

Restricted

"Nothing is Constant Except Change"

A FACTUAL SUMMARY
OF
ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES
OF THE
573RD SIG. A. W. BN



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A Factual Summary
of
Organizational Activities
of the
573rd Signal Aircraft Warning Battalion

January 10, 1944 to May 9, 1945

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INTRODUCTION

This summary is intended as a factual account of the 573rd Signal Aircraft Warning Battalion from the time it docked at Glasgow, Scotland 10 January 1944 until V-E Day, 9 May 1945, which day overtook the battalion while it was located in the area of Braunschweig, Germany. It can only be classed as a summary since it was originally written by the men to whom it is dedicated, the members of the 573rd Signal AW Battalion.

The account is prepared in chronological order, by locations, in the belief that time and place are the two essentials to any summary of organizational activities. Since no two people would give identical interpretations to the same event, the account is limited to factual data for the most part, leaving each man to fill the between-the-line gaps as he desires.

A background of the events necessitating major battalion changes in organization is also included to provide a more continuous story, with the hope that each man can better associate his own experiences with the factors which produced them.

The 573rd Signal AW Battalion was originally activated 4 March 1943 at Drew Field, Tampa, Florida. It received operational training there and finally departed from the Boston Port of Embarkation, 29 December 1943. Unbeknown to its members, it was scheduled for a major reorganization with four similar organizations upon its arrival in the European Theater of Operations. The cards were already stacked.

This reorganization, together with other factors, so completely changed the 573rd Signal AW Battalion as a unit, that for all practical purposes, the battalion came into existence after arriving overseas. It is for this reason that this factual summary commences after the arrival of the organization in England.

PART I

MORE TRAINING

CHAPTER 1

Henley-on-Thames, England

Nothing is constant except change! The 573rd Signal AW Battalion had been in its tented camp near Henley-on-Thames but a few days when the first rumors of a reorganization began circulating.

This reorganization was necessitated by several factors. First of all, all Aircraft Warning Battalions for the invasion of France were to use British radar equipment and that meant complete individual, team and organizational training in England prior to D-Day. Secondly, two of the five battalions were scheduled to hit the beach with the invasion forces and to provide aircraft warning cover offensively, in each of two army areas-----those of the First and Third Armies. The other three Aircraft Warning Battalions were scheduled to become a part of the future Air Defense Command of Ninth Air Force and provide defensive aircraft warning cover in the rear of the army areas. This defensive aircraft warning cover was designed to protect valuable installations such as harbors, communication centers, supply dumps, and air fields from enemy air attacks. To further complicate the picture, certain Separate Aircraft Warning Companies were in England with teams already trained on British radar gear. It was planned that these teams would become a part of the Aircraft Warning Battalions and that some of the separate companies would be deactivated. As a fourth factor, the 566th Signal AW Battalion had arrived in England in early December and some of its teams were already attending British schools. However, the 566th Signal AW Battalion was not scheduled for a high-priority offensive role in the forthcoming operations. Finally, toward the latter part of January, the reorganization happened.

Trained teams from the various separate Signal Aircraft Warning Companies and the 566th Signal AW Battalion were transferred to the 555th and the 563rd Signal AW Battalions, who in turn transferred untrained teams to the three lower priority battalions scheduled for assignment to the IX Air Defense Command (These were the 573rd, 564th and 566th Signal AW Battalions).

In addition to the reorganization, which practically doubled the strength of the 573rd Signal AW Battalion* (See Appendix II for composition of the 573rd Signal AW Battalion before and after this reorganization), two other changes were made which affected the final composition of the 573rd Signal AW Battalion. Firstly, the respective battalion headquarters of the 555th Signal AW Battalion and the 573rd Signal AW Battalion were interchanged. Secondly, Lieutenant Colonel O. E. Everett and Captain R. H. Eberle were transferred to the 573rd Signal AW Battalion and became Commanding Officer and Executive Officer, respectively. Lt Col Everett had previously commanded the 926th Signal Construction Battalion and Captain Eberle had spent some two and a half years in Aircraft Warning organizations in Iceland.

As can be seen, this produced three layers of change---The Battalion Commander and Executive Officer were new to the battalion and vice versa; the battalion headquarters was new to the organization and almost half of the personnel of the battalion itself were new to the number 573. It can be seen that a new 573rd Signal AW Battalion had taken shape in the European Theater of Operations.

Coincident with this reorganization, teams from all five of the Aircraft Warning Battalions which had not received individual and team training on British radar equipment were sent to British schools. Radar mechanics

and technical officers were, for the most part, sent to RAF Station, Yatesbury, and operators for GCI (Ground Controlled Interception) equipment were sent to Leighton Buzzard. After two or three weeks of individual training, each radar platoon was assembled at Renscombe Down, Swanage, Dorset for training as a team. Filter personnel were trained at Bawdsey, England.

The teams of the 573rd Signal AW Battalion, or those scheduled to become a part of the 573rd Signal AW Battalion, were trained on the basis of a defensive aircraft warning organization. Basically, this tactical plan consisted of several outlying radar units which reported to a common Filter Center, that is----a center set up for coordinating the information on aircraft locations submitted by the different radars. Teams were shifted within the battalion to provide a filter and communication company (Company "C") and three radar reporting companies (Companies "A", "B", and "D"). This was the first major shift of teams within the battalion. Later shifts to meet changing requirements were to aid materially in producing a flexible organization.

The 573rd Signal AW Battalion was the only one of the three rear area Aircraft Warning Battalions which had a Company "D". This radar company was designed to provide 16 LW (Light Warning) radar units for the local protection of such isolated installations as hospitals, ammunition dumps, and airfields. It was soon learned, however, that the 16 men provided for each LW unit were not sufficient for 24 hour per day operation, nor could one LW radar be expected to operate that continuously. Accordingly, the units were paired to provide 8 LW stations, each with two radars. The tactical organization of the 573rd Signal AW Battalion for defensive operations is shown in Figure 1.

Since the Army and Air Force alike operate on a system of priorities, it followed that the two battalions scheduled for offensive operations (555th and 563rd Signal AW Battalions) were the first to become organized and the first to receive the necessary equipment and supplies. This hampered the work of the Supply Section of the 573rd Signal AW Battalion in providing even the equipment for the training of the battalion as a whole. Not until the battalion was ready to depart from the United Kingdom to the Continent some six months later did the battalion receive some of the essential equipment such as Frequency Modulated radios.

When the 573rd Signal AW Battalion arrived in the ETO, it was assigned to the IX Fighter Command of Ninth Air Force. It had been previously planned that IX Fighter Command would be tactically in command of two Air Support Commands. Accordingly, two new Commands were formed the latter part of January 1944 and IX Fighter Command became a tactical headquarters, that is-----a headquarters concerned solely with operations. These two new Commands were called the IX AND XIX Air Support Commands. The 573rd Signal AW Battalion was transferred to the IX Air Support Command 22 January 1944. This caused no major change since the personnel of the new Support Command were approximately the same as those who had been in IX Fighter Command. It is pointed out that the IX Air Support Command with the 555th Signal AW Battalion was scheduled to aid the First Army while the XIX Air Support Command with the 563rd Signal AW Battalion was scheduled similarly to aid the Third Army. At this time, no one officially admitted the presence of General Patton's Third Army in England.

Initially, IX Fighter Command and subsequently IX Air Support Command had been charged with the training of all five of the Aircraft Warning Battalions. Toward the latter part of February, IX Air Support Command had started to "shake down" into its expected tactical organization, but the

IX Air Defense Command, for which the 573rd Signal AW Battalion was scheduled, had not as yet been organized. Accordingly, the battalion was transferred to XIX Air Support Command 4 March 1944 and that Command proceeded to provide the facilities to train the battalion as a unit.

