

# "WALKY-TALKIES"

## Radio Communications Make Possible The Speed of Modern War

(By ROBERT PARRISH, through the American Office  
of War Information)

"JOHNSON!" snapped the captain on a crest above the Italian valley.

P.I.C. Johnson knelt, jerked out the telescoping antenna pole of his "walky-talkie," and handed the captain a "talker." The captain called the code signal, and got an acknowledgment from headquarters.

"Tank warning," he said quietly. "Heavy concentration proceeding north by north-east on valley road."

The battalion "walky-talkie" verified the message. In three minutes, dive-bombers droned overhead. Down they zoomed over the tanks, which were caught and smashed like sardine cans.

Meanwhile, a tank destroyer battalion rushed into position.

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MODERN war is fought at 30 miles an hour instead of 50 yards a day. In 1918 the tank warning would have been sent to headquarters by runner. Even if he'd been lucky enough to get through the German barrage and machine-gun fire, he'd have taken an hour to cover the distance. By that time, all the men in the infantry outposts would have been "dead ducks."

Communications have come a long way since the day when an army in the radio field maintained contact by the old telegraphic code signals requiring trained operators, or one-way communications by voice.

From the bomber feeling its way home to its English base by a radio beam, to the tank operator reporting through twin discs pressed against his throat (with headphones built into the helmet, leaving both hands free) communications—and by that is meant versatile, multi-missioned radio—have here changed the whole technique of warfare.

Cavalry officers used to lead a charge with drawn sabres. Now the commander of a tank battalion may direct the fight by radio from a distant hill. Encircled troops no longer send runners or carrier pigeons. Their radio messages leap through any lines drawn around them.

### Light Weight a Feature

Infantry patrols and front-line troops swear by their new five-pound "handy-talkie," light enough to hold in one hand and almost as easy to use as a telephone hand-set. Originally designed for paratrooper use, this set features an automatic switch which turns the instrument on when the telescopic antenna is pulled out.

The "handy-talkie" in the field can send about three miles. At battalion headquarters is another "walky-talkie" to take the information, as in the case of the battle manoeuvres just described. This "walky-talkie" relays to another radio operator, who contacts regimental headquarters. Quickly the message goes to divisional, corps, and army command by high-powered radio.

Nothing must happen to that radio net. The army must always maintain contact between its units.

In France, in 1940, the Germans discovered the wavelengths of the French and tuned in to give false orders. To-day an authentication code is used to prevent such disaster. On the "walky-talkie" is a wavelength calibrator which looks like the tuning-button on a home radio set. When the soldier in the field turns it, he begins broadcasting and receiving



Soldiers like this one, directing artillery fire with a "walky-talkie," send reports back to headquarters from advanced outposts at the fighting front

on a new wavelength. Armies have pre-arranged wavelengths to substitute when the enemy tries to jam the one they have been using.

"Walky-talkies" are used in modern warfare to direct artillery fire. The artillery-liaison officer accompanying the advanced infantry has a "walky-talkie." When he calls for fire, he can see the bursts and correct the aim until the guns are on the target.

In 1918, the officer would have different coloured rockets to help correct the artillery fire. The guns were some miles back. They fired blind, using a map, and if they made a mistake, as sometimes happened, they shelled their own troops.

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An American unit keeps in touch with other troops on the New Guinea front by means of a portable "walky-talkie," which can be set up very quickly in combat posts



When U.S. troops are sent out on special missions, they take with them the invaluable radio apparatus which keeps them in touch with base headquarters at all times