Jack Binns and the Republic Disaster
by Jack Kelleher
SOWP 2581-P, W4ZC

This article is prompted by the widespread publicity among SOWP people on the PBS' American Experiences segment "Rescue at Sea".

Those of you who watched the PBS program "Rescue at Sea" on February 15th got an insight into the earliest days of maritime radio, and Jack Binns' part in the rescue activities following the collision of the Republic and the Florida. Here are some other excerpts from Sparks Journal articles which dealt with the aftermath of the Republic incident.


"On board the doomed Republic was Mr. Ingersoll, whose company made the then-famous 'one-dollar movement' - the Ingersoll watch which millions carried with them in their vest pockets. Grateful for being rescued, Ingersoll ordered medals struck for Binns and other heroes of the ship's crew.

"Binns gave a thrilling account of the suspenseful moments in the battered wireless cabin, the walls of which had been splintered in the collision. He was able to send a total of 200 messages before the ship went down.

"A tremendous ovation greeted Binns and others when the Baltic docked at the White Star pier in New York harbor with the Republic survivors. Binns and Captain Sealby were carried on the shoulders of grateful crew members of the deck and stewards' departments. On February 10, 1909, Binns received the first gold watch for wireless heroism at sea, the presentation made by Guglielmo Marconi himself.

"Like other wireless operators of his day, Binns was paid one dollar a day for his services. Following the loss of the Republic, he signed a contract to tour a vaudeville circuit across the nation so that he might relate his harrowing experiences to a startled audience. He could ill afford to pay his own expenses while on the road, so he accepted a small remuneration for his appearances. For this action he was roundly criticized by the public at large, and his image as a national hero suffered greatly. Soon it was necessary for him to abandon his tour.

"He was responsible for the rescue of 761 passenger and crew members of the Republic, without loss of life or accident. It was a noble accomplishment. But his appearance on the vaudeville stage cost him the loss of the image he so rightfully deserved."

And from Sparks Journal, Vol. 8, No. 1, September 1985:

Binns writes preface for Radio Boys Series

A very popular series of books for boys - The Radio Boys Series - was published from about 1915 to 1925 by Grosset and Dunlap. They were authored by Allen Chapman. Jack Binns was commissioned by the author to write a Preface or Foreword for each book published. These carried a fine inspirational message for boys and it also recalls an era when wireless was indeed a Magic Word.
The President's Message

By Jack Kelleher
SOWP 2581-P, W4ZC

For some time SOWP Executive Secretary has been considering the possibility of reprinting some of the historical material appearing in The Sparks Journal (circa 1977-1985), but so far it is beyond the reasonable capability of SOWP's treasury. Reading the Radio Aviation Edition of the Sparks Journal (September 1983) I ran across an item which is important enough historically to run in this space, albeit in installments.

The Early Communication System of the Federal Airways

(continued from The World Wireless Beacon, December 1998)

The Day's Work

By 8:30 in the morning the station operator would usually have completed all his calls and seen his pilot off the ground, shooing stray cattle off the strip, if necessary, helping sort and stow mail, and looking after supplies. He was then free until about 4:30 in the afternoon, when he stood a second four hour shift, servicing the arriving daylight flight, and the departing night flight.

If a landing in darkness or poor visibility was anticipated he prepared to light the airfield with the best means at hand — automobile headlights, oil drums, flares, etc. Snow drifts often had to be cleared from the runway and runway edges frequently needed definition in the form of lighted markers.

If field conditions were too poor for a safe landing, the station operator had to warn the pilot, using pre-arranged signals. Many long and lonely nights were spent waiting anxiously for the husky roar of a Liberty engine — that sometimes never came.

The typical starting salary for these early station attendants was $1,200 a year. Raises were modest and infrequent and overtime was unpaid. By comparison, the pilots earned a base pay of $2,000 a year with mileage bonuses, depending on the difficulty of the route. Bonuses were doubled at night, when the hazards increased several-fold.

The typical Air Mail plane in the pioneer stage was an open cockpit DeHavilland biplane, with an unreliable compass and little else in the way of instruments. Pilots flew "by the seat of their pants", and counted heavily on the airfield attendant to keep them out of trouble.