During all of this time, the battalion was camped at Henley-on-Thames, building walks to keep out of the mud, sending platoons to school, and laboring with the million and one details incident to a reorganization. Schools were established in the camp itself for Ground Observer personnel and for the operators and mechanics of COL (Coastal-Overseas Low) radar stations. At approximately the same time that the battalion was transferred to XIX Air Support Command, the first reporting platoon CHB 7 (Chain Home Beam) completed its unit training. As the platoons reported back to the battalion throughout the month of March and the first part of April, they were dispersed at separate camps in the vicinity of Henley-on-Thames. A Filter Center was established at the headquarters camp near Henley and the outlying radar stations reported aircraft plots to the Center for the purpose of training. This was the first time that the battalion trained as a unit.

By the end of March, the transfer of the 573rd Signal AW Battalion to the IX Air Defense Command was sufficiently indefinite to cause XIX Air Support Command to prepare for the tactical deployment of the battalion as a whole in the south-eastern corner of England in the Canterbury-Dover-Ashford area. Sites were selected in this area and all arrangements, such as the laying of wire lines to the proposed Filter Center, had been completed, when the battalion was transferred to the elusive IX Air Defense Command, 20 April 1944. The IX Air Defense Command, other preparations notwithstanding, wanted the battalion to deploy in the northern part of England in the Tyne-Tees area which is roughly the area between Newcastle-on-Tyne and Middlesbrough. Accordingly, the 26th of April, the first echelon of the 573rd Signal AW Battalion departed from Henley-on-Thames, Newcastle bound. The rest of the battalion moved in later echelons to prescribed sites in the new area.

CHAPTER 2

Newcastle-on-Tyne, England

The IX Air Defense Command as an organization, was established to defend vital installations such as airfields, and consisted mainly of AAA (Anti-Aircraft Artillery) personnel of the Coast Artillery Corps. Accordingly, the 573rd Signal AW Battalion was attached originally to the 52nd AAA Brigade and subsequently to the 22nd AAA Group. Company "D" of the 573rd Signal AW Battalion, with its 16 LW stations operating in pairs of two, was attached to other units of the 52nd AAA Brigade during this period. These platoons were located near IX Troop Carrier Command airfields in Central and Southern England. The mission of units of Company "D" was to study methods of providing aircraft warning cover for separate installations in conjunction with AAA Batteries and Battalions.

Units of the 573rd Signal AW Battalion were tactically deployed in approximately the manner depicted in Figure 1, with the simulated mission of providing aircraft warning cover for the Tyne-Tees area. In so far as possible, platoons were stationed near similar RAF installations to permit personnel of the battalion to exchange operating notes with RAF personnel.

The locations of the units of the battalion were as follows:

Battalion Headquarters:-	Woolsington Hall, 5 miles NW Newcastle
Company "C"	:- Woolsington Hall, 5 Miles NW Newcastle
Hqs of Company "B"	:- Woolsington Hall, 5 miles NW Newcastle
Hqs of Company "A"	:- Seaton Snook, 3 miles SW West Hartlepool
GCI-8	:- Seaton Snook 3 miles SW West Hartlepool
GCI-9	:- Stannington 10 miles N Newcastle
GCI-10	:- Northstead 25 miles N Newcastle
COL-7	:- Saltburn 12 miles E Middlesbrough
COL-8	:- Hartley 12 miles NE Newcastle
MRU-2	:- Greatham 5 miles SW West Hartlepool

From the battalion Filter Center, established at the Battalion Headquarters north of Newcastle, direct lines to a nearby sector Operations Room of the RAF permitted a close check to be made between information submitted by the battalion's radar stations and those of the RAF aircraft warning system.

Practice interceptions were held by the three GCI stations during this period. The usual procedure was for the Controller at the GCI station to use two aircraft, one as a fighter-interceptor and the other as a target. Then, it was the duty of the Controller to place the fighter-interceptor on the tail of the target ship. Using aircraft of the RAF and P-61 (Black Widow) night fighters of the 425th Night Fighter Squadron, each GCI completed approximately 60 practice interceptions. Many of the interceptions were accomplished at night.

During the Newcastle training period, numerous flights were held for the purpose of training radar operators in reading through various types of interference. Metallized strips of paper called "window" were dropped from a flight of aircraft flying a predetermined course. Other aircraft were sometimes flown through the "window" as a part of the training.

All reporting of Aircraft Warning plots was accomplished by means of commercial telephone lines or by land lines laid by battalion personnel. Frequency modulated radios, which the battalion was eventually to use, were not available to the battalion during the period of operational training at Newcastle.

Radio sets, SCR-188, were held by the battalion but it was not possible to obtain frequencies for their use. Even if it had been possible to obtain the necessary frequencies, most of the battalion's radio operators were on detached service preparatory to their operating positions with the "D" Day invasion fleet.

Practically all technical supplies were difficult to obtain at this time. Certain types of radar spare parts were practically non-existent. However, by the time the battalion had completed its training at Newcastle approximately 90 per cent of the radar spare parts had been obtained and the first FM radios were received.

Two phases of the Newcastle training lent themselves favorable to future missions of the battalion. The first of these was the experimental establishment at GCI-8 of a combination filter and radar center. This consisted of a small filter board located in a tent adjacent to the GCI radar equipment. Plots on aircraft positions from the GCI station and from two outlying units, Ground Observer platoon and an LW platoon, were filtered on the board. Filtered tracks were then submitted to the Battalion Filter Center. After approximately one week, it was directed by IX Air Defense Command that this project be discontinued since it was not suitable for a defensive mission such as the battalion had at this time. All radar units then reported directly to the Battalion Filter Center. The experiment had served its purpose, however, and aided materially in permitting the battalion to easily switch to FDP's (Forward Director Posts) later.

The other phase of training which proved to be a valuable experience was that of having each unit of the battalion move to a position without prior notice. In each of the two moves so completed by each unit, a courier delivered a Field Order directing the unit to close station immediately and move to another location. Both of the moves prescribed for the platoons and company headquarters were made under cover of darkness and directed resumption of operations the following day. Actually, of course, each platoon exchanged sites with a similar unit, but the training so accomplished was very similar to that experienced in tactical operations some months later.

During the last few weeks at Newcastle, Company "D" returned to the battalion from detached service and established a school on British Type 21 gear nearby. Later the personnel of Company "D" were split into approximately three groups, one-third going to each of the other two Aircraft Warning Battalions in IX Air Defense Command and the remainder staying with the 573rd Signal AW Battalion. In each case, the personnel were to operate British Type 21 radar equipment which was not employed with each GCI station in the three defensive Aircraft Warning Battalions. Personnel were placed on a somewhat permanent detached service to provide the necessary Type 21 operators and mechanics.

While the battalion was at Newcastle, two LW platoons proceeded to Hull, England where the 564th Signal AW Battalion Headquarters was located. Here the platoons experimented with a GCI station composed of two SCR-584 gun-laying radars. The project was later discontinued. Lt. Diffenderfer's platoon returned to the battalion while Lt. Markel's platoon proceeded to the 566th Signal AW Battalion, from where it was placed on detached service with IX Bomber Division. Later, Lt. Markel's platoon operated modified SCR-584 radars as a navigational aid for medium-bombers of IX Bomber Division.

"D" Day, June 6 1944, arrived while the battalion was located at Newcastle. Although the battalion as a unit did not participate in "D" Day activities, some 100 radio operators and plotters of the battalion were assigned to communication sections aboard warships and transports in the invasion fleet. These men played an active role in the invasion and were later awarded the Normany Battle Participation Star.

