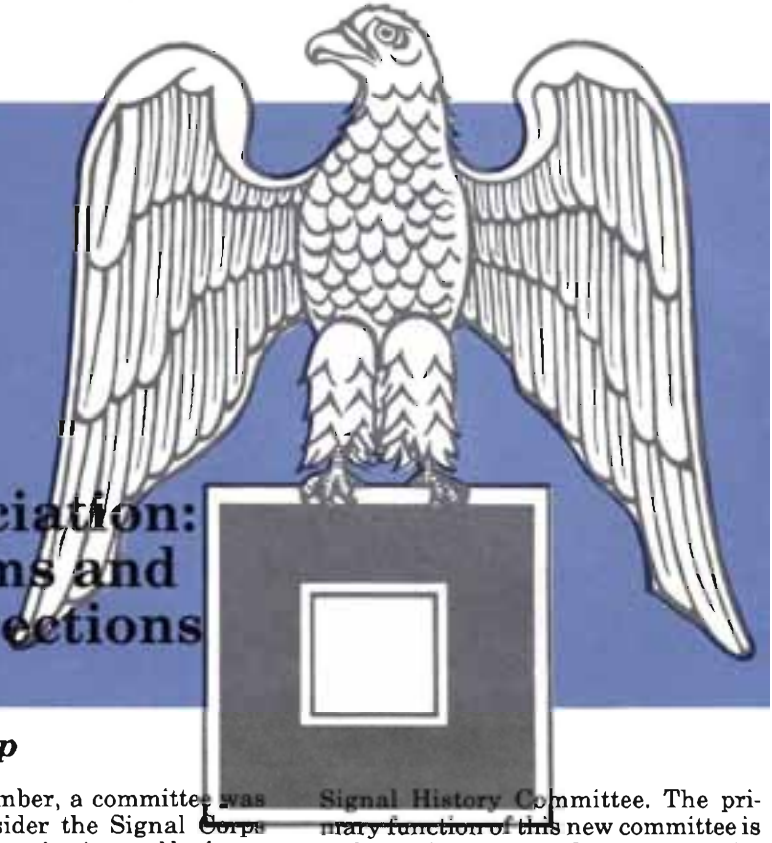
Preserving a proud heritage



The Signal Corps Association: its function, its programs and its new directions

by Col. Robert L. Bishop

The two most often expressed reactions to the Signal Corps Association's displays at conferences are: "I didn't even know we had an Association" and "I'm a member, but I don't know what the Association does." Therefore, this article will explain what the Association is supposed to do, discuss some of its current programs, and outline the new direction of the Association's activities.

The purpose of the Association is to provide an opportunity for interested individuals to aid in preserving for posterity the proud heritage of the United States Army Signal Corps, the United States Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon. Through direct financial support, derived from sources authorized by Para 5-20, AR 230-1, the Association will enhance the educational and recreational value of the Signal Corps Museum and thus insure that the lessons of history and the proud traditions of the Signal Corps are not forgotten by future generations.

Several organizations with this or similar purposes have been formed by Army communicators since Brig. Gen. Albert J. Myer established the "Order of the Signal Corps" in 1865.[1] The present Signal Corps Association was founded at Fort Gordon in 1979 as a nonappropriated fund instrumentality with the purpose quoted above. A major project of the Association, at that time, was to consider the feasibility of building a National Signal Science Center and Museum at Fort Gordon. As this activity came under the aegis of the National Science Center Foundation, a review of the Association's purpose and programs was needed.

Last September, a committee was formed to consider the Signal Corps Association's constitution and by-laws. Its findings were that the original purpose of the Association is still valid, but that new direction and greater emphasis on the original purpose were needed. But before looking at the new ideas, let's review some of the existing programs.

Attendees at the last CONTACCT Conference were the first to buy the recently compiled roster of active, reserve, and retired Signal officers. This roster, the *US Army Signal Corps Commissioned and Warrant Officers,* can be ordered ($4.95 each plus mailing & handling) from the Association as can distinctive Signal Corps historical prints, jewelry, and memorabilia.

Many of you are reading this article in the ARMY COMMUNICATOR (AC) which you received as a result of your Association membership, another activity which promotes the history and traditions of our Corps.

The Signal Corps Association recognizes scholastic achievement at the Signal Center by awarding a certificate and a one-year AC subscription to the honor graduate in each MOS-producing course, and presents a certificate to the SOBC graduate with the highest ranking in leadership.

Maj. Gen. John Hoover, USA (retired), author[2] and noted authority on Signal Corps history, has graciously accepted the Association president's invitation to establish and chair the Signal History Committee. The primary function of this new committee is to determine ways and means to assist our Fort Gordon museum and to better promulgate the history of the Corps. The Signal History Committee also will serve as an advisory panel on historical matters to the Association and to the Commandant of the Signal Center.

One of the projects being considered by Hoover is the feasibility of building an unofficial Association Archive of personal letters and historical publications of Signal interest. These documents, now held in private collections, could be donated or loaned to the Association and preserved for posterity. Once acquired, the archive can be a rich source for research by students from the Signal Center and elsewhere. Encouraging publication of this research is another new program of the Association, with awards given to the most deserving authors.

If you would like more information about your Signal Corps Association or any of its programs, write us.

Signal Corps Association
P. O. Box 7740
Fort Gordon, Georgia 30905

[1] *See 2nd Lt. Michael Coffman's article, "The Signal Corps Association," in the Fall 1980 ARMY COMMUNICATOR.*

[2] *Currently researching a new book on Signal Corps history, Maj. Gen. Hoover published an excerpt from the papers of Lt. George N. Gray, 53rd Ohio Volunteers, as an article, "Signal Officers Basic Course Circa 1862," in the Fall 1982 of ARMY COMMUNICATOR.*