

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY OF THE 420TH SIGNAL COMPANY, (AVIATION)

RETAINMENT XIV

5 August 1945

Prepared Under the Direction Of:

Orren F. Hayes
ORREN F. HAYES
Capt., Sig. Co.,
Commanding

History Compiled And Edited By:

Joseph Colpant
JOSEPH COLPANT
1st Lt., Sig. Co.,
Unit Historical Co.

APPROVED:

Albert H. Dyren
Albert H. Dyren
First Sergeant.

Mark E. Miller
Mark E. Miller
Mail Clerk

With The Assistance Of:

Milton J. Robbins
Milton J. Robbins
Adm. Clerk

Robert L. Tunall
Robert L. Tunall
Adm. Clerk

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ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY OF THE 424TH SIGNAL COMPANY, AVIATION

BATTALION XIV

A. ORGANIZATION

I. Operational Growth of Organization.

(a) Personnel requirements in accordance with T/O & R 11-217 & 11-500 are thirteen (13) Officers and two hundred forty-six (246) Enlisted Men.

(1) Total strength of the Company as of 31 July 1945: Thirteen (13) Officers, two hundred forty (240) Enlisted Men and ten (10) WACS.

(2) During July, in addition to the one (1) Officer and twenty-three (23) Enlisted Men previously reported, three (3) Officers and forty (40) Enlisted Men of the Organization were placed on Detached Service with Headquarters Squadron, Army Air Force, China Theater, APO 879, comprising the 424th Detachment, whose task it is to operate and maintain signal communications for the Army Air Force Headquarters in the China Theater. In order to replace these specialists it has been necessary to secure replacements from various units within the India-Burma Theater. Prior to the arrival of the first five (5) of the above mentioned replacements the strength of the organization was at its lowest level since October 1944, totaling two hundred and eleven (211) Enlisted Men, by the end of July soaring to

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two hundred and forty (240) Enlisted Men.

(9) Nine (9) Enlisted Men of the 801st Signal Company, Depot, Aviation, APO 690, were placed on DS with this Organization on 20 July 1945 to aid in carrying out the working schedule followed by the "424th".

(A) On 10th July 1945, Staff Sergeant John R. Evening, who had been on Detached Service with the organization for thirteen (13) months, due to the Theater Signal Officer controlling all assignment of Cryptographic Repairmen (001). S/Sgt Evening was returned after having served as cryptographic repairman for the "424th" accomplishing a degree of skill and devotion to duty which reflects great credit upon himself and his Unit.

B. MATERIAL ON HAND.

- I. There have been no changes in organizational equipment on hand and possessed by the Company as of 31 July 1945.
- II. With the assignment of additional personnel during the month of July, the personnel situation has been equalized, replacements taking over positions of men being transferred to the China Theater. These replacements are Enlisted Men of practical experience in their particular field.

C. FACILITIES AVAILABLE.

- I. Normal administrative functions prevail. No change has occurred in Signal Communication facilities operated by personnel of the 424th Signal Co., Avn., during July 1945.

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B. STATION (PERMANENT OR TEMPORARY)

- I. The organization is still housed in "A" Bay in the northern-most part of the mill, Hothings Air Base. The men are billeted comfortably despite slightly cramped conditions due to an overlap of personnel, replacements arriving prior to departure of Enlisted Men for IS with the Army Air Forces in China.

C. CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION.

- I. No authorized changes in designation, official or otherwise have been made by the unit during the month of July 1945. The 424th Signal Company, Aviation, has continued to maintain its operating efficiency, thereby performing the mission assigned it satisfactorily.

D. MAJOR ACTIVITIES.

I. COMMANDING OFFICER.

On 10 July 1945, Captain OWEN F. HAYNES, Company Commander, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal....."for meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services as Commanding Officer of the 424th Signal Company Aviation, from 23 February 1944 to 10 May 1945, in connection with operations against the enemy. Captain HAYNES has been primarily responsible for the highly successful operations of the communications system serving Headquarters, Army Air Force, and associated Air Force Commands. His foresight in planning, leadership and untiring devotion to duty, made a communications system function comparable to commercial organizations, in spite of extreme supply and

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construction difficulties," according to the official citation. Captain HAYES was awarded the Bronze Star Medal by authority of General Order #162, Headquarters, Army Air Forces, India-Burma Theater, AFO 671. It was presented the well deserved award at 1100 hours, 15 July 1945, by Lieutenant General GEORGE H. STRATHEMER, now Commanding General, Army Air Forces, China Theater.

II. GENERAL.

At the turning point of the month the Enlisted Men under Technical Sergeant Leonard D. Spottwood, 991st Signal Battalion, Aviation, SP, who were placed on Temporary Duty with this organization for the purpose of operating and maintaining Frequency Modulated radio communications, dismantled the Frequency Modulated Radio Set AM/FMO-1, that they had installed during the month of May 1945. These men were returned to their organization as the need for radio communication no longer exists. To date the 424th has dispensed with all radio communication, former radio personnel serving with the 10th Air Force, 424th Detachment, China Theater, and in specialist jobs in the Signal Center.