July 1927 - USLHS takes over the new Agency

On July 1, 1927, after 7 years of regular Air Mail Service, the Post Office turned over the ground-support facilities to the Department of Commerce. At the time of the transfer, more than two-thirds of the 2,665-mile Transcontinental Airway was lighted with 101 electric beacons and 417 acetylene gas beacons. Ground personnel in the system consisted of 45 radio operators, 14 maintenance mechanics and 84 caretakers. The entire operation was administered by the Light-House Service of the Department of Commerce.

In addition to the 17 original Air Mail (renamed airway) Radio Stations, there were a number of intermediate Airway Keeper Stations with low power radio marker beacons. Many of these were located in desolate wilderness country or on high mountain passes accessible only by mule team. Bitter Creek and Cherokee in Wyoming; Locomotive Springs in Utah; Beowawe and Buffalo Valley in Nevada; Guadalupe Pass in Texas and Donner Summit in California were typical station sites.

At Donner Summit (alt. 7,100 feet), the tower and radio shack had to be anchored to solid rock in order to keep them from being blown away by the fierce winds of the high Sierras. Often the station keepers were snowbound for months.

Maintaining a remote station called for a high degree of ingenuity, a tolerance for isolation — and at times the agility of a mountain goat. Skis, sleds and snowshoes were standard operating equipment during the long winter seasons. Shelters were prefabricated wooden huts, drab and drafty and furnished strictly for utility, housing one to four men. Total annual outlay at these locations was about $12,000, which included salaries and supplies. A good huntsman was always a welcome addition to the complement.

Lighting the airway and extending the radio capability had a favorable effect on flight safety from the very beginning. The 1919 fatality ratio of one pilot killed for every 114,324 miles of Air Mail flight was reduced to one fatality per 2.5 million miles by 1926.

In 1938 the Airways Radio Station was re-designated "Airway Communication Station", under the newly created Civil Aeronautics Authority (later the Civil Aeronautics Administration of the Department of Commerce). By this time, thanks to air-to-ground radio capability, station operators could actively participate in the control of a flight in progress, giving the latest weather reports and helping the pilots identify local landmarks and find their bearing.

The term "flight service station" (note 3) came into use with the creation of the Federal Aviation Agency in 1958, (continued next page)
The World Wireless Beacon - 3- March 1999

President's Message - From Page 3 and continued to the date of this chronicle (1976), when FAA is the Federal Aviation Administration of the Department of Transportation.

Today's flight service station specialist no longer is required to lead the rugged pioneer life of his predecessors in the Air Mail and Airway Radio Stations nor risk his life propping balky engines on frozen fields, or riding in the mail compartment of open biplanes. But his dedication to the safety of pilots who seek his assistance is as strong as it was half a century ago, when the age of flight tottered forward in the form of the United States Air Mail Service. And he is still the person most pilots rely on for flight planning data, for guidance over unfamiliar terrain, for steady reassurance when they get into trouble. No one who has ever been caught in a light plane in a violent thunderstorm, or become disoriented in fog over hazardous terrain, or run low of fuel in pitch darkness, can forget what it is to hear a calm, steadying voice on the radio receiver leading him out of agonizing uncertainty and down to the firm green earth.

Airplane "accidents that didn't happen" seldom make headlines or heroes, but the men and women of FAA's flight service stations can live without either. Then their satisfaction comes from knowing they have helped someone get home safely, whether he be friend, a neighbor, or a stranger passing overhead in the night. Editorial Comment

The foregoing story was written on the 50th Anniversary of the start of the Airways Radio Stations under the Air Commerce Act which President Coolidge signed into law in 1926. The fact sheet carrying the story has been reprinted as furnished by the FAA some 7 years ago. It is the History of the first 50 years under the CAA/FAA. The first station built for Air Mail Service was commissioned on Sept. 15, 1919. By the time the CAA took over the service from the U.S. Post office in 1926 some 17 stations had been established and much history written.

Note 3: The Federal Aviation Agency officially superseded the CAA under the Federal Aviation Act which became fully operational effective December 31, 1958. A few months after Ye Ed had retired from the Service, I had proposed that stations be called "Flight Assistance Stations". The name selected by FAA was "Flight Service Station". I could not quarrel with the substitution of "Service" for "Assistance" hence I compliment my former staff member Aubrey E. "Bud" Cole for the selection.

