

979
SIGNAL MOTOR
MESSENGER COMPANY



IN A
1
MILLION

DEDICATION

This book is respectfully dedicated to all men who have served with the 979th Signal Motor Messenger Company. For two long years, they have lived and worked together, setting a record of which each can be proud.

The Authors.

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THE CO

On the 17th of August 1944, I reported for duty with the 979th Signal Motor Messenger Company. Its personnel was over 350 enlisted men and 16 Officers. The personnel was on duty in every territory of the British Isles, and Normandy, France. It seemed as if I would never meet all the men and officers. I had to readjust myself to an entirely new type of duty, and the officers and men had to adjust themselves to a new Commanding Officer. While the Company was engaged in moving to the Continent, the United Kingdom was successfully closed and European operational requirements were fulfilled.

Your unit was solely responsible for service in the United Kingdom and received the main mission on the Continent. Statistics, that cannot be challenged, are available in this document.

A mileage record that could be the best in the entire Theatre was accomplished. One million, thirteen thousand miles were driven during a little more than three months with only one accident. The short titled slogan "One in a Million" was adapted for our motor fleet.


When things were unsettled to such an extent that men on long trips did not know where their unit would be upon their return, spirit was high. Our branch of Signal Communications succeeded when all the rest were failures and or subject to failure. Our detachment's superb execution of its duties during the bulge was a direct contribution to the doughboys, the backbone of the fighting forces. Although our men were armed, they were armed for the purpose of defending their traffic. This meant you were always on

the aggressive defense, a hard task to perform in the manner of a soldier. Your frozen feet and aching backs, with rapid depletion of health, never interfered with your execution of duty. Some good men had to be returned to the Zone of Interior because of this.

Your duties may not have been colorful, but the responsible "brass" always depended on the Messenger Service first and last. Therefore, everyone had to accept responsibility and learn to master details. The ability to do this, separates the men from the boys and our unit found itself to be composed of men.

As you may some day in latter life consult this document, you may always be assured that you contributed directly to the downfall of Nazi Germany and every thing it represented. Those long hours of effort definitely paid dividends, although at times I no doubt pestered you to shine your shoes, and save your money for better days.

I will return to Virginia as a civilian some day. Should any of you ever be in the Norfolk-Virginia Beach area, consult the City Directory and by all means drop in for a "Hint-Julip". My sincere thanks to you for making the company what I believe to be one of the most efficient units in all of ETOUSA. I based this claim on action and results.


WILLIAM L. PENTRESS,
Major, Signal Corps,
Commanding.

FOR ADMINISTRATION

The efficiency of a service outfit can be very accurately graded by the number of court martials, accidents and cases of venereal disease. It is a good outfit that keeps it skirts clean from an efficiency standpoint, but it is a superior outfit that has personnel who by personal pride keep a good record.

The 979th has had a very difficult task to perform in the many miles that had to be driven in motor messenger activity. The possibility of accidents was greatly increased by driving around the clock in inclement weather. Likewise, driving constantly presented the temptation of speeding. Despite the adverse conditions, the 979th has established an enviable record in accidents and court martials.

Venereal disease has been a constant menace. Not for one moment has the temptation been absent; the instructions in its prevention had to be constantly presented to make personnel VD wise. Fortunately through personal and unit pride, the VD rate has been kept low.

Amid all the strain of operation, there has been the continuing demand for good housekeeping. Since all detachments of the Company were with large headquarters, "spit and polish" has always prevailed. Such was taken as a matter of course, and the demands of good housekeeping were met equally as well as those of operations.

Those sections of the Company, which are classified as overhead, have never failed to meet demands made upon them. The Mess has functioned on a twenty-four hour basis at all times; Supply has been able to procure necessary equipment for Company requirements, and Special Service Section

has provided all available materials for recreation. They have made a far greater contribution to the success of the Company than is generally recognized.

Ratings have been very scarce, men have worked and driven vehicles long hours, not with the hope of securing a better rating, but for the personal satisfaction of knowing their job was well done. Cooperation and teamwork have been evidenced in every job, no matter how small the task may have seemed. The results obtained have reflected much credit upon the organization and each man may feel justly proud of his contribution.

To have served with the officers and men of the 979th has been a distinct privilege for which I am very grateful.

Thomas H. Rawl
THOMAS H. RAWL,
Capt, Sig. C,
Executive Officer.

POP'S PAGE

From Fort Snelling, Minnesota in April 1943 to V-J Day in Europe has been the journey taken by the 979th. That its record is an enviable one is due primarily to the efforts and diligence put forth by the enlisted men of the organization.

As First Sergeant, it has been my privilege to serve you for the greater part of the period in which the 979th has been in existence. We have had our difficulties to surmount, and may I add, that some were not of a minor nature. It is to the credit of all of you that such problems were solved in due course.

Operational demands made it necessary for the company to function as a divided unit but only in the respect that some of us were in Headquarters, some in one Detachment or another.

Through the trying days at Chargrove, when those of us who were in Headquarters knew what it was to be a stepchild, in the country club life at Pre Catelan, the 979th has been united in spirit and although we may have had our personal differences we were quick to resent any criticism by others. That is the true test of unity.

Had the caliber of the majority of the members of the 979th been of lesser quality, the job of being First Sergeant would have been a headache, indeed. It is with sincerity that I thank every one for having made my job a pleasure.

Lloyd A. Stafford
LLOYD A. STAFFORD,
First Sergeant.

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FOR OPERATIONS

The Messenger Service, established over three years ago, has grown to be one of the important factors for smooth, speedy operation of a Communications Zone supply service handling dispatches too large to be sent by electrical means. Advance units were contacted and communication was established prior to the installation of electrical apparatus. Messenger Service operated when all other means failed. By establishing our work as a Courier Service, we can be known as part of the great communications network directly responsible for the assistance rendered to the fighting forces of our own and Allied Armies, which resulted in victory in Europe and a half-way mark for world peace.

