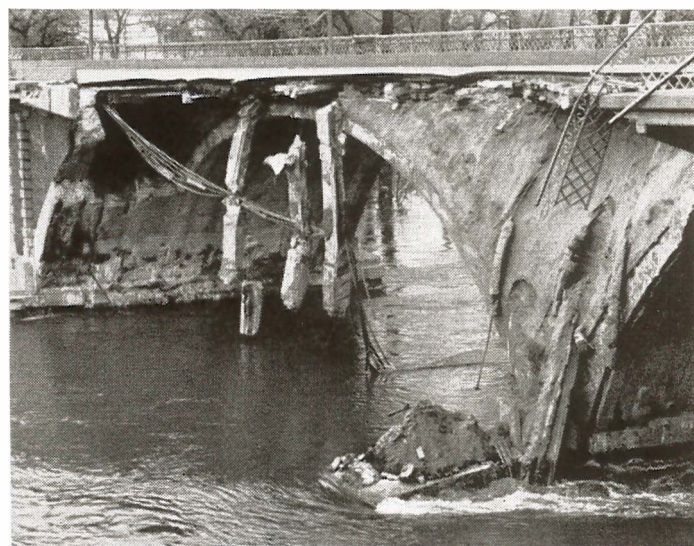


How the "Duke of Des Moines" helped restore service to 10,000 telephone customers



Duke trots lightly across the dangerous span with a line tied to his collar.



This twisted, broken bridge kept hundreds of telephone men and women from enjoying Easter with their families.



A line crew in the cable pit, painstakingly splicing thousands of wires in one cable to their mates in another.

On the Saturday before Easter, 1965, a section of the Sixth Avenue bridge in Des Moines, Iowa, collapsed with a roar into the flooded river below. Seven telephone cables beneath the bridge were broken. 10,000 telephones were silenced.

The bridge break was sudden and unexpected. But within minutes, telephone workers were rushing to restore service—hundreds of men and a dog.

The dog was Duke. And his first job was to help get an emergency cable across the treacherous, weakened section of the bridge still standing—which might go down under human weight.

Duke's owner, a telephone man, tied a light line to the dog's collar. Then he drove to the other side by another route and whistled for Duke. The dog came trotting eagerly across the span, bringing the line with him. This, in turn, was used to pull the first temporary cable across.

Fire stations, fire call boxes, state police headquarters and other essential phones were soon operating again.

Meantime, work went on around the clock. Special operators intercepted calls to the affected area. Girls in service centers checked records, helped cable splicers identify customers' lines. On the spot, telephone crews spliced thousands of lines, wire by wire.

By Easter morning, men, trucks and materials were arriving from all over Iowa. And just 86 hours and 20 minutes after the bridge collapsed, 13,400 splices had been made and every phone was back in service.

The Bell System meets many emergencies, big and little—fires, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, blackouts, transit strikes. During 1965 alone, thousands of Bell System people pitched in to repair disaster damage costing millions of dollars. And each emergency is handled as quickly and humanly as possible—as on that Easter in Des Moines.



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