GMDSS UPDATE

Hi again, Earl. Here's an update about GMDSS from the ARA. -73...Ted

ARA FREE PRESS - DECEMBER 13, 1998 THE WEEKLY UNION NEWSPAPER OF THE SEA MARINE ELECTRONICS DIVISION - ILA, AFL-CIO TO ALL ARA MEMBERS AND INTERESTED SEAFARERS -

GMDSS UPDATE - Despite a 10-year notice to the shipping industry to come into line on GMDSS by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), industry sources say thousands of oceangoing ships are likely to miss the February 1 deadline for conversion to the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System. Equipment industry experts estimate that at least 25 to 30 percent of the 30,000 oceangoing vessels have still to retrofit. They say it would be physically impossible to complete all the work on time. It costs around 30,000 dollars for the cheapest vessel modification, ranging to some 45,000 dollars for superior equipment. A spokesman for SAIT Marine, a leading Belgian-based specialist in communications equipment, said many ship operators were placing their orders late in the cycle and some suppliers would be unable to cope. Ships will get exemptions on a case by case basis. GMDSS has been introduced in stages beginning on February 1, 1992, extending to all passengerships and cargo-ships of 300 gt and above on international voyages, by February next year. Non-SOLAS convention ships, have been given until February 2005 to act on GMDSS fitting. The IMO recognized earlier in 1998 that a large number of vessels might miss the deadline, and urged that ships with GMDSS should maintain a listening watch on VHF channel 16. IMO's maritime safety committee will next week review progress. BT....

TO ALL MEBA MEMBERS ON BOARD AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES MEBA TELEX TIMES VOLUME 6 NUMBER 5 FEBRUARY 5, 1999 THE OFFICIAL UNION NEWSLETTER FOR D1 MARINE OFFICERS AT SEA

/GMDSS FULLY OPERATIONAL/ The Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) was made fully operational in the United States this week. As of Feb. 1, 1999, all cargo ships of 300 gross tons and upward, all passenger ships operating in the open sea and all small passenger vessels undertaking international voyages must be fully compliant with GMDSS regulations.

--The system uses both satellite and terrestrial digital communications systems. The major changes to distress alerting are in both the system and the

(continued - next page)
GMDSS Update - From Page 3

The class was a pilot program for was a participant in the first GMDSS running that program at the Calhoon company officials. It served to apprise school administrators and shipping authorities of mariners in distress. Most members of the MEBA are well prepared for the full introduction of over 20 years, will close activities as of 31 December 1998. Erich Walter, its Director/Coordinator, announcing his personal resignation from SOWP, has been unable to find someone willing to take over as director.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S COLUMN

From Secretary Boyd

It is my painful duty to report to our membership that the SOWP Edelweiss Chapter of SOWP, after an active life of over 20 years, will close activities as of 31 December 1998. Erich Walter, its Director/Coordinator, announcing his personal resignation from SOWP, has been unable to find someone willing to take over as director.

While Erich, HB9CHE, offered to explain in detail in the World Wireless Beacon his personal reasons for his resignation, your SOWP officers in consultation regarding them have decided not to provide a forum for this purpose because they are deemed to be patently outside of any interests relative to SOWP, Erich's post office address may be found in our 1998 Register, in case anyone cares to inquire in person relative to his resignation. His recently posted e-mail address is hb9che@bluewin.ch

Perhaps the most difficult, time-consuming and expensive aspect that our overseas members have to contend with is the yearly submission of dues payments. Some years ago Erich volunteered to be the "payment point" for European members, by collecting dues, consolidating and forwarding them to the SOWP secretary via one large annual check. He has done an admirable job of this, and it is with deep regret that your secretary will, next year, begin once again to collect these dues individually. In particular, his reports as received with each check were beautifully laid-out and meticulous in their accuracy. We wish Erich 73 and look forward to his return to the fold.

I wish everyone a happy and bountiful holiday season, and a reflective final year or two of our fast-fading 20th Century. As the 21st Century looms ever closer, I look forward to explosive growth of the Internet as it enters its inevitable wireless stage. We of the Morse wireless era can take pride that we willingly, even eagerly, contributed our bit when ours was the only game in town. Many of us are still pounding brass as the baton is passed, and will do so for many years to come as our sibling planets and their moons become stepping stones to the stars!

73 Walt, K6DZY 29SS-P

— The Jack Binns story aired and cablecast by the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) was very well done. It was scheduled to be telecast during the month of February, although each local PBS affiliate chose its own day and time. Here at SOWP Hq we have a DIRECTV satellite connection from Boston, the PBS home station, and of course we recorded the segment on VHS tape for the SOWP Archive.

