

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

By Gary Luther, Editor
APCO BULLETIN

Police plus radios? The New York City Police Department used a wireless to contact their police boats in the harbor ... in 1916.

While Prohibition created more criminals, the assembly line created more automobiles. Combined, the two unwittingly produced a new breed: the highly mobile criminal.

Police radio was quicker, though, offering the best hope of capturing these mechanized criminals. The new technology was popular. Police radio operators were calling one another ... coast to coast.

St. Louis was caught in the cross-fire ... police dx-ing jammed local signals. The problem was mounting: the number of police radio stations had grown from 43 in 1930 to 253 in 1934 ... when the FCC was created.

Sergeant Everett Fisher, Radio Supervisor for the St. Louis Police Department, began a campaign to form an organization which could act to bring order to police frequencies. The campaign began with a chain letter in November 1934.

Two and a half months later, a meeting was scheduled in St. Louis at the Melbourne Hotel, January 21-24, 1935. Twenty-three police communications men came from 13 states to join the five in St. Louis to form THE ASSOCIATED POLICE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICERS.

The name and emblem of the Association, already chosen by the St. Louis group, were adopted by the charter member group. Because of the semi-military nature of law enforcement agencies, the formation of an organization such as APCO was a delicate matter. For this reason, Fisher arranged to have present as advisors Captain Donald S. Leonard, Michigan State Police and IACP; E.P. Coffey, FBI; and Lt. Ewell K. Jett, FCC.

Mimeographed sheets comprised the first issues of the APCO BULLETIN. It was not until November 1938 that the high-quality magazine format with advertising was introduced. The first Ten Signals — 17 of them — were published in The BULLETIN in 1939. A year later these were revised and enlarged to 70 signals.

Because of its membership, APCO and the state-of-the-art have always been synonymous. Charter member Bob Batts had installed the first mobile police radio in Detroit Police Department's Cruiser #5 in 1928. Fred Link and Dan Noble had a functional experimental FM system in 1938. They completed the first statewide FM multi-base system for the Connecticut State Police in 1939-40.

War came — so did the War Production Board ... scarce radio tubes ... the APCO

BULLETIN ran stories on the dangers of poison gas and "An Air Raid Device Using No Critical Materials."

There was a clamor for radio spectrum ... panels ... networks emerging ... APCO introduced the Standard Description of Persons and Automobiles in 1944, along with the Police Phonetic Alphabet ... 651 members strong.

No National Conference was held in 1945, due to rationing ... preparing for peace time and post war allocations ... microwave ... 16 chapters and 1,415 members in 1949 ... Civil Defense ... yellow and red alerts ... Conelrad ... transistors ... 6/12 volt conversion blues ... industrial TV used in police lineups ... tape recorders and the move to VHF high band.

APCO became "Public-Safety" in 1961 ... teletypewriter networks spreading ... APCO counsel retained ... APCO frequency coordinating Local Government ... NBS went on atomic time standard ... data processing and retrieval systems ... NLETS dedicated in 1966.

Ten years ago APCO began its Project Series Foundation. Its first production was a color movie, "The Little We Have," explaining the frequency congestion crisis. APCO's all-time best seller, *The Standard Operating Procedure Manual*, received a \$29,000 grant in 1966. LEAA awarded APCO the task of determining the communications requirements of the police agencies in the Chicago metropolitan area, Project 3, in 1967.

The position of Executive Secretary was created in 1969 ... the National Office

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ORIGIN: 1935

February 18, 1935

Mr. Communication Officer:

... We want you in the A.P.C.O. Frankly, don't you think that you belong with us?

If you are being paid as an officer engaged in police communication work, you certainly shouldn't pass up the opportunity to join an association which excludes every one from active membership, who is not employed as a police communication officer. It is an organization created by police communication officers for the betterment of police communication systems in every phase of the game.

We have a technical committee, which is willing and anxious to help fellow members with technical problems. Our executive committee is at your disposal for anything in the way of information you may request as a member. Our resolution committee will consider any changes in regulation you may suggest. We all want to cooperate with you, and we await the opportunity.

Do this, if you will ... just drop a line to any member who belongs to the A.P.C.O. and ask him what he thinks of the organization. This isn't a "fly-by-night" scheme to get your money (if it were, we would charge more than \$2.50 per year). We want you because we want to cooperate with you and want you to cooperate with us.

We want you to thoroughly understand also that we will request no action from you which would serve to embarrass you with your department. Your action in all cases is dependent upon approval of YOUR superior officer. We will NOT attempt to regulate salaries, working hours or working conditions. It is an organization for the general advancement of police communications work and shall continue to be one.

Won't you think this over then and drop me a line? I'll be glad to answer any inquiries and to forward application blanks.

Very truly yours,
Everett E. H. Fisher
Radio Supervisor KGPC
President A.P.C.O.