The operations of the Messenger Service (now called the Signal Dispatch Service) was divided into two distinct parts: that of the messengers and that of the message center personnel and each had a separate job with an identical goal. The messenger bore the responsibility to physically guard official mail placed in his charge, to expedite the delivery of this mail under any and all weather conditions with whatever transportation was available, whether by land sea or air. The message center personnel had the responsibility of accurately routing, preparing and dispatching this mail. Our goal, a method for the handling and transmission of Official traffic with Speed, Security, and Accuracy in the ETO.

All the personnel, officers and enlisted men, in Operations can well be proud of the job they have accomplished. The war in Europe is over. We, the members of the 979th, even though our job be far from glamorous, can rest assured we did our part when the world was at the lowest ebb in this the World War II.

W. H. Bergmann

WILLIAM H. BERGMANN;
Captain, Signal Corps,
Officer-in-Charge.

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FOR THE MOTOR POOL

The men of the Motor Section have done a superior job, since the activation of the company. They have played an important part in the accomplishment of the Company's mission. Many obstacles have been faced and overcome. Shortage of parts has consistently been one of our biggest problems. This was beaten in many instances by improvising, which is not easy, for each case requires many man hours in labor and in the procuring of substitute parts.

When the company arrived at Camp F, in England, the task ahead was to literally build a motor pool. A hard-standing for the parking of vehicles, a paint shop, parts room and wash rack were constructed. Not only did the Motor Pool have to maintain their own vehicles, but also a large number belonging to other units, which at one time reached the staggering total of 325 vehicles. Many long hours of work were required to bring these vehicles up to the standard required to pass the weekly inspections.

These inspections were particularly rigid, as we were one of the camps attached to Headquarters, Communication Zone, and because the Motor Pool took up a major portion of the space in the camp. We may proudly state that after awhile, our Motor Pool was considered the "top" pool in the area.

Difficulties were experienced with the British impressed sedans that we acquired. The men lacked mechanical knowledge and parts for these vehicles, but gained knowledge quickly, and again improvised to keep these vehicles on the road.

In France, new problems were faced. The Motor Section had to be divided into three parts, and mechanics were sent to both of our detachments. This factor, and the great increase in mileage had put an additional burden on the men of the section, but again they came through, and never failed to have sufficient vehicles ready for messenger runs.

Shortly after arriving in France, the majority of our sedans and some weapons carriers were traded for thirty-five command cars. Much mechanical work and painting were necessary to bring them up to the standard of our other vehicles. Although the substitution of command cars for sedans was somewhat resented by the messengers, the change was necessary because it would have been impossible to successfully use the sedans on the rough French roads. Most of the sedans turned into Ordnance had travelled over 100,000 miles in the United Kingdom, and they had been requiring mechanical repairs after almost every messenger run.

The poor grade of gasoline had necessitated many valve and carburetor jobs. Due to the rough roads, a constant check was required to keep radiators, fenders, etc. tight. In addition, we undertook the "closing-in" of command cars and weapons carriers, the main messenger run vehicles, to make them more suitable for winter driving. Many extra hours of work were needed to accomplish this task.

The men of the Motor Section have always prided themselves with the thought that they have the best running, best looking vehicles in the ETO, and I want to thank the drivers for their help in keeping them that way.

Donald B. Bolcom
DONALD B. BOLCOM,
1st Lt., Sig. C,
Motor Officer.

THE 979TH

The 979th Signal Motor Messenger Company is not the same Company that was activated under Major (then Captain) Oliver F. Runde at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, on the first day of April 1943. No company could remain the same after having travelled so far, having changed C.O.'s, personnel and at the very last, its official title. This is the record of events showing the growth and change of the Company, a unit to which many have given a substantial portion of their lives.

SCHOOL DAYS

On the nineteenth of March 1943, the 979th Signal Motor Messenger Company was little more than a gleam in the eye of the War Department. Although this was the official date of activation, it was not until the first of April that any semblance of what was to be the Company could be found. On this date some officers and enlisted men assigned as cadre, began rendering habitable our incubus at Fort Snelling, Minnesota. Before the month was out, men from thirty-nine States had gathered to form the body of personnel that was the 979th.

Few Companies have had a nicer place for training. The people of the Twin Cities seemed bent on taking the entire company into their hearts and their hospitality and friendliness will long be remembered by every man fortunate enough to have been with us during these days.

Between parties, dancing and wolfing, time was found to run the training gamut. Men were instructed in the finer arts of military courtesy, firing and caring for weapons, message center techniques, defense against gas attack, and close order drill. By the first of May, progress had been great enough to warrant a field problem.

LEAVING ST PAUL,
MINNESOTA



had to be carried out for most of the men received furloughs and returned to the Company more tired than when they left.

The body of the Company were still away when a Company Order made Lloyd A. Stafford First Sergeant. The soundness of this choice is best indicated by the mutual esteem that all enlisted personnel and officers hold for him after two long years of continued service. It is difficult to imagine any person other than "Father Stafford" as the Companies First Sergeant.

The remainder of June was devoted to preparations for overseas shipment. It was during this period that many men learned the importance of stripes and the additional responsibilities attendant thereto; acting gadgets were made and unmade daily. Discipline was more rigidly enforced, recourse being made to a large rock pile and many company restrictions. In the midst of the confusion of packing, marking clothing, drilling and other allied activities, the first issue of the "Coordinator" was published. Hencefore it was a regular feature of the Company, its appearance being governed by prevailing conditions and Theatre regulations.

At long last, but not to the surprise of the lovely inhabitants of St. Paul and Minneapolis, the 979th was ready to leave. Initial farewells and goodwishes were received by word of mouth and song in all of the local bars of the Twin Cities; more were received at the Post Siding where at 1740 hours July fifth 1943, the train pulled out for an unknown destination, three months after the task had been started.