During the first part of July the original preparations were made for the move to the Continent. These preparations included the preliminary packing and marking of equipment prior to the move to the Assembly Area at Chilton.

CHAPTER 3

Chilbolton and Weymouth, England

The concentration area for the move to the Continent was an airfield in Southern England near Chilbolton, where the 573rd Signal AW Battalion arrived on approximately 15 July 1944, which was "D" Day plus 39. The mission of the battalion at Chilbolton was primarily that of completing its preparation for movement to the Continent, originally schedule for D plus 48, some 12 days after the first echelon of the battalion arrived at Chilbolton. Due to changes in the shipping schedule the battalion was staged back until the 27th of August, which was D plus 82.

In order to permit each platoon to function as a separate unit, sites were selected in the vicinity of Chilbolton and each platoon moved to a separate site between the 8th and 10th of August.

In the meantime, orders were issued for the battalion to prepare an LW radar unit complete with standby and communications equipment and control personnel to take part in an airborne operation. The LW platoons of Lt. Mecklenborg and Lt. Sprouse were selected for the operation. They were trained in glider transport and practiced the combat loading and unloading of LW radars, jeeps and radios in the gliders.

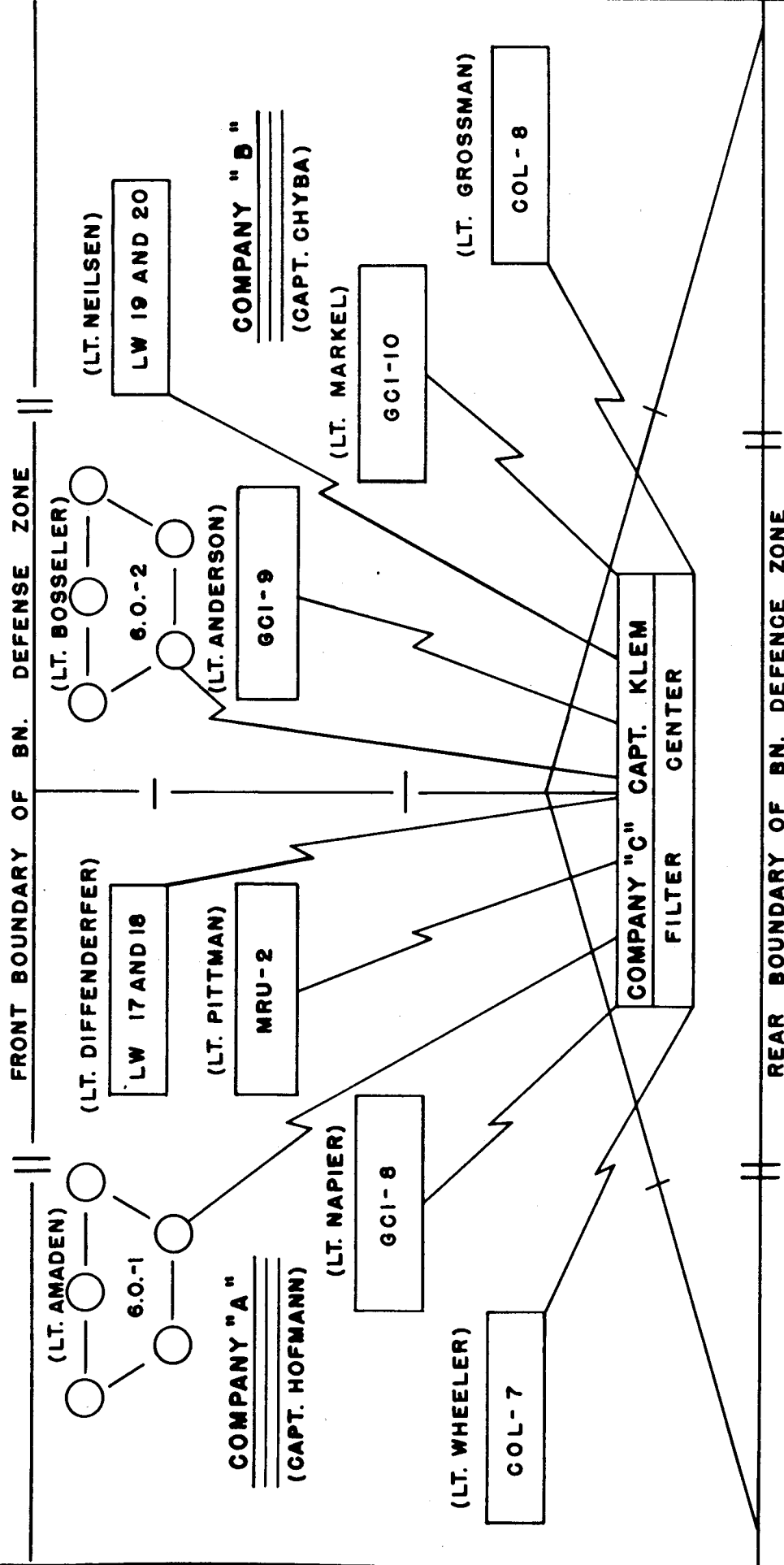
At the same time that the airborne unit was being trained, a small task force consisting of one control station was organized by Company "A", Capt Hofmann, commanding, composed of the personnel and equipment necessary to provide a combination radar and control center. Personnel were selected and the control center was established in a tent adjacent to a Type 15 radar set. This control center was almost identical with that established by GCI-8 at Seaton Snook. The training at Seaton Snook had already paid dividends.

Later it was learned that these units were to have provided air control in an airborne and sea landing on the south side of the Brittany Peninsula.

TACTICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE 573 SIGNAL A.W. BN.

FIGURE 1

1 MAY 1944



BN. HQ. AND HQ. CO.
BN. CO.-LT. COL. EVERETT
EX. OFF.-MAJ. EBERLE
HQ. CO. CO.-CAPT. MENO

COMPANY "D" CAPT. PREECE
8 LW RADAR PLATOONS
FOR DEFENS OF
SEPARATE INSTALLATIONS

G.O.-GROUND OBSERVER PLATOON
L.W.-LIGHT WARNING RADAR PLATOON
G.C.I.-GROUND CONTROLLED INTERCEPTION RADAR
M.R.U.-MOBILE RADAR UNIT
C.O.L.-COASTAL OVERSEAS LOW RADAR

However, General Patton's Third Army started its drive from the bridge-head the latter part of July, cutting off the Brittany Peninsula ahead of schedule, thus terminating the need for such radar units.

When the need for the task force and airborne operation was cancelled, most of the personnel reverted to their normal duties within the battalion. One LW Platoon (Lt. Mecklenborg's 1/2 "U" Team), however, with some control personnel was placed on detached service to the 82nd Airborne Division. Here they made practice flights and continued their airborne training, qualifying for the Airborne Glider Badge.

Among the equipment received at this late state of the game were two Air Ministry Experimental Stations Type 21 radar convoys and frequency modulated radio sets. Personnel were placed on these equipments for training purposes as soon as they were received. Final preparations were made for overseas movement to the Continent and 25 August 1944, the battalion moved in convoy to the Marshalling Area at Weymouth England. This was the first time that the entire battalion had moved in convoy at the same time.

The loading of battalion personnel and equipment on LST's, LCT's and LCI's commenced at 1200 hours, 27 August 1944. Included in the battalion were 1085 officers and enlisted men including some personnel of the 306th Fighter Control Squadron and the 564th Signal AW Battalion, and also 309 vehicles, including 228 trucks and 81 trailers. Most of the personnel and equipment were loaded on four LST's and six LCT's. A "Marching party" of approximately 100 men and officers travelled separately by LCI, however. The convoy departed at 0700 hours the following day, the 28th of August, arriving off the coast of France that same evening. Personnel and equipment disembarked 29 August 1944 at Utah Beach on the Normandy Peninsula.

