



Signal Corps Cameramen – World War II History of the Army Pictorial Service

Of 1,400 Signal Corps cameramen on the Western Front in Europe, 32 were killed in action and more than a hundred were wounded. When pictures failed to get through more often than not the cameraman had been forced to drop his equipment and fight with the infantry.

Millions of feet of motion picture film and thousands of still pictures were taken by Signal Corps photographers during World War II.

The Signal Corps Photographic Center (SCPC) in New York, under the supervision of the Army Pictorial Service, produced newsreels, historical chronologies, training films and many special productions. Thousands of still photographs were filed in the Still Picture Branch of the Army Pictorial Service in the Pentagon. Pictures published in newspapers and magazines featured the credit line: U.S. Army Signal Corps.

When the entry of the United States into World War II made it necessary for the APS to expand its facilities, the former Paramount Studios in Long Island City, New York were purchased. In April 1942 the Laboratory and the Photographic School were moved from Fort Monmouth to the Signal Corps Photographic Center, the name given to the Long Island installation.

With the establishment of the Signal Corps Photographic Center the Army Pictorial Service became a major film producer, even by Hollywood standards. Writers, cameramen, directors, technicians and administrative personnel came to the Center from the industry through the Reserve Corps, direct commissions or recruitment by Selective Service. Many others with photographic backgrounds were trained for special jobs. Throughout this organizational period the Research Council of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences cooperated with the War Department and aided in the placing of contracts for the production of training films with Hollywood film companies. In the later part of 1942 the Western Division of the Signal Corps Photographic Center was established in Hollywood to serve as the contracting agency with

West Coast producers. This Division continued to function until November 1945. Still picture activities remained at the Signal Corps Photographic Laboratory on the grounds of the Army War College until the fall of 1943, when new and larger quarters were provided in the Pentagon.

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