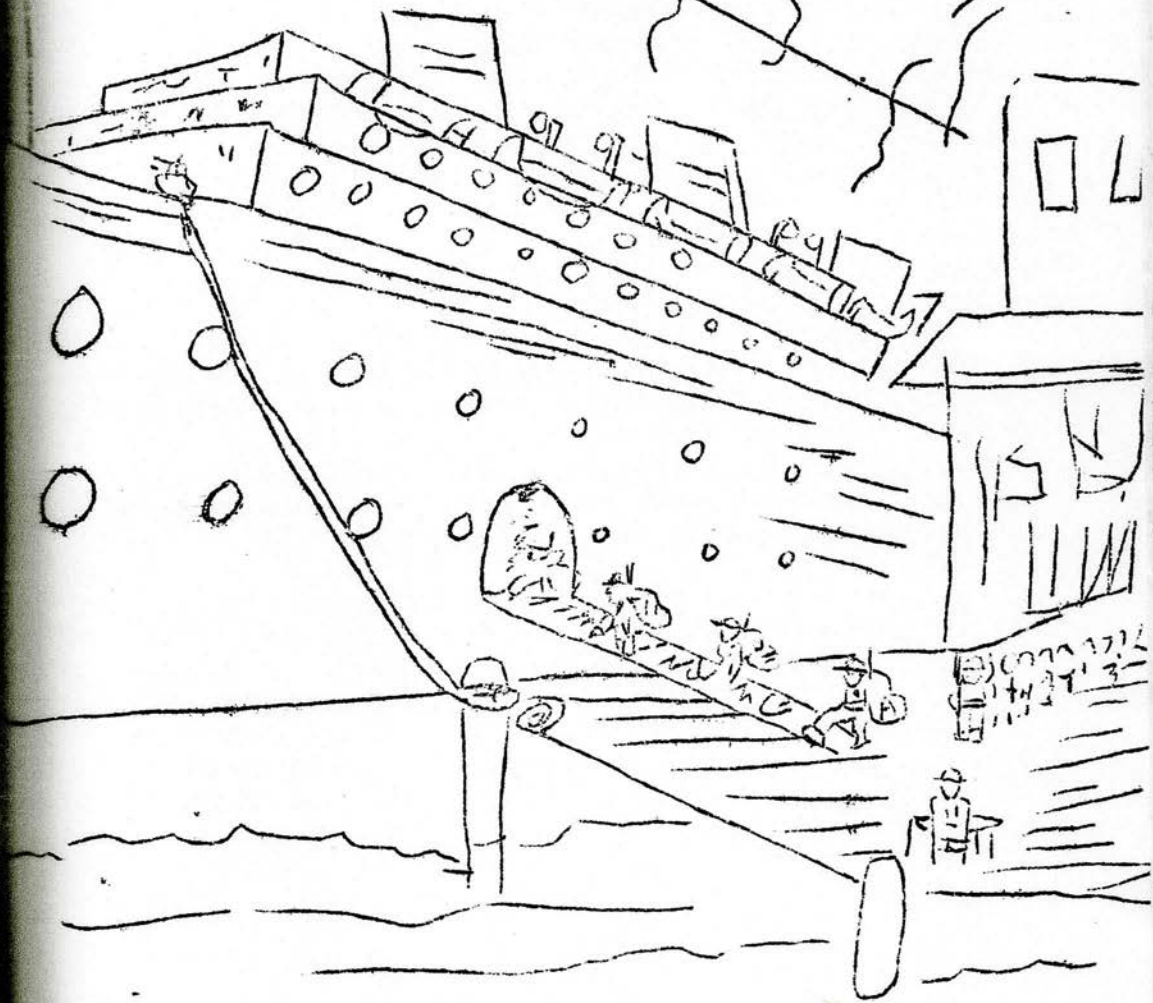
"WE SET OFF TO SEE THE WORLD"

The train went backwards and forwards, north and south, until it seemed that even the engineer was a part of the conspiracy to confuse the passengers as to their eventual destination. It did not much matter, for as soon as the gear was stowed, and seats found, the cards and dice came out. In spite of wandering through most of the States bordering the Mississippi, we finally found Chicago, where we lay over in the freight yards for a long, long time. Off again and it seemed as if the remainder of the forty-eight States passed beneath the wheels of our train, more poker, crap games and digging the cinders from under our collars. But the trip was fairly comfortable and provided some little excitement when we were forced to detour because of the wreck of a large freight train. As all things must, even the train finally came to rest, this time at the siding of Camp Kilmer, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Baseball, drill and available telephones passed the time at Camp Kilmer. Twelve hour passes were given so that men could visit New York City. Bags were packed, unpacked and repacked; it was hot, confusing but purposeful. One famous statement was born here, "They won't take me overseas, I'll never pass the physical."

Camp Kilmer was left behind at 1830 hours, July 16, 1943 via train. Men carried their packs, weapons and two bar-racks bags. Reaching the train caused most of the men to wonder what the Army meant by MOTOR Messenger Company; so far the footwork had been admirable. More fancy footwork was done to reach a ferry, and by this time the July heat had melted three quarters of the Company into a nice puddle.

JULY 16,
1943



The Red Cross proved that it is a boon to long suffering humanity by turning up at the dock with iced lemonade and sandwiches. God bless 'em one and all.

Boarding the boat was like playing "Going to Jerusalem." The men from our Company and the entire troops remaining in the United States were all trying to find space on the U. S. S. Thomas H. Barry, sister to the ill-fated Moro Castle. The termination of a four mile hike through the bowels of the vessel was on "F" deck, not exactly a bridal suite. Everyone dropped where they could.

Morning found the boat at sea. Land was in sight and there is no record of a serious case of "mal de mer" at this time. The boat sailed round and round until there was a collection of twelve freighters, one aircraft carrier and six destroyers. Some morale builder those boats. Falling into line, the boats started on their eastward journey, nicely covered by planes and blimps. Later we picked up the cruiser Augusta as part of the convoy.

