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DAILY ENTERPRISE



(U) HISTORY TODAY - 10 July 2015

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(U) On July 10, 1943, British and U.S. forces invaded the island of Sicily, which was held by Italian and German forces. Casualties were high, but the island was liberated and plans were made for operations on mainland Italy.



(U) U.S. combat forces were accompanied by what was then known as the "J Service." The term was adopted from the British Army, and referred to units that monitored U.S. communications for security purposes. The J Service was generally at division level, and was controlled by the G-2 (intelligence) section.

(U) In August 1943, the J Service for the Seventh Army turned in a report on the use of radio in July and August in the invasion of Sicily. It was not pleasant reading.

(U) One common problem was "the frequent bandying of officers' names in the clear." This made identification of the unit and its cover designation much easier. If those names were not already known to the Germans, the report said, "an alert enemy intercept [operator] has no doubt already noted the names of these officers for future identification."

(U) Another common problem was the use of home-made codes. The enemy could follow the movement or transfer of units through these codes, and, if prisoners were captured from a unit, could then identify it. As the report commented, "Numerous instances have occurred where our 'J' Service, without any prior knowledge, have kept track of the movements of friendly troops by the interception of non-standard codes. It must be assumed that the enemy can likewise make use of this same information."

(U) On August 5, an infantry division radio message gave a map location in the clear for the movement of a command post. This unit also made a comment on the radio about another infantry division moving up on their left.

(U) On August 12, an unidentified unit commander in a regimental combat team radio net reported in the clear that "The mortar is too heavy, we are digging in and will not attack until 2030."

(U) On August 15, a corps-level radio operator received a message from a naval lieutenant commander referencing an amphibious landing scheduled for that night and telling the operator to pass the information on. When the corps radioman questioned the advisability of relaying the message to its final recipient, he was ordered to do so. The J Service intercepted it in the clear.

(U) Sometimes the J Service was able to correlate an information compromise with its negative results. On August 3, an infantry division radio announced in the clear that an attack would be made that night on "Hill 1060." An after-action report from the division described the German defense on that hill as "severe."

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(U) There were several ironic examples of the J Service making positive use of negative activity. For example, often J Service stations ashore were able to pass news and current situation information to local commanders, based on their intercept of the plain language communications of friendly forces.

(U) There was another positive benefit to this activity. J Service monitoring stations ashore were able to use their radios to supplement the equipment of combat units; many combat units found that their communications equipment had gotten waterlogged during the amphibious landings and was inoperable.

(U) It is not known what corrective actions were taken on the basis of this report, but U.S. communications security in general improved only marginally during the war. It should be said, though, that this often depended on local commanders. General Eisenhower, theater commander, took communications security and security monitoring seriously; so did some other senior leaders. See *History Today* of July 13, 2007, at [REDACTED]

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