



# Record Traffic From The Past

# Greely



Horace Greeley, the eminent editor of the New York Tribune, advised: "Go west, young man."

Adolphus Washington Greely, no relation to the editor, not only went west, he went north as well—far north to the Arctic.

Greely, a Massachusetts native detached to the Signal Corps, was hand-picked by BG Albert C. Myer, the first Chief Signal Officer of the U.S. Army, to supervise the vast extension of military telegraph lines in the West. It took 8 long years, from 1870 to 1878, to complete the project.

Three years later, in 1881, Greely was chosen for another major mission. He led 24 men on expedition to Grinnell Land off the northwest coast of Greenland to set up a temporary weather station. The expedition was marooned for 2 years, and 19 of its members perished before a Navy expedition reached and rescued the survivors.

Despite the terrible hardships, LT Greely brought back the expedition's records with important meteorological, tidal, magnetic, and pendulum observations.

In 1887, Greely, then a captain and world renowned for his Arctic service, was promoted to brigadier general and Chief Signal Officer of the Army. He served in that position

*Secretary of war George Dorn pins the Medal of Honor on MG Greely's lapel during a ceremony in 1935 at the retired officer's Georgetown home. MG Greely, the only Chief Signal Officer to ever receive the coveted award, died later that year at the age of 91.*



*This photo, taken sometime in 1881, records the start of the North Greenland supporting party, led by SGT David L. Brainard (third from left) who returned alive and retired as a brigadier general. LT Greely (far left) did not accompany this excursion party. Only six men, including Greely and Brainard, returned alive. Some of the men appear to be harnessed to sleds.*

# Signal Pioneer

for 19 years and kept the Army Signal Corps intact despite efforts to disband the Corps.

In 1892 Greely won War Department consent for the Signal Corps to assume responsibility for military balloons. [See *TAC*, Summer 1976, page 7.] He also promoted military use of photography.

In 1906 Greely was promoted to major general and made commander of the Department of the Pacific with headquarters at the Presidio of San Francisco. He commanded the Army's relief efforts following the devastating San Francisco earthquake of that year.

Greely retired in 1908. He was awarded the Medal of Honor, but not until the year of his death, 1935—a belated thanks for his many contributions.

Greely was also the founder of the National Geographic Society.

A life-sized bronze bust of MG Greely was unveiled last summer at Fort Huachuca, AZ, in front of the massive three-story building there which bears his name.

The unveiling was combined with the rededication of Greely Hall, the headquarters of the U.S. Army Communications Command (ACC), and the date—June

24—coincided with the 116th anniversary of the Signal Corps.

Among the attendees were MG Gerd S. Grombacher, commander of ACC and Fort Huachuca; MG David Gibbs (USA-Ret), the last officer to hold the title of Chief Signal Officer of the U.S. Army; and MG William B. Latta (USA-Ret), who served as commander of ACC from 1969 to 1971, when it was known as STRATCOM.

*Reprinted from ACCent, U.S. Army Communications Command, Fort Huachuca, AZ*

*MG Gerd S. Grombacher, commander, U.S. Army Communications Command and Fort Huachuca, and MG David Gibbs (USA-ret) unveil the bronze bust of MG Adolphus W. Greely. Gibbs was the last person to hold the title of Chief Signal Officer of the U.S. Army.*