Crap games, poker, sun-bathing, reading, impromptu entertainment by G.I. Talent, sea-gazing, yoo-hooing at the nurses and policing the deck were primary diversions; getting down to the mess was the primary task of each day. Two meals per day proved insufficient in the salt air, and it was not long before some lovely nose for the underworld, had discovered a blackmarket in food. "Sixty cents a meal, men, Eat all you want."

We went north and south but always with an easterly heading. Two days out of Ireland, the winds blew and the seas rose (the seas were not alone in this respect). When land was sighted, all were just a bit weary of the cruise.

Down the Irish Sea dropping off members of the convoy under the protective wing of the RAF that so liked to buzz the boats; down the Irish Sea wondering about the bright flashes of light that could be seen in the distance, until one morning the Welshian "island forts" of Liverpool confronted us.

Here was England, barrage balloons, scarred buildings, misty, a brand new home.

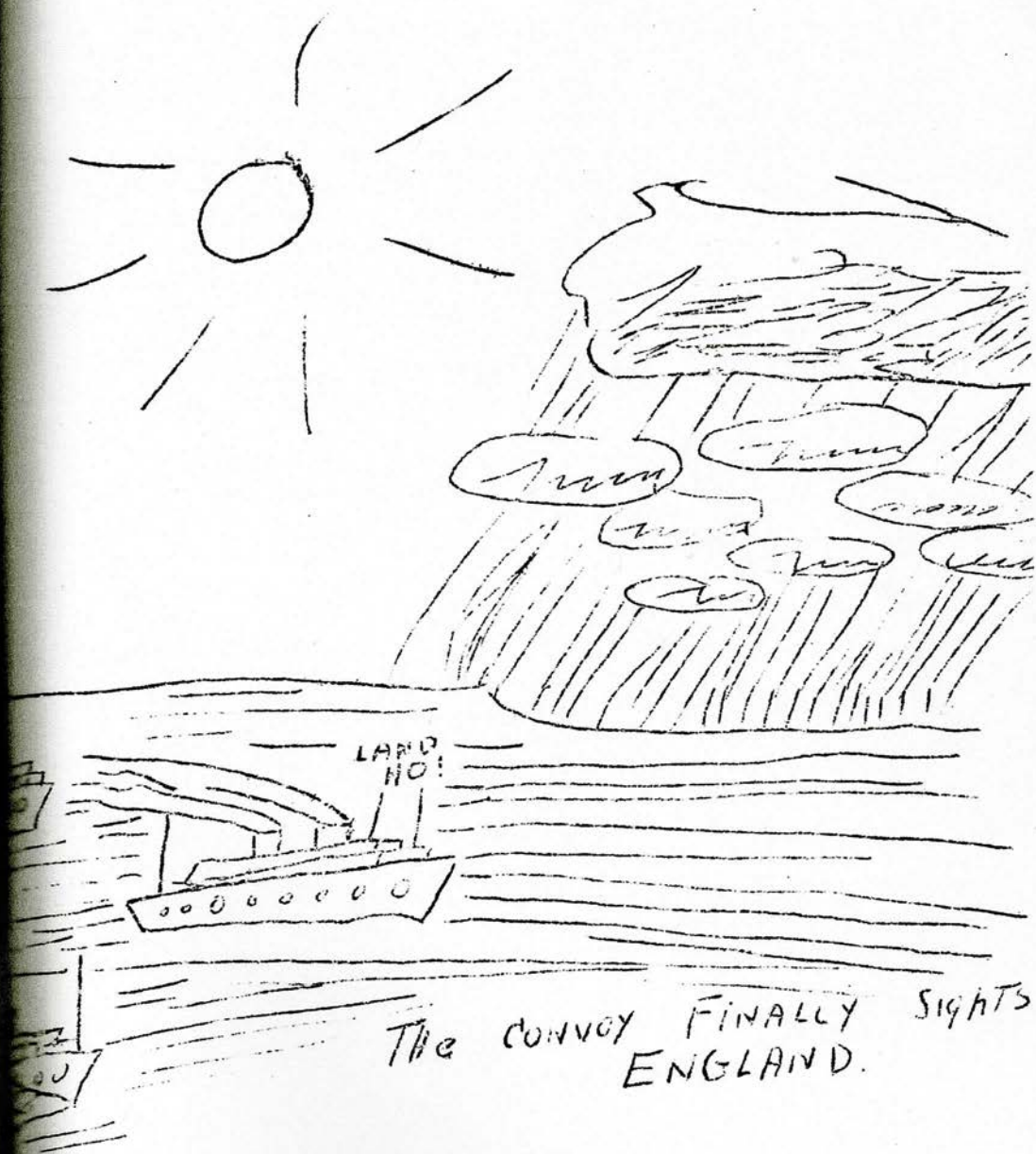
MERRY ENGLAND

Our boat lay at the dock in Liverpool all day long. There was little to do except watch the harbor patrol dynamiting in the channel, and throw oranges (how little we knew), cigarettes and candy to the English civilians on the quai. The damage to buildings adjacent to the dock was impressive and started no little amount of small talk about bombing. The dumpy ferries sailed by the boat, jam-packed with crowds of waving people, all of whom seemed glad to see us.

At 1630 hours we debarked to entrain with full pack, weapons and Barracks bags. This was a short haul (not more than a quarter of a mile), but there was a train there and we got rid of the bags. This was the first of many train rides; flashes of rows of red brick houses, green fields and more red brick houses. We ate a sumptuous meal of sardines bread and an orange, and before the blackouts were drawn, we leaned out of the windows and made V signs with our fingers at the kids. We got off at a small town called Great Barr and hiked about three miles to our temporary billets at Pheasey Farms.

EVERYONE ENJOYED THE TRIP ACROSS





The CONVOY FINALLY SIGHTS
ENGLAND.

