

HEADQUARTERS 40TH SIGNAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

HISTORICAL RECORD

1. Original Unit:

- a. 40th Signal Construction Battalion
- b. Activated 21 September 1942.
- c. Activated at Camp Campbell, Kentucky.
- d. Authority: War Department letter order.
- e. Sources from which enlisted personnel were obtained:
  - (1) Fifty (50) cadre men from 29th Signal Construction Bn.
  - (2) Selective Service recruits from Fort Dix, New Jersey, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and Camp Robinson, Arkansas.

2. Changes in Organization:

- a. 10 January 1944: Relieved from assignment 14th Headquarters Special Troops, Second Army, Camp Campbell, Kentucky.  
Auth: Movement Orders Shipment 8069-GG, GGX Secret ltr, Hq Second Army 020249Z January 44 (GNMBF)
- b. 11 January 1944: Assigned First United States Army, ETOUSA.  
Auth: Troop Assignment #2, 1944, First United States Army.
- c. 11 January 1944: Attached Service of Supply, ETOUSA.  
Troop Assignment #2, First United States Army.
- d. 22 January 1944: Relieved from attachment Service of Supply, ETOUSA.  
Auth: Troop Assignment #9, Hq ETOUSA, 1944.
- e. 14 April 1944: Assigned to First United States Army Group, Relieved from assignment First United States Army.  
Auth: Troop Assignment #49, 1944, Hq ETOUSA.
- f. 14 April 1944: Attached First United States Army, ETOUSA.  
Auth: Troop Assignment #49, 1944, Hq ETOUSA.

HEADQU ERS 40TH SIGNAL CONSTRUCTION B ALION  
APO 655 US ARMY

1 January 1944

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The 40th Signal Construction Battalion had a readiness date for overseas shipment as of 1 January 1944, and after numerous inspections the organization on 10 January 1944 boarded two troop trains at Camp Campbell, Kentucky, Capt George W Drawbaugh and Capt Edgar Pooley as train commanders. The train arrived at Camp Shanks, New York on 12 January 1944. There the unit was processed for six days, preparing last minute insurance, allotments, undergoing innoculations and physical inspections, executing change of address cards, replacing clothing, and performing last minute drill with the gas mask.

On 12 January 1944, the Battalion boarded the Steamship Susan B Anthony, Major Tilton D McNeal assuming command of all troops on board, 1st Lt Weinstein acted as Ships Adjutant, while M Sgt Walker and his assistants acted as ships clerks.

The 40th Signal Construction Battalion landed at Newport, South Wales, on the 29th of January 1944, and entrained for Eynsham Park, Northleigh, Oxfordshire, England, where the entire battalion was garrisoned in Neison huts.

The five months, from February to June, were devoted to intensive training in all forms of wire construction, including the battalions introduction to British Multi-Air-Line Construction.

On 26 April, the battalion was alerted for movement overseas for the purpose of taking part in the liberation of the continent of Europe. Eynsham Park was our concentration area.

On 2 June, the Battalion in strength participated in the "Salute the Soldier Week" inaugural parade at Long Handborough, Oxfordshire, England.

On 2 July 1944, at 2345, the battalion left Eynsham Park by Motor convoy for the marshalling area 1/RCRP/4 near Dorchester, England, a distance of approximately one hundred thirty miles. It rained during the entire nine hours of the movement. The Battalion was broken into craft loads and at 0145 hours, 5 July 1944, the first craft load, LST 1359, left for embarkation area at Portland, England, followed at 0230 hours by craft load, LST 1360, and at 0630 hours by craft load LST 1361.

The convoy left the port in England at 2200 hours, 5 July 1944, and after an uneventful crossing arrived at Omaha Beach, Normandy, France, at approximately 1200 hours, 6 July 1944, debarking between 1400 and 1630 hours the same day.

The Battalion moved to Vehicle Transit Area Number Four (4), Omaha Beach, and proceeded to dewaterproof vehicles and set up night bivouac. At approximately 1440 hours, 7 July 1944, the unit proceeded in motor convoy to bivouac area, 2 miles west of Valognes, Normandy, France, Arriving at about 1730 hours. The Battalion remained at this bivouac sight, along with the attached company, the 257th Signal Construction Company, until 9 July 1944.

During this period, contact was made with the Signal Officer, First United States Army, and the battalion's initial job in combat was outlined to the Commanding Officer, Major Tilton D McNeal. The Battalion moved at 0730 hours, 9 July 1944, to bivouac area one-half mile east of St Come-du-Mont, Normandy, France, in order to centrally locate the unit for the job that they were about to begin.

On the morning of 10 July 1944, the Battalion began work on their first wire construction job under combat conditions. The job was a two (2) arm twenty (20) pin open wire line from Ht Chemin to St Come-du-Mont, Normandy, France, for the purpose of connecting First United States Army to First United States Army Rear, VIII Corps and VII Corps. This line supplanted the existing line between St Come-du-Mont and Carentan, along the railroad which was under enemy fire.

In order that the line would in no place come within range of enemy artillery fire, the new line was to follow a northern route across the low-lands between Carentan and the English Channel, a good part of which was inundated marshland as a result of German flooding on D-Day.

