company set out across France, bivouacing at St Rambert, Dijon, Epinal, and Morhange. The first bivouac area was a quagmire of mud from melting snows, the second a city park covered with eighteen inches of snow, and the third an old bakery. In Morhange the company was bivouaced in the division rear command post in barracks of a former French military post. One might say that quartering improved each night of the convoy until the company reached its destination at St Jean Rohrbach. There, though the installations were basically satisfactory, the previous occupation of the building and area by other military units had left a condition of filth requiring immediate attention. Buildings had to be cleaned, yards cleared, and even pavements dug out from under deep layers of accumulated mud.

Upon its arrival the company was set up on a strict basis of Tables of Organisation. To meet the particular circumstances facing the division, the Division Signal Officer reorganized the various sections of the company. The division was stretched out over an unusually wide area, and radio was not being used to any extent in the relatively static situation that obtained on the front at that period. There was also a critical wire situation. Therefore, the construction section of the company was increased from four teams to ten: the three regimental teams, four heavy construction teams, and three light teams. Telephone and Telegraph section, less teletype operators, was attached to construction section to form what was termed a wire operations section. This new section was placed under command of 1st Lt Douglas G. Blankenship, who became Wire operations Officer. As his assistant was 2nd Lt Edward C. Brand, formerly Telephone and Telegraph Officer. The teletype operators detached from wire operations section were attached to message center section under command of 1st Lt Gustav A. Graffius, Message Center officer, and his assistant, 1st Lt William H. Schmidt (then 2nd Lt). The personnel of Message Center at division rear command post was reduced from its T/O strength of twelve men to three enlisted men. Certain personnel was detached from radio and message center sections to form a wire salvage team. Increased personnel of 52, authorized by Army, was assigned to the company and absorbed into the organization, most of the men being used to make up the ten wire construction teams. Radio Repair, Telephone and Teletype Repair, and Division Signal Supply Sections were united under command of 1st Lt James T Shanahan, Division Signal Supply Officer, with Mr. Ira G. Tyler as his assistant. About the middle of the month minor revisions were made in the organization of wire operations section, but the main setup remained unchanged.

Lt Col Herman R. Wagner, Division Signal Officer, took over direct command of the operations of the company, dealing directly with the various sections. The activities of the company commander, Capt. Myron M. Leszynski, were limited exclusively to administration.

The company occupied six buildings, former barracks for a French garrison of the Maginot Line. Billets were assigned, the various section installations made. In general, section personnel lived in the immediate vicinity of the section installation. Within a few days the sanitary conditions had been greatly ameliorated, and all administrative functions were thoroughly established and operating smoothly.

Operations: Wire Operations Section

The newly organized wire operations section inherited a wire system which had been installed for the use of another American division. Most of the system was old and there were entanglements of dead circuits which further complicated repair work. Two switchboards TC-4 were used at the forward division command post and a captured 20-drop German switchboard was in use at rear. Another switchboard BD-72 was installed at Wyandot Switch in Farberswiller north of Puttlange. Lines from division headquarters ran forward to this switch and separated there to continue on to the regiments. By the end of the month, lines had nearly all been rerouted along railroads to get them away from menaces of tanks and vehicles along the roads. In Puttelange the lines of several other organizations made that town a constant center of trouble.

Seven teams of the construction platoon under T/Sgt Dan K. Fogarty cleared dead circuits in the existing wire systems near division forward command post from 5 February for four days through 9 February. The three regimental teams improved existing installations to their respective regiments. From 10 February to 1 March four heavy construction teams carried out construction assignments involving the use of all commercial telephone and power poles from Deibling through Hundling to Lixing, and from Deibling through Bushbach to Folking. This type of construction placed insurance on circuit service hours because the lines on poles were kept free of all ground activities. In carrying out these operations S/Sgt Richard L. Cunningham and S/Sgt Thomas J. Leonard's teams worked through mine fields. During the same period teams under Sgts Charles I. Pennington, Robert E. Mills, and Laurance H. Hagen maintained all lines of communication other than those to the regiments. During one of these operations Sgt Pennington's team was strafed by enemy aircraft. The work of the regimental teams under Sgts William L. Thompson, Jack D. Richards and Marvin L. Bausman maintained their circuits while exposed to enemy gun fire. About 18 February 1st Sgt Walter J. Cichon took direct overall charge of construction, and T/Sgt Fogarty was given the supervision of wire installations within division headquarters command posts.

During the latter part of the month, the regiments moved forward and lines became very extended so that it became necessary to utilize repeaters to carry voices over the distances. At one time one of the regiments lost its entire wire crews in action. A team was lent to the regimental communications officer and under Sgt Anthony D. Franklin replaced the infantry wire crews until such time as reinforcements were organized. Throughout the period two shifts of two men patrolled lines 24 hours a day against sabotage. The division had experienced some wire cutting during the month of January, but this ceased after the establishment of the patrols (in January) and capture of a pair of wire cutters.

For their work during this period, Lt Douglas G. Blankenship and S/Sgt Richard M. Cunningham received the commendation of the Commanding General of the division.