Pheasey Farms was a part of the Tenth Replacement Depot (HQs. Lichfield). Actually it was an incomplected housing project, a place admirably suited for us. In spite of the details and evident 'chicken', a good time was had by all. Here we made our first acquaintance with English beers, Fish and chips, Red Cross Clubs and our allies, the English. Here the Company was broken into Operational units, being split in the following manner on August 7, 1943: Detachment "A", London, Detachment "B", Birmingham, Detachment "I", Chester, Detachment "D", Bristol, Detachment "G", Watford, Detachment "H", Salisbury, Detachment "E", Reading, and Headquarters Detachment, at Cheltenham.

The ground work for the motor messenger service in the British Isles had been well laid by the 2002nd Operations Co. (Prov). These men trained the members of the 979th in Motor Messenger techniques that had been developed for the English traffic. When the 2002nd was disbanded, approximately 100 men chose to transfer into our Company, bringing the Company to operational strength.

By the end of 1943 Major David L. Barton (then Capt.) was the Company Commander. It was increasingly difficult to use the material provided by the Army Postal System for motor messenger dispatches and it was evident that a more refined information concerning the location of units would have to be used. To meet this need, the Directory Service was developed. Although the Directory Service was eventually transferred to the Messenger Section of the Chief Signal Office, the basic methods used were developed by members of the 979th.

The 979th saw as much if not more of England than any other organization located on that "tight little Isle." We ranged from Plymouth to Glasgow and from Norwich to Carmarthen; Great Britain was webbed by the Companies routes.

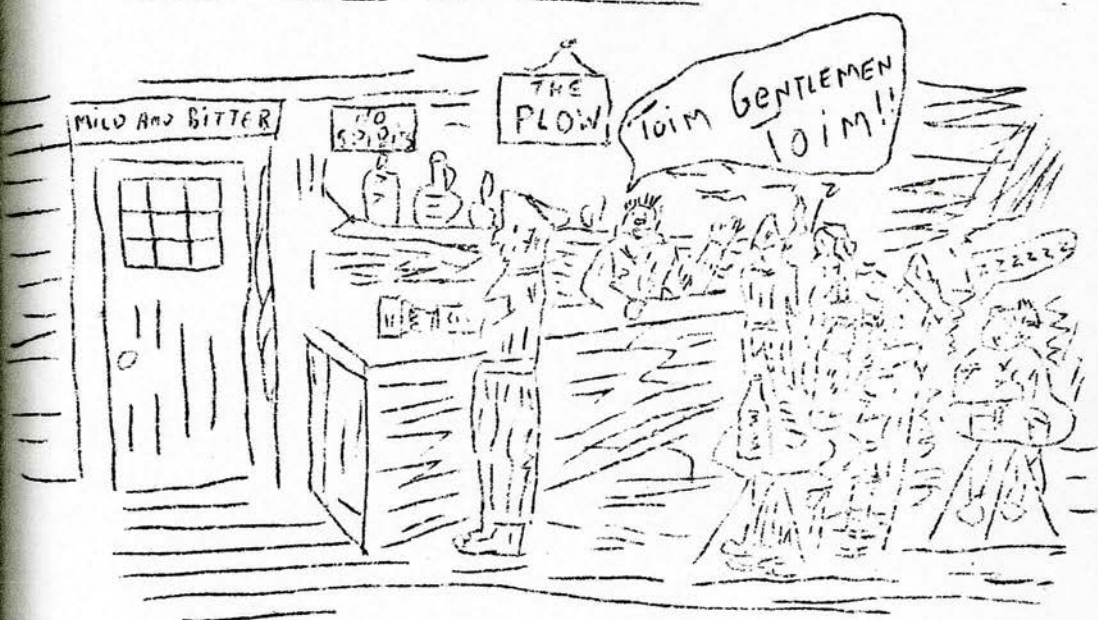
The men assimilated much that was England. They learned to drink the beer, count the money and date the girls. The proof of their success can be seen by the number of men who won the hands of English lassies. It was not long before cries of "Browned Off", and "You can't miss it" could be heard in any camp. Each man made good friends, regardless of his location.

From the first day of 1944, messenger traffic continued to mount. More units were piled onto English soil causing the rapid delivery of official dispatches to be of prime importance. In spite of the increase, twenty-four hour service to any part of the British Isles was maintained.

For the exceptionally high standard of its work and the maintenance of discipline for the period of time from February 1 until March 31, 1944, the 979th Signal Motor Messenger Company was awarded the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque. Shortly thereafter, Captain Bryan Cowan assumed command of the Company.

Added to the regular duties of the Company was the additional task of demonstrating motor messenger technique to newly arrived Motor Messenger Companies. The 3137th & 3138th Signal Motor Messenger Companies were divided into detachments for a two week refresher period in England. Both units were to play a prominent part in the maintenance of communications in France.

NIGHT LIFE IN ENGLAND



All this activity could point to but one thing, invasion, and on June 6, 1944, the news was flashed that the coast of Normandy had been slashed.

HAIL AND FAREWELL

Work in England after "D" Day was an anti-climax, in spite of the fact that there was plenty to do for the following three months. The movement of installations and of large bodies of troops to the Continent made the delivery of messages difficult while increasing their importance. To meet the constantly changing conditions, detachments were activated and deactivated. Men in the southern portion of England were subjected to the annoyance and hazard of German Buzz-bomb and rockets. There were plenty of things to occupy the mind-both good and bad.

The first men of the 979th to reach France did so as members of the 582nd Signal Depot Company, to which they had been transferred in order to form a nucleus of personnel familiar with the problems of motor messenger work. They were in France during those trying days, when it seemed that the allied penetration was little more than a bug bite on the side of a giant. But it was through their efforts that the foundation of the messenger service, which was to straddle Western Europe, was laid.

The first men which were members of the Company, to reach France were the messengers, who travelled to France on boat and plane carrying vital information for the troops engaged in battle. But all the Company did get over. Six detachments were to make the journey, and you may trace their itinerary in the following chart.

