

Tuesday 21 Nov. '44

Somewhere in Belgium.

Dear Mom & Chief

yesterday (tho' I've seen no letters for some time) brought some good news in the guise of 3 packages from you. Swell! I'd hardly expected to see any arrive so soon. But I didn't waste any time thinking about that. I opened them to find the flashlight, cigarette lighter, scarf, sweater, gum, candy, chicken, pickles & pineapple. Thanks million. The light is just the type we use here and the lighter fits to a T. But the biggest surprise of all was that bottled cake. Your note said you hoped I'd like it. Well, I did - and so did about 20 other fellows. They "ooked" & "ah-ed", and guessed at everything from brandy to whiskey. The general opinion was that it was soaked in rye - but good. One fellow suggested we squeeze the cake thru a paper bag & drink the squeezies. But the overall effect (one fellow

jokingly complained the cake burned ~~on~~
his throat as it went down) was good
morale. Sure hope I get some more
of that bottled stuff in the remaining
4 pgs I ~~xx~~ haven't received yet.

Mom, I'm sending the shoes home
soon's I get a chance. Can't use 'em now
& they'd just be so much trouble to
cart around. ^{and} I'll enclose a small
bottle of perfume & a bayonet pin.
I don't know when they'll arrive, but I
want you to give them to Peg as a
birthday present from me.

By the way, Eleanor Kirwan sent
me a Christmas card. First of the
season. Nice kid.

Well, Mom, with no letters at hand
to answer, I'm finding it hard to write.
So I'll close for a while. — By the way,
some of our 4255 mail is coming in —
one fellow got over 20 of 'em at once.
That's all for now

P.S. Am enclosing a press
release, originally printed in
Stars & Stripes.

Love, as ever
Frank.

P.P.S. I'm very peeved about your removing
your picture from my folder before you sent
it to me. Don't you want me to have a
picture of you? Please reconsider just what
you did - and send the picture.

Love, Frank.

HEADQUARTERS
COMMUNICATIONS ZONE
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES ARMY

(Censored)

EXTRACTED FROM REPORT OF PRESS CONFERENCE
NUMBER: 2055

4 November 1944

"VICTORY GOES TO THE ARMY WITH THE BEST COMMUNICATIONS"

How fast and how far will our armies be able to go when they break through the German Siegfried Line? Can they sweep forward to Berlin with the same speed and power they showed smashing from Normandy to the borders of the Reich?

The answer hangs on a thread. And what a thread!

The thread is spun by the Signal Corps. It is the communications system which covers the continent like a spider web. The Signal men vow that this thread will not break. They will spin and weave it into Germany as they did behind the racing infantry and tanks in Normandy---the most spectacular military campaign in History.

Police Scout Car Radio System Goes to War as VHF

There were times during the smash through, however, when even wire could not keep immediate pace with fast moving armored columns. The Signal Corps was faced with a new contingency. To meet the need, a system of very high frequency (VHF) radio relay equipment was utilized---stations taking about four hours to install and sight.

This radio relay system consists of stations 25 to 100 miles apart, each beamed on the next like a rifle on a target. The military possibilities of this system were developed in America and England after it was first tried out in North Africa.

A considerable quantity of police scout car radio equipment had been procured for expected police communications requirements in North Africa, and this equipment was found admirably suited to provide communications for the rapid advance. As a result of this successful experiment and concurrent British groundwork, the amazing radio relay link equipment in use to-day was developed in the U.S. and in England, and was made to provide four teleprinter circuits plus three radio telephone circuits as compared with one teleprinter circuit of the experimental models in Africa.

Before the opening of the Second Front, the Signal Corps in Great Britain mapped out conditions expected for trans-channel communications and sent the information to the War Department. A topographical replica of these conditions, which include water path and elevation factors, was discovered along the coast of

Maine. Here, the problems in invasion communication by high frequency relay equipment were worked out in detail and smooth signal operations were insured for the greatest amphibious assault in history.

Although this equipment had not been subjected to severe tests under combat, the Chief Signal Officer in Washington anticipated the wide application of this equipment and embarked on a production program immediately. American mass production methods came through again. The European Theater was fortunate in that the task of planning the combat communications for the invading army fell to a Signal Officer who had served as Division and Corps Signal Officer in Algeria, Tunisia, and Sicily and who is now Signal Officer of General Bradley's Army. Col. Grant Williams anticipated an extensive utilization of radio relay equipment, ordered what seemed like fantastic quantities and as a result the Army was able to meet the demands of the rapid advance from the shores of Normandy to the Siegfried line and to share this valuable equipment with others who needed it. This VHF radio with its speed of installation and accurate transmission was one of the chief factors which enabled the American Armies to continue their rapid drive through France.

VHF relay also provided the initial contact between the besieged continent and Great Britain on D-Day. Signal men in England could hear the shells and machine guns as they listened to the messages of their comrades on the far side.

One of the outstanding Signal Corps outfits in this war, from a radio standpoint, is the 980th Signal Service Company, commanded by Captain Donald J. Lake of Johnstown, Ohio. Its men landed soon after D-Day, operating the high frequency relay. They are now scattered in groups of five or so all the way from the front to Cherbourg, along the French Channel coast, back to the Southern ports of England. Other units operate in similarly isolated groups over a vast area. Living like hermits in tiny stations on hilltops and towers miles from anywhere, their only contact with the world is radio and semi-weekly visits of the ration trucks.

It is no secret now that, exploiting their break through with amazing skill and courage, our fighting men moved much faster than had been expected. It is no secret, either, that our Signal men were called upon to do the impossible---to make equipment and men stretch their resources in unprecedented operations and endurance. For each gain that the combat troops made forward, Communications Zone Signal men have had that much additional area to consolidate with permanent signal connections.

* * * * *

CERTIFIED A TRUE EXTRACT COPY:

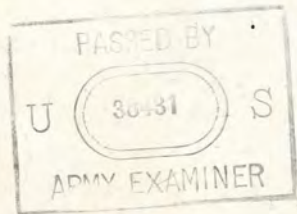
HGT/ash

Harold G. Tait
HAROLD G. TAIT,
2d Lt, Sig C,
Personnel O, 980th Sig Sv Co

Pfc. Francis J. Shields 12110488
Co C - 3186 Sig Sv Bn - APO 4250
% PM, New York, N. Y.



Mrs. Frank J. Shields
244 - 87 Street
Brooklyn 9
New York.



H. Lewis



Written Nov 21
Recd Jan 4-45
Answered Jan 5