PART II

THIS IS IT!

CHAPTER 4

Rennes, France

From Utah Beach the battalion moved directly to a bivouac area north-east of Rennes, 29 August 1944. Here it was learned that the IX Air Defense Command, located in Rennes, planned to have the 573rd Signal AW Battalion move into the sites of the 566th Signal AW Battalion in that vicinity. Actually, this was a move to replace the 1st Air Defense Wing (Provisional) by units of the 3rd Air Defense Wing, (Provisional) in order to release the 1st Air Defense Wing for operations in another area. The 3rd Air Defense Wing (Provisional) consisted of the 573rd Signal AW Battalion and the 306th Fighter Control Squadron placed under one commanding officer. Officers of the 573rd and 306th carrying wing staff duties in addition to their normal duties. This type of organization had been formed after it was learned that an Aircraft Warning Battalion and a Fighter Control Squadron could not be suitably operated as a part of an AAA Group.

It was further planned that the 573rd Signal AW Battalion and the 306th Fighter Control Squadron would operate adjacent Filter and Operations Centers as the 566th Signal AW Battalion and the 316th Fighter Control Squadron had similarly done in that area as a part of 1st Air Defense Wing. Accordingly, the battalion began tactical operations 8 September 1944 as a part of the 3rd Air Defense Wing of the IX Air Defense Command.

The battalion quickly learned that operational training with land lines is poor preparation for tactical operations with FM radios. The FM radios which were received at Chilbolton, England were set up here on a full scale basis for the first time. For the first two or three days, communications were extremely indefinite. At the end of a week's time however, most of the difficulties had been eliminated. This proved to be a good experience for the change in tactical organization that was to be effected in a few days.

As soon as the battalion reached Rennes, France the two COL (Coastal-Overseas Low), COL 7 and COL 8 were placed on detached service to the 54th AAA Brigade and proceeded to positions on the Brittany peninsula near Brest. It was their mission here to provide Aircraft Warning cover and early warning for SCR-584 units of some of the Batteries and Battalions of the 54th AAA Brigade. The MRU radar was set up during the one week period of operations from 8th to 15th of September, but never became operational.

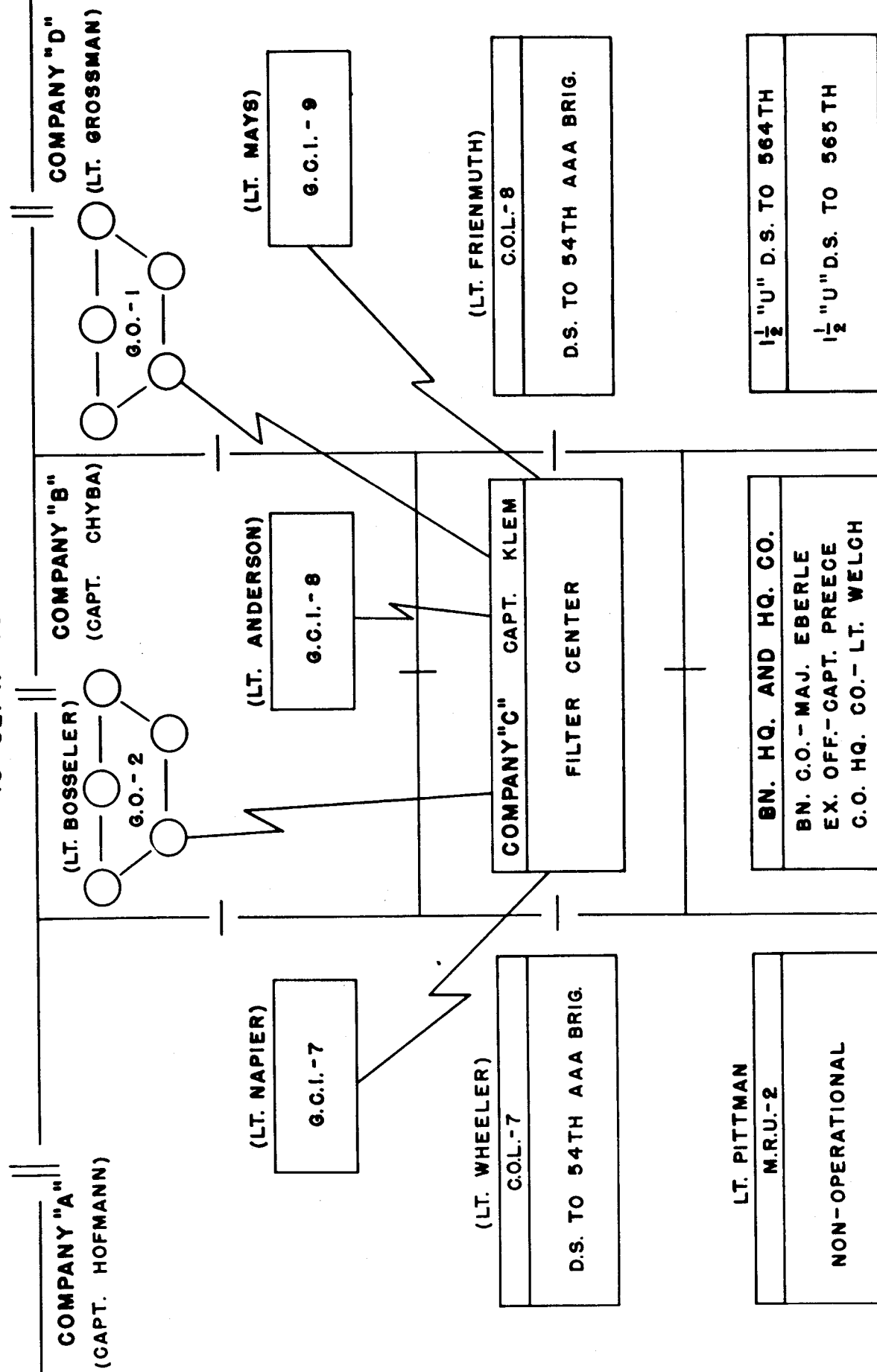
For this operation two of the three GCI stations were equipped with a British Type 25 Radar station, consisting of a Type 15, Type 21, and Type 11 Radars. The third GCI station was minus a Type 11 radar which had not been received from the depot as yet. (See Figure 2 for tactical organization of the 573rd Signal AW Battalion at this time.)

During the operation of the battalion at Rennes, France, a few missions were controlled. These consisted of routine patrols by P-61 (Black Widow) night-fighters. At this time, the need for defensive operations was rapidly diminishing. Except for occasional sorties, the German Air Force seldom made an appearance. Army planning must provide for all contingencies, and IX Air Defense Command was no exception. This Command was established to provide protection against a certain scale of German Air Force operations, but the Air Forces in general were ahead of schedule in liquidating the Luftwaffe.

Already the wheels were turning to grind out a new change. Effective the 15 September 1944, the 573rd Signal AW Battalion was transferred to the XXIX Tactical Air Command (Prov.) This new Command was being organized to aid the Ninth Army, not yet announced in the European Theater of Operations. The term "Provisional" in the title of the XXIX Tactical Air Command (Prov.) indicated that it was not authorized by the War Department but was

**TACTICAL ORGANIZATION
OF THE 573 SIGNAL A.W. BN.
15 SEPT. 1944**

FIGURE 2



being formed from other units of Ninth Air Force in order to meet the tactical requirements. Tactical Air Command was a name which replaced Air Support Command, although the mission of the two organizations was the same. IX and XIX Air Support Commands had previously become IX and XIX Tactical Air Commands.

