Article for the "INDIAN"

UNUSUAL CABLE REPAIR JOB DONE HERE

The combined efforts of personnel and equipment of several Base and other naval activities recently resulted in the successful raising and repairing of the submarine telephone cable between the Naval Operating Base, proper, and Leeward Point Field. The telephone cable had been damaged and partly shorted on 12 January when it became fouled with the anchor of the USS PC-579 and was lifted to the surface.

Funds for emergency repairs were obtained by the Commanding Officer, Naval Air Station from the Bureau of Aeronautics. The Bureau of Yards and Docks furnished technical assistance and arranged for the temporary transfer of three qualified cable splicers from the 15th Naval District, Balboa, Canal Zone.

When the extent of damage was explored resistance readings indicated that the "short" was closer to the eastern shore. Accordingly, it was decided to approach the location starting from Windward Point. On Wednesday, 29 March, divers from the Naval Station Ship's Repair Department placed slings on the cable in the shallow water close to the beach at Windward Point and raised the cable to the surface. The cable was then carefully lifted and placed on specially constructed guides and rollers across the deck of the Naval Air Station "Mary Ann" crane, following which Naval Station steamer and yard tugs pushed the "Mary Ann" towards Leeward Point, underrunning the cable or causing it to rise to the surface and pass across the deck of the "Mary Ann". When the "Mary Ann" had approached to within 500 feet of the "short", the cable was found to be fouled on the bottom. Following failure of repeated attempts to free the cable, it was decided to leave the "Mary Ann"

Underrunning from Leeward Point was started Friday, 31 March using a 30 ton lighter, rollers borrowed from the All American Cable Company and a steamer tug for propulsion. By nightfall the 30 ton lighter had moved to within 600 feet of the "Mary Ann".

When tests located the short between the barge and the "Mary Ann", it was decided to remove this section replacing it with new cable to be spliced into both ends. After new cable had been run between the "Mary Ann" and the lighter, the old cable was cut and the two end splices completed. By working around the clock, the splices were finished Sunday morning, 2 April and after successful tests the cable was slowly lowered to the bottom of the bay.

Throughout the job "calm seas" generally prevailed, but in the exposed location at the Harbor entrance the heavy swells made the work both difficult and dangerous.

Although the job involved long hours and hard work it had its pleasanter aspects. Meals were good, and from all reports the shark fishing excellent. Mostly, however, all hands enjoyed using the temporary phones rigged on the "Mary Ann", particularly because of the disbelief encountered in trying to convince the person on the other end of the line that they were really talking to someone out in the middle of the Bay.

The Base is grateful for the cooperation of the Bureau of Aeronautics, Bureau of Yards and Docks, Headquarters 15th Naval District and All-American Cable Company, who all contributed so materially to the efforts of the local commands and activities.