Message Center Section

On 2 February 1945, the first European Message Center of 570th Signal Company closed when the company began to move in motor convoy to Morhange. On 6 February an advance team of one officer, one warrant officer and seventeen enlisted men relieved the Message center maintained at 70th Infantry Division Headquarters, St Jean Rohrbach, by 250th Signal Company

gave this team a complete orientation of current operations. The remainder of the message center personnel joined the advance team 7 February, leaving a crew of four men to operate the rear Message Center at Morhange. This crew was later reduced to three enlisted men. In addition to serving all original division units down to regiments, Message Center extended its service to attached units. A scheduled messenger on foot also covered the various staff sections within the command post. 1st Sgt Theodore B. Moyer was section chief.

Three operating teams were in service, each working twelve hours. Each team had eight hours regular duty plus four more of miscellaneous duties, such as care and cleaning of vehicles and equipment or orientation. An up to date log of the length of time required to travel to various units has been established and maintained, and daily traffic reports are maintained covering messages serviced by the Message Center. From four to six teletype operators have been attached to the Message Center throughout the period and work under the command of the Message Center Officer. The section furnished personnel for wire salvage teams, guard mounts, and other special company duties. Radio Section

The section arrived with the company and other units of 70th Infantry Division Special Troops at Morhange, France, 5 February. This contingent under the Radio officer, 1st Lt Conrad A. Stahl and the Section Chief, T/Sgt James E. Meyer, was composed of 28 operators. It moved to St Jean Rohrbach on 6 February to the division command post, joining the other twelve operators who had preceded the section to France as a part of the division advance headquarters detachment.

During the 6th and 7th, the relief of the 250th Signal company in operation of division radio was effected. Nets taken over at the command post were the Division Command Net by a team under Tec 4 William Blueskye, Division Special Purpose Net by a team under S/Sgt Frederick W. Patton, and Corps Command Net by a team under S/Sgt Erwin L. Steen. All Nets at the command post were under the general supervision of T/Sgt Shulim C. Huber. In addition two teams were detached on the 7th to operate with the regimental combat teams of the 275th and 276th Infantry Regiments, one team under Sgt Irvin Sillerud joining its regiment (275th) at Gubenhause, the other under Tec 4 Edward L. Lazar joining its regiment (276th) at Ferberswiller, later moving to Benning. On the 9th another team under Tec 3 Raymond C. O'Keefe was detached to the 274th Infantry Regiment at Farberswiller. These regimental teams operated for about three weeks and were finally recalled when radio communication with division was taken over by the regimental radio sections. A relay team for the Special Purpose Net was established under Tec 4 Adelbert J. Smith at Seignobus, and on the 15th another relay team was installed for the Division Command Net by Tec 4 Stanley Organ's team at Deibling. Then the regimental detachments were recalled, the relay at Deibling took over relay operation for both nets and the team at Seignobus was recalled 28 February.

From 9 February to the end of the month, the section furnished personnel (8 to 14) for division wire salvage teams. These teams operated continuously under command of Lt Conrad A. Stahl.

During the entire period covered by this report, radio operation was continuous on all nets. There were no major technical or transmission difficulties.

Division Signal Supply and Repair Section

Signal Supply Section was already functioning when the company arrived at Morhange on 5 February. Signal Supply and Radio and Telephone and Telegraph Repair were immediately formed into a single section with T/Sgt Emil George as Section Chief, Tec 4 Walter I. Owen in charge of Division Signal Supply, and T/Sgt Wilford G. Pusey in charge of Telephone and Telegraph Repair, and set up near division rear command post. Repair trucks had been equipped at CP-2 near Marseilles before moving up to join the rest of the division. Aside from regular requisitioning and issue of Signal supplies, Division Signal Supply had certain major shortages of materiel to contend with. Of these the most critical and most urgently needed was wire. During

the month this shortage was largely overcome, although issue kept rather close pace with receipts. Shortages in Radio Sets SCR-300 and SCR-536, as well as shortages of Reel Equipment CE-11 were finally eliminated after considerable effort.

Radio Repair was assisted in its initial organization by a detachment from Seventh Army. An inventory of spare parts was made immediately upon arrival at Morhange and requisitions entered to cover shortages. A mobile repair team was formed and serviced the regiments, special troops, and attached units for a time. It was discontinued, however, before the end of the month. Personnel of the Radio Repair Section were used by Signal Supply Section during the early part of the month to assist in the handling and trucking of wire.

Telephone and Telegraph Repair installed a ventilating system in the mess truck on the 1st day of February immediately before leaving CP-2. Upon arrival, repair work began immediately and parts were sorted in the midst of this work. Also work was done in an effort to develop repeaters which could satisfactorily increase the range of our hard pressed lines. Three types were developed, but none were judged satisfactory by the Division Signal Officer. Further work was interrupted by changes in the situation. German dial phones were brought in for conversion into substitutes for ??-8s*. A 5-drop test board was built for the Assistant Wire Operations Officer, and a 3-drop switchboard was made for G-3 Air Support. The section was also engaged for some time in the splicing of 5 and 10-pair cables. An Army repair unit was stationed in Morhange, and arrangements were made with them so that the section obtained several extra telephone sets and converters. This enabled the section to exchange good equipment for equipment brought in for repair and reduced to nothing delays in securing repairs on this type of equipment. One man was absent for the whole month at the forward wire dump.

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*Unreadable on document - webmaster.