Operation of the battalion as a part of the 3rd Air Defense Wing terminated the 15th of September 1944 and 20 September 1944, the battalion moved to Vermand, France, arriving there the following day.

CHAPTER 5

Vermand and St. Quentin, France

As can be seen, the training of the 573rd Signal AW Battalion had been almost entirely defensive in nature prior to the assignment of the battalion to the XXIX Tactical Air Command (Prov) 15 September 1944. This defensive training had been emphasized from the date the battalion was activated, 4 March 1943, through operational training at Drew Field and through subsequent field training in England. Upon arrival of the battalion in France, the mission appeared to remain a defensive one, inasmuch as the organization had been deployed as a part of the 3rd Air Defense Wing.

Now, under XXIX Tactical Air Command (Prov), the battalion was to be required to switch from defensive thinking to offensive thinking and go into tactical operations in a period of less than two weeks. Fortunately, the battalion had changed its tactical organization so many times in the previous six months that it was possible to realize this latest change and go to work on schedule. The small Sector Filter Center established by GCI 8 while the battalion was at Newcastle; the training in field moves without notice; and the shift in teams to provide personnel for the proposed airborne operation during the battalion's stay at Chilbolton----all paid dividends at this time. The battalion had shifted teams within the organization so frequently that changes could be accomplished with minimum confusion.

Each of the three GCI stations turned in its Type 11 radar, keeping the Type 15 and Type 21. The third type 11 was in the battalion only a few days before it was returned to the depot, having been drawn while the battalion was moving to Vermand, France.

Since operation of the battalion with XXIX Tactical Air Command (Prov) required three Forward Director Posts, the three GCI stations, each using the Type 15 and Type 21 as the FDP radar, set up a small filter board in a tent adjacent to the radar operations vans. Later this tent was replaced by a converted radar operations van permitting each FDP to be completely mobile. The three FDP's so formed were called FDP-A, FDP-B, and FDP-D and were operated by Companies "A", "B" and "D", respectively. Filter and communications personnel for the three FDP's were obtained by transferring the necessary teams from Company "C" to each of the other three companies. Company "C" was reduced to a headquarters only.

The primary role of each FDP was to control aircraft, so Controllers from the 306th Fighter Control Squadron were attached to each FDP. The Controllers' duties were to position aircraft and to give pilots the necessary vectors from either the Type 15 or the Type 21 radar.

Two outlying platoons reported into the FDP filter board. These were a Ground Observer platoon and an LW platoon. A third Ground Observer platoon was placed on detached service with the battalion from the 564th Signal AW Battalion and became GO-4. (See Figure 3 for this type of organization.) Each of the FDP's in turn, reported filtered tracks on aircraft to the XXIX Tactical Air Command's Fighter Control Center.

In order to provide additional radar coverage, COL-7 turned in its Type 14 COL radar and drew a Type 15 radar from the depot. This platoon was now designated CHB and reported directly to the Fighter Control Center, since it had no control or filter requirements but served entirely as a reporting unit.

The 2nd of October XXIX Tactical Air Command (Prov) went into tactical operations aiding the Ninth Army in the vicinity of Luxembourg. Battalion headquarters moved to Virton, Belgium while the FDP's were distributed from St. Vith to positions south of Luxembourg.

CHAPTER 6

Virton, Belgium

At Virton, the battalion headquarters forsook its pyramidal tents and moved into a school building. Very little use was made of tents from this time until after V-E Day by any unit of the battalion. Disregarding the one week dress rehearsal at Rennes, France, this was the first time the battalion had operated as a tactical unit. In any case, it was the first time that the battalion had operated with a Tactical Air Command in cooperation with an army, that is---in offensive operations as compared with the many months of training for a defensive role. It was particularly hard for personnel in administrative positions in the battalion headquarters to realize that the 573rd Signal AW Battalion was actually taking a part in the war effort. There was no major change in duties of any of the personnel and for the most part it seemed not too different from another training assignment.

Company "A" selected a site on the northern flank in the vicinity of St. Vith; Company "B" was located south of Luxembourg. The CHB was located on the outskirts of Bastogne. The LW platoon for FDP-D returned from detached service with the 82nd Airborne Division 14 October 1944, and went into operation with that FDP, located north of Metz. Control personnel at the FDP's controlled fighter-bombers of XXIX Tactical Air Command (Prov) over the Ninth Army area.

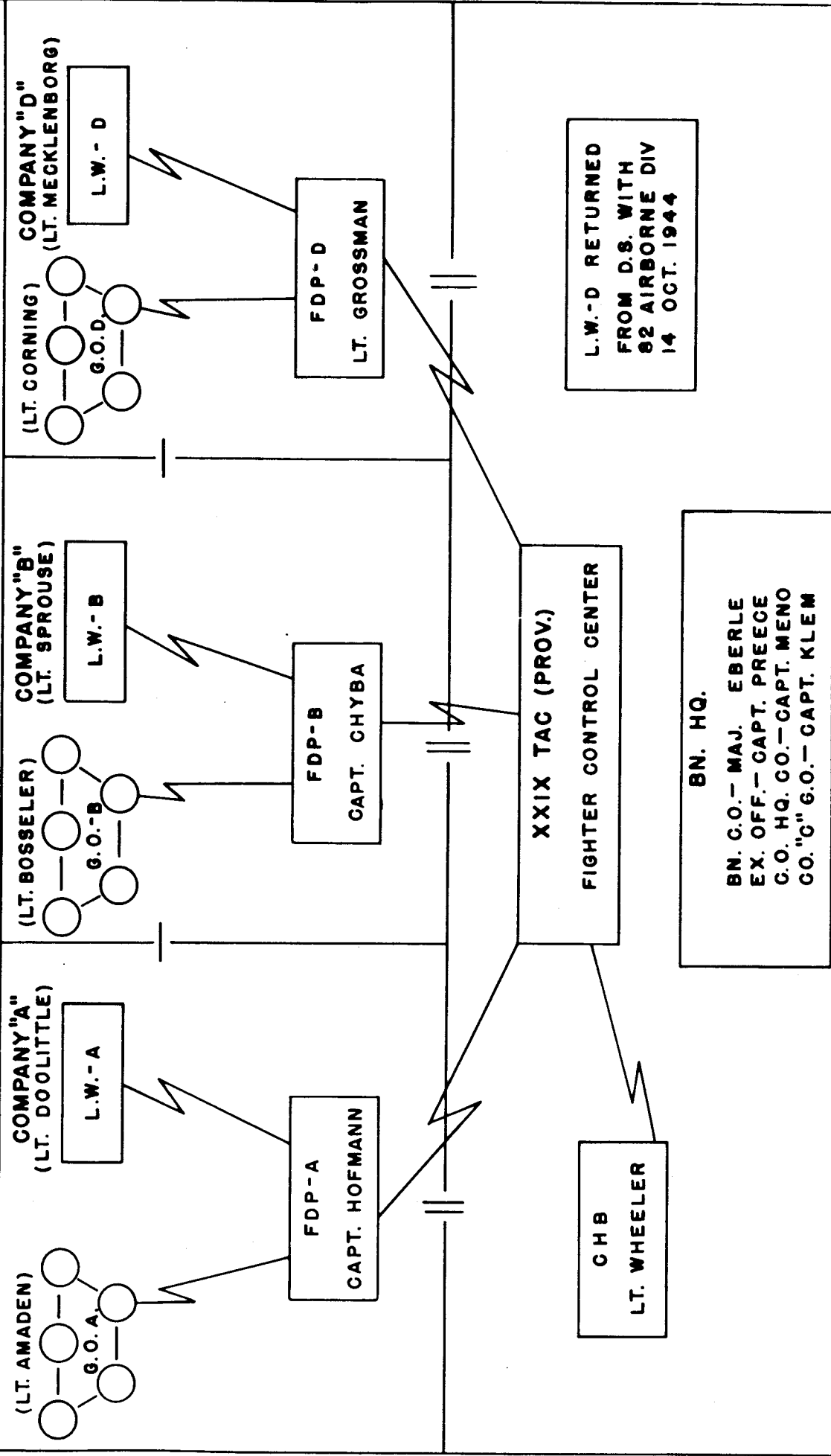
By the middle of October the plan had changed and the Ninth Army was scheduled to take the northern flank of the 12th Army Group. As a note of interest, the headquarters of the 573rd Signal AW Battalion from this time until V-E Day was always close to XXIX Tactical Air Command (Prov) Headquarters whose location in turn was immediately adjacent to Headquarters, Ninth Army. On the 19th of October, the day before the German garrison of Aachen

TACTICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE 573 SIGNAL A.W. BN.

