

## WWII Message Center

It could be clearly stated that America was brought into WWII on 7 December 1941, when the Japanese deliberately bombed Pearl Harbor. Two signalmen, Pvt. Joseph L. Lockhart and Pvt. George A. Elliott, were stationed at the north shore of Oahu, operating their radio aircraft-detection device, called RADAR, (Radio Direction and Ranging). They were operating a SCR-170, which was very new and very secret. At 0702, Lockard and Elliott spotted an echo on the oscilloscope such as neither of them had ever seen before. By their calculations, a large flight of airplanes was 132 miles off Kahuku Point and approaching at a speed of three miles a minute. At 0720, Lockard and Elliott made a call to the information center at Fort Shafter where Lieutenant Kermit Tyler took the call. Lieutenant Tyler told the signalmen to "forget it". The Japanese air attack on Pearl Harbor began at 0755.

A WWII Signal Corps Message Center exhibit is located in this area of the museum. This exhibit shows the many changes in communications during the war. The most important change in communications was to develop a radio small enough to carry, yet powerful enough to communicate at distances up to one mile. The development of the "walkie-talkie" had begun in earnest. On the table in this exhibit is from left to right: A SCR-194 which is a VHF portable radio set. Next is a M-209 ciphering device and to the right of the M-209 is the radio which replaced the SCR-194, the SCR-300 FM radio. On the shelf looking out the "window" is a "suitcase" radio used by the Office of Strategic Service (OSS, forerunner to the CIA). Next to the "suitcase" radio is a SCR-536 "Handi-Talkie," the first truly portable hand-held radio.

The soldiers are wearing uniforms used at the outset of WWII, note the WWI helmets. The first sergeant and private are operating a SCR-288 radio, powered by a hand-crank generator. On the very right of the exhibit is a SCR-511-B "pogo-stick" radio, used by soldiers on horseback. Other items in the exhibit include, pocket Bible, Coca Cola aircraft spotting playing cards, Post magazine (Note the original painting on the magazine in the Signal Corps Art and Motion Picture exhibit), message book, V-Mail along with various posters/pinups of the day.

During both WWI and WWII the army experienced good luck in enlisting Native American as signal soldiers. They used their native language when operating radios. Not once was their "code" broken by either the Japanese or Germans. Because the word "tank" was not in many Native American languages the word "turtle" would sometimes be substituted. This was true also for the word "machine gun" where the words "washing machine" or "sewing machine" were substituted.

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