The entire line was constructed well off the road right of way in an attempt to keep the line out of any trouble which might result from heavy traffic or enemy action directed at communication routes. To do this, two river crossings were made, necessitating spans of 250 foot and 400 foot respectively. Long Span, Non-catenary, Construction was used.

The initial survey was made 9 July 1944, and the entire line of thirteen and three tenths (13.3) miles was completed and turned over to the First U.S. Army Signal Service on 14 July 1944.

On 10 July 1944, the Battalion suffered its first casualties. Two members of the Battalion Headquarters Personnel Section, Tec Sergeant William H. Johnson, and Private First Class Edward L. Foster, were injured by shrapnel when PFC Foster picked up an unexploded German fuze in the field adjacent to the bivouac sight. Tec Sergeant Johnson received wounds on the right hand and right hip, while PFC Foster was wounded in the chest, neither seriously.

On 15 July 1944, the battalion began work on First United States Army Signal jobs, numbers 268 and 276. Job 268 was a new line of two arm, twenty (20) pin open wire, to run from First Army Test Station 99 at St Come-du-Mont to Carentan, to link with the partially existing St Come-du-Mont Periers line. Job 276 was a two (2) arm, twenty (20) pin open wire line from First Army Test Station 99 to Chef-du-Pont and one arm ten (10) pin open wire French poles along a railroad right of way.

The army was using existing French rehabilitated circuits along this route, but found them unsatisfactory due to past enemy activity which weakened and deteriorated the line. The new lines replaced those foreign circuits. This line was completed 18 July 1944.

g. 30 July 1944: Relieved from assignment First United States Army Group, ETOUSA.  
 Assigned Twelfth Army Group, ETOUSA.  
 Auth: Troop Re-assignment #2, Hq ETOUSA, 1944.

h. 1 August 1944: Relieved from attachment First United States Army, ETOUSA.  
 Auth: Troop Assignment #1, Hq Twelfth Army Gp.

i. 29 August 1944: Assigned 3146 Signal Service Group, Hq Twelfth Army Group.  
 Auth: Circular #9, Hq Twelfth Army Group.

j. 16 December 1944: Loaned to First United States Army, ETOUSA  
 Auth: VOCG, Twelfth Army Group.

3. Strength, Commissioned and Enlisted:

			Net increase or decrease
a. 1 January 1944:	Officers: 25	Enlisted Men: 572	
b. 31 January 1944:	Officers: 24	Enlisted Men: 543	Off-1 EM-29
c. 28 February 1944:	Officers: 24	Enlisted Men: 539	Off-0 EM -4
d. 31 March 1944:	Officers: 24	Enlisted Men: 534	Off-0 EM -5
e. 30 April 1944:	Officers: 24	Enlisted Men: 538	Off-0 EM +4
f. 31 May 1944:	Officers: 23	Enlisted Men: 534	Off-1 EM -4
g. 30 June 1944:	Officers: 24	Enlisted Men: 533	Off+1 EM -1
h. 31 July 1944:	Officers: 22	Enlisted Men: 523	Off-2 EM-10
i. 31 August 1944:	Officers: 24	Enlisted Men: 541	Off+2 EM +18
j. 30 September 1944:	Officers: 24	Enlisted Men: 534	Off-0 EM -7
k. 31 October 1944:	Officers: 24	Enlisted Men: 526	Off-0 EM -8
l. 30 November 1944:	Officers: 23	Enlisted Men: 517	Off-1 EM -9
m. 31 December 1944:	Officers: 22	Enlisted Men: 208	Off-1 EM -9

4. Stations (permanent or temporary) of Unit or Part Thereof:

Station	Date Arrived	Date Departed
a. Camp Campbell, Kentucky	1 Jan 44	10 Jan 44
b. Overseas Movement:		
(1) Advance Detachment:		
Farringdon, Berks, England	1 Jan 44	24 Jan 44
Eynsham Park, Oxon, England	24 Jan 44	29 Jan 44
(2) Main Body of Troops:		
Camp Campbell, Kentucky		10 Jan 44
Camp Shanks, New York	12 Jan 44	18 Jan 44
Boarded SS Susan B Anthony		18 Jan 44
Newport, South Wales, England	28 Jan 44	28 Jan 44
Eynsham Park, Oxon, England	29 Jan 44	2 Jul 44
c. First United States Army Maneuver:		
(1) Company "B", Middleston Stoney, England	24 Feb 44	29 Mar 44
(2) Company "A" Leatherhead and Staine, Surrey, England	11 Mar 44	29 Mar 44
d. Anti Aircraft Gunners, Stiffkey Range, York, England	27 May 44	31 May 44
e. Overseas Movement:		
(1) Marshalling Area, 1/RCRP/4 3 Jul 44 near Dorchester, Dorset, Eng.		5 Jul 44
(2) LSTs 1359, 1360, 1361 US Navy	5 Jul 44	6 Jul 44
f. Vehicle Transit Area #4, Omaha Beach, Normandy, France	6 Jul 44	7 Jul 44