1 OCT. 1944

FRONT LINE

FIGURE 3



surrendered to American troops, battalion headquarters moved to Vlytingen, Belgium where it was to spend the winter. FDP-B and FDP-D moved to positions north and east of Maastricht, Holland at Oppitter, Belgium and Valkenburg, Holland, respectively. FDP-A remained at its site near St. Vith which was now on the southern flank rather than the northern flank, and the CHB moved to Battice, five miles north of Verviers, Belgium.

CHAPTER 7

Vlytingen, Belgium

In Vlytingen, the battalion headquarters was situated in three small school buildings and a number of troops and officers were billeted in private homes. Except for the wide dispersion, the location proved to be a suitable winter home.

Action was initiated at the time of transfer of the 573rd Signal AW Battalion to the XXIX Tactical Air Command (Prov) to realize the return of the three and a half "U" Teams which were on detached service to the 564th and the 566th Signal AW Battalions. Three of these "U" Teams returned the latter part of October and were immediately assigned to the FDP's pending the formation of CAB (Close Attack Bombing) platoons.

The equipment for the proposed CAB platoons was to be the American built, gun-laying radar SCR-584. The unit, with its high degree of accuracy, had been modified to provide an automatic plotting table in the radar van and also extended range. Using this equipment, a controller could position an aircraft quite close to its desired location over enemy territory.

Shortly after the battalion began tactical operations in the Luxembourg sector, an early need was seen by the Signal Officer of XXIX Tactical Air Command (Prov), Colonel R. C. Maude, for a fourth FDP to provide more continuous control facilities during periods of rapid movement. A request was made to Ninth Air Force by XXIX Tactical Air Command (Prov) for one company of the 566th Signal AW Battalion with the appropriate teams to establish a fourth FDP.

Subsequent to that, Company "A" of the 566th Signal AW Battalion was attached to the 573rd Signal AW Battalion as FDP-3 and the other three FDP's were renamed FDP-1, FDP-2, and FDP-4, rather than FDP-A, FDP-B and FDP-D.

The new FDP originally began tactical operation at Veldwezelt, Belgium, near Maastricht, Holland, with the XXIX Tactical Air Command's Fighter Control Center on the 19 November 1944. Its composition was almost identical to that of the other three FDP's, however, no LW Platoon was included. At this time the CHB discontinued tactical operations pending its use as a CAB platoon.

In the meantime, arrangements had been completed for the procurement of four modified SCR-584's to be employed as Close Attack Bombing units. This program was expedited and the first platoon proceeded to England for training on the 10th of December 1944.

Until 1 December 1944 the 573rd Signal AW Battalion had been operating with teams as authorized in TO & E 11-400, dated 17 June 1943. On 1 December 1944, it was directed that the battalion reorganize under TO & E 11-400, dated 1 March 1944. Since the battalion was in continuous tactical operations at this time, the reorganization was handled as a paper project and for the most part did not affect operations. Under the reorganization Company "D" was deactivated and the personnel were transferred to Company "C". Teams authorized the 573rd Signal AW Battalion in the later TO & E are included in Appendix II.

During this period the FDP's were controlling aircraft continuously throughout good weather and each one, except FDP-3, the latest to arrive, had already controlled more than a hundred separate missions. These were entirely fighter-bomber missions in which the aircraft performed Armed Reconnaissance, Dive Bombing or Tactical Reconnaissance of the enemy held area east of Aachen.

On 16 November 1944 the Ninth U. S. Army playing its part in a unified move toward Germany by six Allied armies pushed off for the Roer River. This was the first time that any of the FDP's had controlled aircraft in armored-column cover, or Division or Corps cover. It was a new but also a

notable experience since controllers were able to aid many flights of aircraft in finding their target or in returning to base throughout the daylight hours. Six days later the first troops of the Ninth Army reached the Roer River.

Action was started by XXIX Tactical Air Command (Prov) in November to procure an MEW (Microwave Early Warning) radar for the use of XXIX Tactical Air Command (Prov). The request was approved and on 10 December 1944, the Battalion Commander, Major R. H. Eberle, proceeded to the States for the purpose of expediting the delivery of MEW Number 6 to the European Continent.

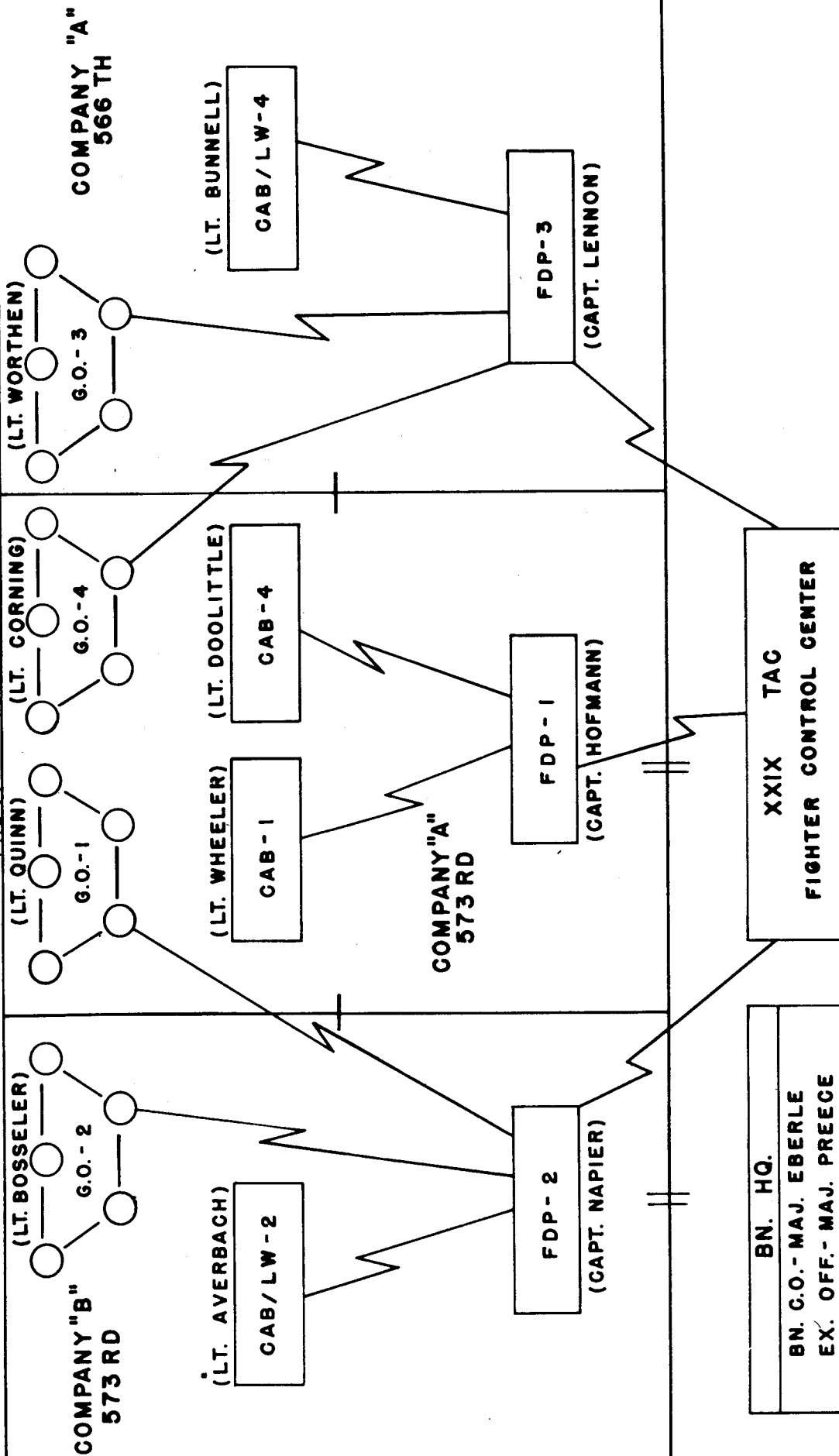
In the middle of December while the Ninth U. S. Army and the British Second Army were collecting supplies and laying the ground work for an offensive across the Roer River the Germans started their counter offensive which became the Battle of the Bulge. Fortunately for the 573rd Signal AW Battalion, FDP-1 had moved from St. Vith the latter part of November to Terwinselen, Holland about 10 miles north of Aachen, leaving no units of this battalion in the direct path of the counter offensive. However, that did not prevent concern for the possibility of a German pincer movement by an attack north of Maastricht at Maesyeck. Such an attack would have encircle the entire Ninth U. S. Army.