UNIT	OFF.	EMB.	DATE ACTVD.	LEFT CHELT.	EMB.	DISEMB.	STATIONS	DE ACTVD.
Det "E"	2	45	5/8/44	12/8/44	14/8/44	17/8/44 Utah	21/8/44 Valognes	24/8/44 Paris
Det "J"	1	26	22/8/44	3/9/44	6/9/44	7/9/44 Utah	9/9/44 Valognes	10/9/44 Paris
Det "B"	3	70	24/9/44	27/9/44	28/9/44	3/10/44 Utah	4/10/44 Paris	28/11/44 Paris
Det "K"	2	49	13/10/44	15/10/44	16/10/44	22/10/44 Orcha	*	**
HQS.	5	89	—	11/11/44	25/11/44	18/11/44 Rouen	19/11/44 Paris	**

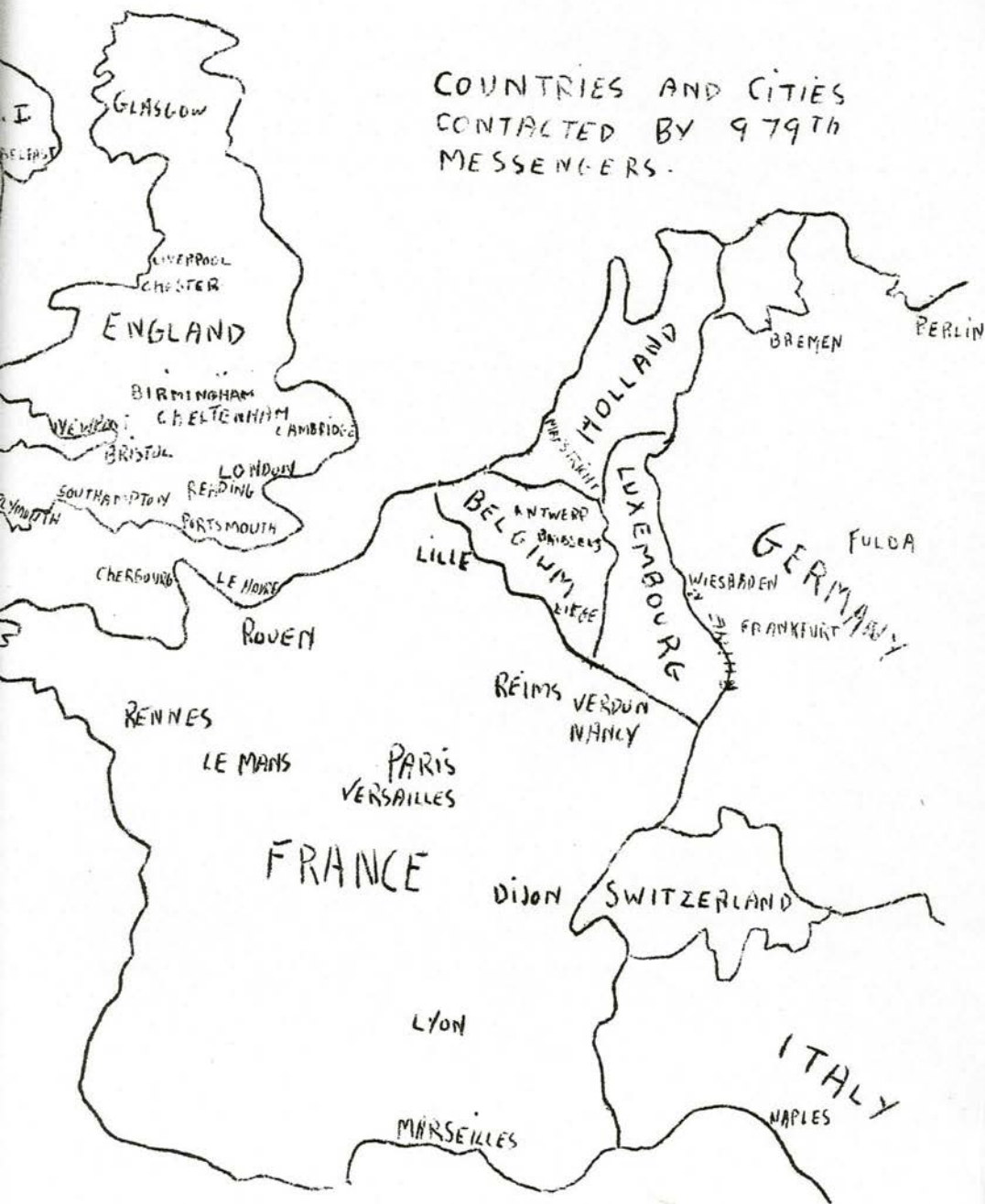
* Det "K" --Stations: 24/10/44--Versailles
25/10/44--Antwerp
27/10/44--Lille
12/7/45--Reims

** Still operating.

Cheltenham was the point of leave for all men of the 979th. Because the routes of the detachments were similar, all the men in the company shared certain common experiences.

As usual it was a case of, "Hurry up and wait." The first stop was the Marshalling Area at which point the units spent from one to six days. Then there was the delay as the boat was being loaded. Despite all reports to the contrary, the men of each unit, including the last, all thought that after the boat pulled away from the dock they would see the shores of France in a few hours. But all were forced to lay in sight of England for twenty-four hours awaiting the other members of the convoy.

COUNTRIES AND CITIES
CONTACTED BY 979TH
MESSENGERS.



In France, we found an abundance of new things: cognac, vin blanc, all night dances, girlie shows. Operations cut "chicken" to a minimum and we went about our daily tasks with few other thoughts. Here for the first time perhaps, we felt we were in a foreign country because of the different tongue. But the French were enthusiastic over the arrival of additional Americans even when the last detachment of the Company made its way into Paris late in November. Those of us who were among the first to arrive will have the best memories, but no one can complain of his stay over here.

As the enemy was pushed further back into his homeland, detachments were sent out. Reims became a great military center; the Lille detachment provided an important link between the Canadian and British Forces and those of the Americans. Paris, the rear echelon headquarters of the Forces on the Continent, was the hub for trunk runs connecting major distribution centers.