July was a month of great consternation in the 424th Signal Center. The much delayed and many times postponed shipment of personnel to China finally came to fruition, that is, those men scheduled for shipping were relieved from duty. Then postponed again men were called back to duty, finally ending in the men being placed on definite orders. The loss of seventeen (17) men from the Code Room, six (6) from the Message Center, and nine (9) from the Teletype Section was a

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serious organizational upheaval. To be sure new men arrived having practical experience in their fields but lacking the knowledge of procedure used in the 424th Signal Center. A readjustment of section and operation heads became necessary. First Lieutenant ROSS E. WALSH was appointed, in addition to his other duties, as Signal Center Officer, being in complete charge of the Code Section, Message Center Section and Teletype Section. He is assisted by M/Sgt Fred C. Hill, Jr., appointed Signal Center Non-com. S/Sgt Floyd D. Smith as Teletype Chief, S/Sgt Stanley J. Carter as Message Center Chief, and 1st Lt. Sgt. Joseph Henry as Code Room Chief, comprise the remainder of the new operating staff. Replacements are now in the process of being familiarized with the working procedure under the guidance of men who have operated under the existing methods since April 1944, when operations first began at Hastings Air Base. During this period of change-over, message traffic gradually increased, the Code Room group count averaging as high as 65,000 groups per day, the Message Center and Teletype Sections reaching as high as 105,000 groups per day.

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COMMANDER OFFICER -- Captain Owen F. Hayes, Commanding Officer, of the 424th Signal Company Aviation, in his office just inside the 424th Signal Center, performing the many duties involved in carrying on signal communications for HQ AAF INT, X-2 ATC, HQ-300, 100, 22nd SCU, and associated Air Force Commands at Hastings Air Base, Apo 671.



Captain OWEN F. HAYES, Company Commander, right, and First Lieutenant HARRY A. BOWEN, Operations Officer admire Meritorious Service Unit Plaque awarded the Company on 13 April 1945.

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HIGHER OFFICE -- First Lieutenant Joseph Colpeart, Personnel Officer, and First Sergeant Edward F. Wadyko, who was recently returned to the United States and Officer Candidate School, in the office just off the Orderly Room, where the Lieutenant supervises the administration of the Company.



HEADQUARTERS SECTION -- Left to right, T/Sgt Cornelius, then Sergeant, Cpl Robbers, F/Sgt. Wadyko, Pfc Mayhood and Sgt. McCafferty, Company Mail Clerk, who comprise the Orderly Room Personnel, in the office situated at the entrance to "A" Bay of the mill, Hastings Air Base, where administrative functions of the company are carried on.

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Col. W. H. ENGLISH, AOC, congratulates Capt. OWEN F. HAYNES, Company Commander on the award of the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque in the latter's office, 424th Signal Center, Hastings Air Base, APO 671.



CODE AND CIPHER SECTION -- First Lieutenant Ross E. Walker, Message Center Officer, who, with the assistance of N/Sgt Fred G. Hill, Jr., directs the functions of the Code and Cipher Section where personnel perform the cryptographic duties of ciphering and deciphering messages handled in the Signal Center. This section handles as high as 75,000 groups per day. The map, put up by Lt. Walker, serves as a diagram of theater signal circuits, stations being designated by various colored pins.

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TRANSMITTER SITE -- The remote transmitter site at Ballyghat Seaplane Base which is operated by S/Sgt Merican, T/4 Scheitzsch, T/4 Scott, Cpl Broadland, and T/5s Smith, M. A., and Springett, who are billeted in the building shown in the background.



(HQAAFIBTPL 27APR 45-212-18) (CONFIDENTIAL)

RADIO ANTENNA -- In the foreground stands the radio boom antenna which forms a part of the Radio Transmitter Site at Ballyghat Seaplane Base; this antenna being used on the circuit to Kuming, China. In the background is the building which housed the 424th officers during the monsoon season of 1944.

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T/S Gwely, left, and Cpl Flanner operate the chief operator's booking board for long distance calls. Designed by W/Mgt Frank H. Wilcox, Wire Chief, this board enables the chief operator to keep a log on all long distance calls made.



TELEPHONE MAINTENANCE ROOM -- W/Mgt Frank H. Wilcox, Wire Chief, and his assistants, S/Mgt Polnin, left, and T/A Sylvester, center, in the maintenance room of the Telephone Exchange. On the left is shown the power panel and test desk with the fire extinguisher up above ready for emergency use. On the right is the power frame (M-19), supplying full power for the switchboards behind the left wall.

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SENDING AND RECEIVING -- Another view of a portion of the radio section with a few of the personnel who operate the various stations on a twenty-four (24) hour basis, namely, l. to r., Pfc Marinello, T/Sgt Lovitky, Cpl Campbell and Pfc McClelland. This section operates two circuits, the first employing stations JOUR and WINF, and stations BOG, RSO and JOUR comprising the second. The radio section handles as high as 32,900 groups per day.