During the night 17 December 1944, an enemy aircraft dropped anti-personnel bombs in the motor pool of Company "A" headquarters. Three casualties were suffered---one of which was fatal. Upon 1 January 1945, the German Luftwaffe made an all-out air effort in which it attempted to catch Allied planes at airfields in eastern Belgium while they were still on the ground. For this attack, the Germans avoided radar detection by flying a few feet above the ground of the Ardennes sector, thus achieving their element of surprise but losing a great number of planes. Many personal stories of close-calls will be recounted for that day by members of the battalion.

TACTICAL ORGANIZATION
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1 APRIL 1945

FIGURE 4

FRONT LINE



As soon as the German counter offensive got under way, XXIX Tactical Air Command (Prov) was assigned a sector of the Bulge and FDP-2 moved from Opitter, Belgium to a site a few miles southeast of Liege in an effort to provide better radar coverage over the bombing sector of XXIX Tactical Air Command (Prov). This move was made under conditions similar to those practiced at Newcastle-on-Tyne some months before. Company "B" which operated FDP-2, was directed to move without prior notice. They shut down operations at 2300 hours 27 December 1944; moved from Opitter at 1500 hours 28 December 1944; arrived at Neuville 1830 hours 28 December 1944 and were operational 0800 hours 29 December 1944. The personnel of Company "B" later received the Ardennes Battle Star for their part in the "Battle of the Bulge". It was at this time that the buzz bombs which the Germans called V-1's were being concentrated on Liege and a good many of them scored near misses on the radar site. Fortunately the FDP suffered no V-1 casualties. Throughout January the battle of the Bulge continued.

The first CAB platoon (CAB-3 of Company "A", 566th Signal AW Battalion) returned from England with its SCR-584 the first part of February and became operational 4 February 1945. CAB-1 of Company "A", 573rd Signal AW Battalion became operational the 14 February 1945. The MEW radar arrived on site near Valkenberg, Holland, 22 February 1945, twenty-one days after it had left the States. Preliminary arrangements had already been made, including the excavation of the positions for the Operations Hut and some of the vans, and certain personnel had been trained at MEW stations of the IX and XIX Tactical Air Commands in December and early January. The MEW was assembled and initially placed in operation at 0730 hours, 4 March 1945, ten days after it had arrived on site. Company "A" and Company "C", 573rd Signal AW Battalion, FDP-1 and FDP-4, were consolidated in order to provide personnel to man the new radar unit. Company "C" again became a

headquarters with few personnel. The first mission was controlled by the MEW on the 9 March 1945, marking the start of controlled missions by that unit.

Units of the battalion were at this time provided protection against enemy air attacks by a battery of Anti-Aircraft Artillery. The assigned and attached strength of the battalion had risen to approximately 1450 officers and enlisted men. Included in this strength were the Controllers and air-ground radio operators of the 306th Fighter Control Squadron, although the bulk of the 306th Fighter Control Squadron personnel were employed at the headquarters of XXIX Tactical Air Command (Prov) in operating the Fighter Control Center.

A few days before the MEW was placed in operation, the Ninth Army jumped off across the Roer River and began its drive to the Rhine River. FDP-3 had been shifted to a site east of Aachen about seven miles behind the Roer River, at that time the front line, in order to provide more continuous cover once the offensive got under way. FDP-2 was now back in its original position at Opitter at this time, having left its site south of Liege as soon as the Bulge threat had been removed.

Although the MEW was not in operation for the initial phases of the Roer River crossing it was able to handle some missions of that offensive prior to its closing station 15 March for a move to a position 15 miles southwest of Wesel, Germany.

CHAPTER 8

Viersen-Munster-Brunswick, Germany

Battalion headquarters moved 10 March 1945 from Vlytingen, Belgium to Viersen, Germany. XXIX Tactical Air Command (Prov) had moved to Munchen Gladbach a few miles south of Viersen. These were the headquarters from which operations were to be controlled incident to the crossing of the Rhine. FDP-2 was located about four miles east of FDP-1 (MEW) while FDP-3 had moved up to a site southeast of Munchen Gladbach.

The MEW became operational at its new site 15 miles southwest of Wesel 20 March 1945, four days before the crossing of the Rhine by the Ninth Army. CAB-4 and CAB-2 returned from training in England and became operational on 15 and 23 March, respectively. The tactical organization of the battalion at this time is shown in Figure 4.

During the night of 23-24 March the first units of the British Second Army crossed the Rhine River north of Wesel. The following day, 24 March 1945, Ninth Army sent its first units across south of Wesel. The Ninth Army was under the tactical control of the British Twenty-first Army Group at this time. On the morning of 24 March 1945 the airborne troops made their landing on the east bank of the Rhine and rapidly consolidated their position for the subsequent drives of the British Second Army and the American Ninth Army into the heart of Germany.

All three FDP's of the battalion were in a position to cover the crossings. On the day of the crossings, 24 March 1945, FDP-1 (MEW), alone, handled 45 missions comprising a total of 570 aircraft sorties. FDP-3 was the first FDP to cross the Rhine occupying a site 20 miles southwest of Munster. FDP-2 followed shortly thereafter, and occupied a site due south of Munster about 15 miles from the city. On 6 April 1945, FDP-1 ceased operations and moved to a site a few miles northwest of Bielefeld, resuming operations 79½ hours after the unit went off the air for the move.

The total distance travelled by FDP-1 was approximately 135 miles. Shortly thereafter FDP-3 moved to a site a few miles west of Hannover. FDP-2 moved to a position northwest of Magdeburg and FDP-1 established its station about 25 miles east of Brunswick. These were the positions occupied by the radar units 9 May 1945.