The winter was cold, there was much snow and ice on the roads making the task of the messengers difficult and dangerous. Transportation facilities and communications on the continent had been so completely wrecked by aerial bombardment that many cities were without fuel for power or heat. This not only chilled G.I. bones but made it a most unpleasant task to shave or shower.

The Ardennes breakthrough cut lateral communications in the eastern sector of France. The messenger service was undisturbed, but some men of Detachment "G" at Reims were called upon to make deliveries near the fighting front. This was the second such instance; Detachment "K" originally had been scheduled for Antwerp but was forced to withdraw as the town was under heavy shell fire.



SPRING

PARIS

BICYCLES

During the period of time from March thru May, the men of the Company established a record for safe driving that will hold its own with any outfit. One accident for 1,000,000 miles of operational driving in spite of all French vehicles encountered on the open road.

The eighth of May was officially proclaimed V-E Day, and, the men of this Company may be proud of their contribution to the final victory.

FINALE

And now it is with considerable sadness that this last paragraph is added. On June 25, 1945, the 979th Signal Company (Motor Messenger) was placed in Category IV of the War Department's Redeployment Plan. This may possibly be the complete history of the Company as the present membership knew it.

The men of the Company will never forget the years spent in the Army as part of the 979th. If this little history gives each fellow in later years a feeling of pride in what this outfit accomplished, it was well worth writing.

The End.

COMPANY LOG

March 19, 1943 Company activated by War Department letter.

April 1, 1943 Arrival of first men at Fort Snelling, Minnesota.

May 24-27, 1943 Field Problems around St Paul and Minneapolis, Eaton's Ranch Bivouac Area.

May 31, 1943 Memorial Day Parade.

June 2-4, 1943 Trip to Camp Ripley, Minn.

June 7, 1943 First men left on furloughs.

June 29, 1943 First issue of "The Coordinator".

June 30, 1943 Farewell Party at Field House.

July 5, 1943 Left Fort Snelling for Port of ~~Embarkation~~.

July 7, 1943 Arrived at Camp Kilmer, N. J.

July 11, 1943 12 hour passes to New York City.

July 12, 1943 Company Alerted.

July 16, 1943 Left Camp Kilmer at 1830 and boarded train for Jersey City and boarded ferry for Staten Island. Boarded U.S.S. ~~Thomas~~ H. Barry, sister ship of the ~~Marro~~ Castle. Company assigned to "F" Deck, Compartment II.

July 17, 1943.	Sailed at 0620 hours in convoy consisting of 12 freighters, one aircraft carrier, and six destroyers.														
July 27, 1943	Arrived at Liverpool, England, at 1050 hours. Debarked 1900 hours for Great Barr. Marched from Great Barr to Pheasy Farms arriving at 0010.														
August 7, 1943	Company broken into Detachments and separates to begin operations: <table border="0" style="margin-left: 100px;"> <tr> <td>Det. "A"</td> <td>London</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Det. "B"</td> <td>Birmingham</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Det. "D"</td> <td>Bristol</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Det. "G"</td> <td>Watford</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Det. "H"</td> <td>Tidworth</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Det. "I"</td> <td>Chester</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HQs. Det.</td> <td>Cheltenham</td> </tr> </table>	Det. "A"	London	Det. "B"	Birmingham	Det. "D"	Bristol	Det. "G"	Watford	Det. "H"	Tidworth	Det. "I"	Chester	HQs. Det.	Cheltenham
Det. "A"	London														
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Det. "D"	Bristol														
Det. "G"	Watford														
Det. "H"	Tidworth														
Det. "I"	Chester														
HQs. Det.	Cheltenham														
August 9, 1943	HQs. Det. started operations at Ben Hall Farms. Billeted at Chargrove Lawns.														
September 1, 1943	12 Men on DS to Exeter.														
September 3, 1943	Det. "E" started operations at Reading.														
September 20, 1943	Major (then Capt.) David L. Barton assumed command of Company.														
January 1, 1944	New Years in England--Furloughs granted.														
March 18, 1944	Det. "E" ceased operations.														
April 1, 1944	Captain Bryan Cowan replaced Major Barton as C. O.														

June 1, 1944	Det. "C" activated at Portsmouth.
June 6, 1944	"D" Day.
August 5, 1944	New Det. "E" activated for Continental duty.
August 12, 1944	Det. "E" left Cheltenham.
August 17, 1944	Major (then Capt.) William L. Fentress assumed command of the Company. Det. "E" landed at Utah Beach.
August 27, 1944	Det. "B" of Birmingham dissolved. Men rejoined HQs. at Cheltenham.
August 29, 1944	Det. "J" activated for Continental duty.
September 3, 1944	Det. "J" left Cheltenham.
September 7, 1944	Det. "J" landed at Utah Beach.
September 9, 1944	Det. "E" moved to Paris.
September 12, 1944	Dets. "C, D, H" deactivated, men re- joined HQs. at Cheltenham.
September 21, 1944	Det. "B" activated for Continental duty.
September 27, 1944	Det. "B" left Cheltenham.
October 3, 1944	Det. "B" landed at Utah Beach.
October 5, 1944	Det. "J" deactivated, men assigned to Det. "E" in Paris.

October 9, 1944 Det. "G" of Watford deactivated, men rejoined HQS. at Cheltenham. Now Det. "G" activated in Paris for duty at Reims, to which it proceeded and remained.

October 12, 1944 Det. "F" activated in Paris for duty at Le Mans.

October 13, 1944 Det. "K" activated in Cheltenham for Continental duty.

October 15, 1944 Det. "K" left Cheltenham.

October 22, 1944 Det. "K" landed at Omaha Beach.

October 24, 1944 Det. "K" enters Versailles.

October 25, 1944 Det. "K" enters Antwerp.

October 27, 1944 Det. "K" enters Lille.

November 11, 1944 Headquarters Det. left Cheltenham.