RADIO REPAIR ROOM -- In this space adjoining the Radio Room, Radio mechanics from left to right, S/Sgt Zeman, T/4 Stump, Pfc Allensworth and T/5 Suddendorf maintain the various transmitters and receivers, as well as other sets used in the 424th, in an excellent working condition.

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POWER ROOM -- The Power Room, situated directly opposite the East wall of the 424th Signal Center, houses the gas driven generators which provide emergency power for all signal equipment operated by communication personnel of the 424th Signal Company, Aviation.



RADIO SECTION -- Personnel under the supervision of First Lieutenant Thomas E. Strickland, Radio Officer, (center left) and W/1st Richard Hroll, Radio Chief, efficiently transmit and receive as high as 300 messages per day. Note the super-two receivers. Operating here from l. to r., are Pfc Marinello, T/S Hiere, and Cpl Campbell, H. M.

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TELETYPE SECTION -- Shown are a small percentage of the personnel who send and receive over their machines as high as 170,000 groups per day handled by this section. In the foreground is T/Sgt Jeffrey C. Everson, Message Center Chief. First Lieutenant Blinn is at the duty officer's desk and forming the semi-circle from l. to r., are: Pfc Myers, T/A Love, Cpl Shepherd, Cpl Strunckenburg, T/A Dallen, T/A Weinstein, Pfc Boncherry, and T/S Vogel.

There are 15 stations in regular operation, some of which are handled by the eight positions shown.



TELETYPE REPAIR -- A portion of the repair and maintenance room of the Teletype Section where T/Sgt Outnik, T/A Aldrich, Cpl Alexander, Cpl Wickman and Pfc Palmann keep the intricate mechanisms of twenty-five (25) teletype machines in a good working order. Shown performing this duty are Cpl Wickman left, and Pfc Palmann. In addition S/Sgt Frenning, Pfc Ray and Pfc Nisco maintain twelve (12) SIG-ARM and two (2) SIG-CUM machines.

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TELEPHONE SWITCHBOARD -- being operated by 424th personnel, from l. to r., Cpl Hampton, Cpl Schlundt, T/S Feiter, Cpl Flanner and Sgt. Savely.



INSPECTED -- Inspecting the power frame situated in the Power Room directly behind the Telephone Switchboard, "Buffalo Exchange" area, from l. to r., First Lieutenant BOWY A. HEINTZEN, Captain OWEN F. HAYNES, Major ALFRED H. SCHMIDT, Base Executive Officer, Col CARL L. JENSEN, Commanding Officer, Hastings Air Base and First Lieutenant JOHN F. O'BRIEN.

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SUPPLY SECTION -- S/Sgt Frank Felt, Supply Sergeant (extreme left), and his three Supply Clerks, Pfc Lewis, T/S Marconi, and Pfc Bobock, who handle the large amounts of supplies and incidentals used by the Organization.



MOTOR POOL -- The 424th Motor Pool, situated at Dallyghat Seaplane Base, where drivers and mechanics of the Unit are billeted and carry on the various functions connected with transportation, maintenance of vehicles, and message delivery for the Company.

There are five jeeps, three trucks, and two motorcycles which are maintained and driven by S/Sgt Watson, motor sergeant, T/S Brown, T/S Bardick, T/S Cobb, Pfc Buta, Pfc Cain, Pfc Castillo, and Pfc Hasty, Richards and Stutting.

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MESSAGE CENTER COUNTER -- Situated just inside the Signal Center, in the counter where members of British and other American Units at Hastings Air Base deliver and receive messages to and from New Delhi and other headquarters in the Theater, as well as to and from China and the United States. Pfc Dougherty gives service to a member of the British forces.



MESSAGE CENTER SECTION -- T/Sgt Jeffrey C. Everson, Message Center Chief, and a small percentage of the message center clerks who carry on a smooth flow of the enormous message traffic handled by the 124th Signal Company, Aviation, as high as 170,000 groups per day are handled by this section. The personnel shown here are Sgt. Carter, foreground and left to right are Cpl. Jannchen, Cpl. Dougherty, T/S Cristando, Pfc Dougherty, T/S Weinstein, T/S Story, Cpl. Alexander, 1st Lt. Bliss and T/Sgt Everson.

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STATISTICAL SECTION -- The Statistical Section of the 424th Signal Center where daily information from a number of logs maintained respectively by the Message Center, Teletype, Radio and Code Room sections is consolidated by, from l. to r., T/4 Scule, Sgt. Kissinger, Pfc Tunall and T/5 Rosenberg. This section handles as high as 171,000 groups per day.



OPERATIONS OFFICE -- First Lieutenant Crowder F. Elias, Message Center Officer, in the operations office performing one of many administrative duties connected with Message Center operation. His duty as head of the Message Center and Teletype Section carries a large amount of responsibility which the Lieutenant diligently maintains.

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