## g. Bivouac Are

		Date Arrived	Date Departed
(1)	2 Mi W of Valognes Manche, France	7 Jul 44	9 Jul 44
(2)	½ Mi E of St Come du Mont, Manche, France	9 Jul 44	28 Jul 44
(3)	1½ Mi SW of St Jean de Daye, Manche, France	28 Jul 44	30 Jul 44
(4)	1 Mi SW of Carantilly, Manche, France	30 Jul 44	7 Aug 44
(5)	Bouceel, Manche, France	7 Aug 44	13 Aug 44
(6)	Clermont, Mayenne, France	13 Aug 44	15 Aug 44
(7)	1 Mi NW of Argentre, Mayenne, France	15 Aug 44	24 Aug 44
(8)	5 Mi E of Chartres Eube, France	24 Aug 44	27 Aug 44
(9)	1½ Mi N of Ablis, Eube, France	27 Aug 44	29 Aug 44
(10)	2 Mi N of Bois D'Arcy Seine, France	29 Aug 44	6 Sep 44
(11)	4 Mi S of La Ferte, Sous, Jouarre, Seine, France	6 Sep 44	13 Sep 44
(12)	4 Mi SE of Verdun, Meuse, France	13 Sep 44	21 Sep 44
(13)	4 Mi SW of Longuyon, Meuse, France	21 Sep 44	3 Oct 44
(14)	Capellen, Duchy of Luxembourg (Billets)	3 Oct 44	5 Nov 44
(15) (a)	Hq, Hq Co and Med Det, Company "A" Chenee, Liege, Belgium	5 Nov 44	22 Nov 44
(b)	Company "B" Beyne Heusey, Liege, Belgium	5 Nov 44	22 Nov 44

			Date Arrived	Date Departed
(16)	(a)	Hq, Hq Co, Med Det, and Company "B" Epen, Holland	22 Nov 44	11 Dec 44
	(b)	Company "A" Mheer, Holland	25 Nov 44	28 Nov 44
	(c)	Company "A" Valkenburg, Holland	28 Nov 44	8 Dec 44
(17)	(a)	Hq, and Hq Company Aachen (Aix La Chapelle) Germany	11 Dec 44	19 Dec 44
	(b)	Med Det and Company "B" Laurensburg (North of Aachen) Germany	11 Dec 44	19 Dec 44
	(c)	Company "A" Brand (SE of Aachen) Germany	8 Dec 44	20 Dec 44
(18)	(a)	Hq, Hq Co, Med Det and Company "B". 6 miles East of Namur, Belgium	19 Dec 44	21 Dec 44
(19)	(Entire Battalion)	Tillier, Belgium	21 Dec 44	22 Dec 44
(20)	(a)	Hq, Hq Co and Med Det Bommershoven, Belgium	22 Dec 44	31 Dec 44
	(b)	Company "A" Heers, Belgium	22 Dec 44	27 Dec 44
		Fize Le Marsal, Belgium	27 Dec 44	31 Dec 44
	(c)	Company "B" Thys, Belgium	22 Dec 44	24 Dec 44
		Bommershoven, Belgium	24 Dec 44	31 Dec 44

#### 5. Marches:

a. 2 June 1944. "Salute the Soldier" Inaugural Parade,  
Long Handborough, Oxon, England.  
Distance marched between Eynsham Park and Lond  
Handborough: Five (5) miles. Roads good;  
weather, sunny.

#### 6. Campaigns:

##### A. Normandy Campaign

- (1) Duration: 6 July 1944 to 24 July 1944.
- (2) Purpose: To secure a beach-head in an assault on the continent of Europe from which to build up forces and eventually defeat the German Army.
- (3) Authority Ordering: Supreme Commander. Allied Expeditionary Force.
- (4) Participation Credit: Secret Letter Headquarters European

Theat~~o~~ of Operations, United States A~~o~~, file number AG 200.6 OPGA, Subject: Battle Participation Awards - Normandy Campaign (No 1), dated 16 November 1944.

B. Northern France Campaign

- (1) Duration: 25 July 1944 - 18 September 1944.
- (2) Purpose: To consolidate our forces over an ever increasing liberated area, to bottle up the remaining German forces in Northern France, and to permit our forces the usage of local communication, transportation lines and local resources of the Allied liberated nations.
- (3) Authority: Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Force.
- (4) Participation Credit: Secret Letter, Headquarters European Theater of Operations, United States Army, File number: AG 200.6 OPGA, Subject: Battle Participation. Awards - Northern France Campaign (No 1) dated 1 December 1944.

7. Battles: None.

8. Commanding Officers:

	From	To
a. Major Tilton D McNeal (Lt Col as of 1 Aug 44)	1 Jan 44	13 Dec 44
b. Major William H Cobb	13 Dec 44	31 Dec 44

9. Losses in Action:

23 July 1944: Tec 4 Lancelot A Riley, Company "A", 40th Signal Construction Battalion, received shrapnel wound in leg from 88 MM. Shell while working on a telephone pole near Marigny, Normandy, France, resulting in loss of leg, six inches below the knee.

10. Former and Present Members who have Distinguished Themselves in Action: None.

11. Photographs: None.