November 18, 1944 Headquarters Det. disembarked at Rouen.

November 19, 1944 Headquarters Det. arrived in Paris at Jean Fontaine School.

November 28, 1944 Dets. "B & E" deactivated and men absorbed by Headquarters in Paris.

December 12, 1944 Det. "F" at Le Mans deactivated, men rejoined Headquarters in Paris.

December 24, 1944 Evacuation of Jean Fontaine School,
moved to Pre Catelan.

February 22, 1945 Det. "A" in London deactivated.

May 8, 1945 V-E Day.

August 15, 1945 Victory over Japan announced.

SOMETHING HAS BEEN ADDED

After the history of the Company had been written, but before the final stencils had been cut, news of the "A" (for atomic) bomb rent headlines as well as Hiroshima. Shortly thereafter, Russia declared war on Japan and showed the Kwantung Army what it was like to play soldier in the big league. This caused much discussion and more speculation than any other event of the war.

But it was "a still small voice" compared to the uproar caused by the Japs proposal for peace on the tenth of August, 1945. Hearts beat hard and fast for five days until August 15, 1945, your editors joyfully included this additional page, which meant that peace had been restored to all the world.

LIGHTER MOMENTS

Let the reader of this booklet arrive at the erroneous conclusion that life with the 979th was all work and no play, we have decided to include the following information.

Since the inception of the Company, there has always been much organized extra-military activity, some of which has taken the form of efforts of the entire group and the remainder of which has been left to the individual.

At Snelling, there were a number of parties which could be called howling successes. At two company parties it became evident that the Company was possessed of a tremendous capacity for high octane potables. Company parties were SOP for all detachments in England, and at this time the English learned to their chagrin that the Yanks could and would develop a taste for the local beers, ales and wines that was phenomenal.

In addition to golf, tennis, strolling, badminton, volleyball, ping-pong, and bicycling, the men of the Company organized a basketball, baseball and softball team, all playing under the name of "The Couriers." The basketball and baseball team won the Headquarters Command Championship, and the men had a good time playing soft-ball. That was a pretty fine record in addition to the job that was done. There were also dances at Town Halls and English Army Posts.

In France, many of the same sporting activities continued. The basketball and baseball teams were reformed, but in spite of enjoying a highly successful season the men were unable to capture top honors. Golf and tennis were extremely popular,

and the men of Headquarters delighted in swimming in the River Marne or merely making the trip for the purpose of photographing the French bathing beauties. Company parties were also continued with more success than ever before. The language barrier was easily surmounted by ingenious systems devised by the enterprising G.I.'s.

Until conditions caused the various detachments to move, everyone enjoyed good billets. Unfortunately, it did not last for any of the men but those in headquarters. But all men were able to get to Paris from time to time, and were always welcome at Pre Catelan.

Pre Catelan was one spot in a million. Situated in the Bois de Boulogne, it was more like a private club than any Army billets. Our thanks for this good fortune are owed directly to Major William L. Fentress who cut through red tape and spared no time or effort to obtain the building. Not content with this, he heartily endorsed every suggestion to make the place more homelike. This included the installation of a darkroom, a beer bar, named "Wild Bill's," and making certain that everything to make the place more comfortable was obtained and properly installed.

It is best that the manifold attractions of our various detachment locations be left to individual memory, for each man's will be based upon his location and various friends he has made.

WHAT DID YA' DO IN THE WAR POP

Except for the few die-hards that are forever wedded to a bachelor life, most of us may expect to be asked about our individual contribution to the success of the Army, by one or more "Young Hopefuls." A recognition of the difficulties of making an honest answer to this question has prompted your editors to supply a bit of information that will, perhaps even startle you.

In the course of operations the 979th drove, 8,098,072 miles, and this is only to V-E Day. If this does not properly impress you, consider that it would take one vehicle around the world 324 times and that driving at blackout speed, one courier would spend $48\frac{1}{2}$ years behind the wheel, without any time out. As this was accomplished while driving under war time conditions and there was but one accident for each 73,000 miles, only three of which were fatal, you have something of which to be proud.

To accomplish this 445,000 gallons of gas were consumed. It would take 89,000 Jerricans to hold all this, and, if placed in one field, about one and three tenths acres of land would be covered by the containers. About 40,000 quarts of oil were consumed, which snappy division tells us would last an average civilian driver 533 years. One hundred eighty-four vehicles were turned in indicating that we averaged about 44,000 miles per vehicle. Tires numbered 800, which would have been enough to stock a store.

All of this was necessary for the delivery of approximately 28,000,000 pieces of official mail. It would take

more than 375 Empire State buildings piled on top of each other to equal a stack of letters like this, or if you would prefer the stack would reach from New York to Philadelphia if laid on its side. If this mail were to be delivered at one time by rail men, each carrying 500 pieces of mail, 56,000 men or almost 4 divisions would be required.

If Junior is not properly impressed with these accomplishments, raise him to be a postman and let him find out for himself.

* * * * *

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The editors of this document would like to thank all contributors without whose help it would have been impossible to present this Company History.

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* Denotes Man has been transferred from the organization.

ERRATA

The following names and addresses have either been erroneously omitted from the roster, or the addresses have been changed since work was started on this company history.

If there are any more additional corrections to be made, we suggest that you, the individual add them to this page, or on the reverse side.

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Kelley, Shelby - Route # 1, Elba, Alabama
McKearen, Barber A. - Centerville, Tenn.
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Urban, Howard T. - RFD, Kenton, Delaware.
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Joseph Sheller - 550 Grand Street, Brooklyn, New York

ENGLAND

FRANCE

IRELAND

BELGIUM

SCOTLAND

LUXEMBOURG

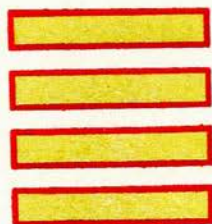
GERMANY

HOLLAND



Rhineland

Ardennes



Northern France

Central Europe

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