Statue dedicated

On November 4, Maj. Gen. Archibald Cull Birtwistle, CBE, the Signal Officer-in-Chief (Army) of the British Empire rededicated a bronze statue of Mercury to the United States Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon. The statue was originally given to the US Signal Corps in 1945 by the British Royal Corps of Signals to mark the close cooperation between the two corps during WWII. It has been at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, ever since.

Fort Gordon was the second stop in Birtwistle's tour of the US Signal Corps. According to Lt. Col. Gordon Young, the British exchange officer, the purpose of Birtwistle's visit was to

see how the US Signal Corps trains its people and activates its policies.

Young related that he had been working for a long time to get the bronze statue transferred to Fort Gordon. "It is appropriate that since the Signal School is located here rather than Fort Monmouth, the statue should be moved. With Birtwistle being here, it's appropriate that he dedicate the statue. He is responsible to the General Staff of the Army for all matters dealing with British Army signal operations," Young said.

The bronze statue of Mercury has special significance to the British. Affectionately referred to as "Jimmy," the statue is the badge of the Royal Corps of Signals. Mercury is the messenger of the gods; the colors on the statue are the light blue of the sky, the dark blue of the sea, and the green of the land — the different paths of communication.

Birtwistle visited the Signal Center on November 2-4, and after he had addressed students of the officers department and invited guests on his role as Signal Officer-in-Chief (British Army), he dedicated "Jimmy."

Speaking on behalf of Royal Signals, Birtwistle said:
"The signal communications provided for the United States and British Armies in the field in all theater of operations has been of a very high order. Their provision has, in many cases, been a joint responsibility of the US Signal Corps and Royal Signals. This has required the closest cooperation between all ranks in message centers, in carrier and repeater stations, in the field of wire construction and maintenance and in various forms of Signal dispatch service. The success attending their joint efforts is sufficient proof of the close relation which has existed between the Corps, and the officers of my Corps have asked me to make this presentation as a mark of admiration of the work of the US Signal Corps and of appreciation of their wholehearted cooperation. It gives me great pleasure to ask Maj. Gen. F. H. Lanerhan to accept on behalf of the US Signal Corps this figure of MERCURY — the badge of my Corps. I hope it will always help to keep fresh the memory of the many close associations and friendships that have been formed during the past three years between the officers of the US Signal Corps and the Royal Corps of Signals."

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Gen. Birtwistle, Signal Officer-in-Chief (Army) of the British Empire stands beside "Jimmy" whom he had just presented to the Signal Center as a symbol of the cooperation between the two Signal Corps. (US Army photo by Janet M. Walker)

Col. Raymon Ketchum, commander of the 2nd Signal Training Brigade at Fort Gordon, presents the distinguished graduate award to Sp 5 Jose Villegas, top graduate in the 36L Electronic Switching Repair Course. Brigade CSM Marion S. Howell looks on. (US Army photo by Janet M. Walker)

Error corrected

Today I was given a copy of the Winter 83 ARMY COMMUNICATOR by Maj. Arthur McRaie who is the US Army Signal Corps Exchange Officer at the School of Signals, Blanford.

I was delighted to see the account on pages 10 and 11 of the dedication of the statue of Jimmy; however, I am afraid that you attribute to Maj. Gen. Birtwistle the words of HRH The Princess Royal spoken in 1945! This speech was heard by the audience in Alexander Hall on 4 November 82 while watching the video film record of the original presentation.

Since I left Fort Gordon soon after 4 November and was therefore not available to proofread the report, I would like to have the chance through your Letters column to correct the record.

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