At this time the CAB platoons were conducting experimental blind bombing missions. Two fighter bombers would "check in" with the CAB Controller who directed them to their target, telling the pilots at what instant to release their bombs. A third photo aircraft photographed the position of the hits with respect to the targets. This use of the CAB's precluded much use of the stations as a navigational aid to aircraft.

Throughout these rapid moves the CAB and GO platoons were usually ahead of the FDP's. Often the companies and sometimes the platoons were "on their own" as far as procuring rations was concerned. In the shuttle process, the CAB and LW platoons would report to first one FDP and then another, depending upon the proximity of FDP to the platoon locations. Sufficient crystals were held by each FDP to permit them to establish communications with any CAB or CAB/LW platoon in the battalion. In some instances, units occupied positions bypassed by the armored spearheads but not as yet cleared by the Infantry. The rapid movement, though, proved that the communications system, as established, was not adequate. It is pointed out that the Ninth Army had moved from the Rhine River to the Elbe River, a distance of 240 miles, in less than a month.

In the latter phases of the drive, it was necessary to have the radar stations set up and control aircraft without direct communications with the XXIX Tactical Air Command's Fighter Control Center. In these cases, Field Orders for the proposed missions in any one day were delivered to the station early in the morning by a courier. During this period, the XXIX

Tactical Air Command's Fighter Control Center was set up in Haltern, Germany, after which it moved to Gutersloh. V-E Day found the Fighter Control Center set up on an airfield near Braunschweig, Germany.

Battalion headquarters moved apace with XXIX Tactical Air Command (Prov), stopping at Munster while the Fighter Control Center was established at Haltern and Gutersloh. From Munster, the battalion headquarters moved to Braunschweig 25 April 1945, its V-E Day Home.

Approximately two weeks after the first unit of the Ninth Army reached the Elbe River the German armies capitulated, terminating World War II in Europe

APPENDIX I

Battalion & Company Commanders

Battalion Commanders:

Lt Col Roy T. Richards, 9 Sept 43 to 11 Jan 44
Lt Col O. E. Everett, 23 Jan 44 to 25 July 44
Major R. H. Eberle, 25 July 44 to 15 April 45
Lt Col R. H. Eberle, 15 April 45 to present.

Executive Officers:

Major William V. Rettger, 2 Nov 43 to 11 Jan 44
Captain R. H. Eberle, 25 Jan 44 to 15 May 44
Major R. H. Eberle, 15 May 44 to 25 July 44
Captain William R. Preece, Jr., 25 July 44 to 15 Dec 44
Major William R. Preece, Jr., 15 Dec 44 to present

Commanding Officers: "A" Company

Captain Thomas B. Hofmann, 13 Sept 43 to 16 March 45.
1st Lt Claiborne L. Pittman, 16 March 45 to 16 May 45.
Captain Claiborne L. Pittman, 16 May 45 to 1 June 45.
Major Thomas B. Hofmann, 1 June 45 to present.

Commanding Officers: "B" Company.

Captain Herman J. Chyba, 25 Jan 44 to 7 Oct 44.
1st Lt Wilber P. Napier, 7 Oct 44 to 1 April 45.
Captain Wilber P. Napier, 1 April 45 to present.

Commanding Officer: "C" Company

Captain Stanley J. Klem, 15 Sept 43 to present.

Commanding Officers: "D" Company

Captain William R. Preece, Jr., 16 Jan 44 to 27 July 44.
1st Lt Charles R. Crossman, 27 July 44 to 7 Sept 44.
"D" Company deactivated 11 Dec 1944 and personnel transferred to Company "C".

Commanding Officers: Headquarters and Plotting Company.

1st Lt. Thomas J. Meno, 23 Jan 44 to 14 April 44
Captain Thomas J. Meno, 15 April 44 to 20 May 44.
1st Lt. Lester L. Welch, 21 May 1944 to 14 Sept 44.
Captain Lester L. Welch, 15 Sept 1944 to 29 Sept 1944.
Captain Thomas J. Meno, 30 Sept 44 to present.

APPENDIX II

1. The 573rd Signal AW Battalion arrived at Henley-on-Thames, 12 January 1944 with the following teams from Table of Organization and Equipment 11-400, dated 17 June 1943:

A	B	C	I	J	L	N	P	Q	S	U
1	4	3	1	5	1	4	8	1	6	3

Authorized Strength: 39 Officers
 5 Warrant Officers
 545 Enlisted Men.

2. In January 1944, the battalion was reorganized and was then authorized the following teams from TO & E 11-400, dated 17 June 1943:

A	B	C	D	I	J	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	U
1	4	5	2	6	5	6	10	10	8	1	1	6	1	6

Authorized Strength: 73 Officers
 7 Warrant Officers
 959 Enlisted Men

3. The battalion was again reorganized, December, 1944, in the midst of tactical operations, and was authorized the following teams under the 1 March 1944 edition of TO & E 11-400

A	B	C	D	E	H	I	J	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	U
1	4	6	6	1	1	6	5	4	2	3	11	1	4	12	1	4

Authorized Strength: 54 Officers
 7 Warrant Officers
 841 Enlisted Men.

APPENDIX III

Awards & Decorations, Commendations &

Battle Participation Credit

Bronze Star Medal

Lt. Col. R. H. Eberle,
Per Par 1, Section I, G. O. 16,
Hqs, XXIX TAC, dtd 2 April 1945

1st Lt. W. L. Freinmuth,
1st Lt. H. J. Morrison
M/Sgt J. L. Broadaway
M/Sgt H. B. Young
Per Par 1, Section I, G. O. 31
Hqs, XXIX TAC, dtd 19 June 1945.

Major T. B. Hofmann
Capt W. P. Napier
S/Sgt B. Mandel
Per G. O. 6,
Hqs, XXIX TAC, dtd 27 July 1945.

Organization of XXIX TAC

Ltr, Hqs, XXIX TAC, subject: Commendation, dated 24 Dec 1945. 1st Indorsement to 573rd Signal AW Battalion by Director of Communications, commending units for organization of XXIX TAC under pressure and results obtained.

Drive to Roer

Ltr, Ninth Army, Lt. General W. H. Simpson, Commanding, dated 24 November 1944, to XXIX TAC, indorsed by TAC to 573rd Signal AW Battalion.

Ltr of Commendation from Brigadier General R. E. Nugent, Commanding General, XXIX TAC, dated 21 March 1945, to Company "A", 573rd Signal AW Battalion, on outstanding work in the erection, operation control and maintenance of MEW.

Rhine River Crossing

Ltr, XVI Corps, Major General John B. Anderson, Commanding dated 25 April 1945, to Ninth Army, indorsed by Ninth Army to Ninth Air Force, to XXIX TAC, thence to 573rd Signal AW Battalion.

Battle Participation Credit

Battalion awarded Battle Star for Campaign "Northern France" per Ltr. Order, Hq. ETOUSA, file AG 200.6, OpGA dated 30 March 1945

Battalion awarded Battle Star for Campaign "Central Europe", per Ltr (8), Hq. USFET, AG 200.6, OpGA, dtd 6 July 1945.

Battalion awarded Battle Star for Campaign "Rhineland", Ltr (8), Hq. USFET, AG 200.6, OpGA dtd 8 July 1945.

APPENDIX III (Continued)

Battle Participation Credit (Cont'd)

Company "B" awarded Battle Star for Campaign "Ardennes" per ltr, Hq. ETOUSA, dtd 30 June 1945.

Decorations

Battalion awarded the "Belgian Fourragere (1940)" per Decision No. 717, Orders of the Day, Belgian Army, and War Department Cable (AG War-WX 32845, dtd 15 July 1945).

Battalion awarded Meritorious Service Unit Plaque per Sec IV, G. O. #6, Hq. XXIX TAC, dtd 27 July 1945.