If we are successful in buying a master tape from PBS I will archive it and make the present copy available for loan on a first-come request basis. It is hoped that your tape players will be gentle on the tape and that the requests will be honored by a prompt use-and-forward. Much time in transit can be saved if we set-up a list of addressees, which would be honored as loan circuit blocks of 10 users instead of returning the tape to headquarters after each use. The obvious disadvantage is that, like a "chain letter," if someone neglects to forward promptly, the chain falters to a sad halt, to the dismay of the dangling chain-enders.

The Society will absorb the outgoing postage, but each user will pony the forwarding postage, which will probably be about two to three dollars. Obvi-
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY’S COLUMN - From Page 4

ousely, depending upon the number of requests for viewing and bow promptly each transaction is handled, you might not receive the tape for upwards of a year or more!

DUES PAYMENTS Just over 100 overdue members have renewed for the coming one to three years, but at least that many more have yet to remit to maintain the status quo. Because we were late in mailing the December 1998 Beacon issue, the DEC/98 (or 12/98) prompts are included in this March mailing for additional reminder. Dues-unpaids by mailing time for the June 1999 issue will not receive it until we hear from you.

THE WEB The “Information Highway” was shortened for handy use as a title to “The Internet,” but that didn’t last long either. Now it’s generally referred to as “The Web.” We most fortunate denizens of the USA are adept at abbreviating, and perhaps well it is that we do so.

I have just heard on a TV newscast that a third of US homes are now equipped with a personal computer. I can believe it, because my XYL has just informed me that she is enrolling at the nearby Jr. College for a course in computer basics! After years of anti-computer invective in my direction, you can imagine my incredulity when she purchased a sewing machine that is PC-controlled! and of course, there isn’t room on this keyboard for four hands... that resolves to a two-computer home from now on. Samuel F. B. Morse had, surely, no idea what his invention with its soulful “dit-dah software” would beget.

SECRETARIAL CORRESPONDENCE As some of you know all too well, I am far behind in reply to your very welcome letters. Letters, both e-mail and USPS, arrive every day, and each deserves reply. Yet, the day is limited to a total of about eight hours on the keyboard, since other household and yardhold duties are equally demanding. My 1998 resolution to be back “on the air” (as K6DZY) by December went the way of most of my druthers. I am at a loss to understand how Bill Breniman was able to handle this station in the days before PCs!

Fifteen “dead end” Beacons have been returned since 1 Jan. 1999, undelivered due to “addressee unknown,” “moved, left no fwdg address,” and returned with no explanation. Statistics have a way of forecasting more when each subsequent Beacon is published. If the member has a Ham Callsign, we keep checking for a possible clue to a live address. Otherwise, the stack gets higher and higher. Those returned with a new address indicated are resent. Each USA return costs SOWP 55 cents, and re-mailing costs another 55. Canadian and overseas returns cost double and triple those figures. Thus, you can imagine how eagerly a personal change-of-address (COA) is received here from those who have precluded the above problem. The same day -yes, even the same hour -the new address is received, it is inserted into the computer database!

THE LONG NIGHT Have you compared the Int’l Morse character set to the ASCII 128-character set? Remember when you first heard Morse sent at machine-speed? Beyond the capacity of the human ear to resolve characters (75wpm x 5 char/words = 375 char/min) the two resolve similarly to hash. I see ASCII as simply an extension of Morse - anyone agree? In my Navy experience I was exposed briefly to an experimental high-speed Morse-translation receiver-to-teletypewriter set-up at 100wpm. It worked! But only under near-perfect receiving conditions. Baudot code popularity interrupted those experiments.

Morse is composed of variable-length characters. ASCII, Baudot, BCD, EBCDIC, Gray, Hollerith, NBCH and many others are of fixed length. While machinery has been devised to react to variable-length characters, fixed-length types are far more suitable for use at higher speeds. In ASCII, for instance, despite its regularity, timing is as critical as was the old original Morse telegraph code.

The old-Morse “C” was dit space dit dit. “R” was dit dit space dit (or was it the other way around? Age hath its due reward!). Thus, the timing (non-sound) had to be factored in the operator’s mind. International Morse eliminated the timing factor, except for the relationship of one dash equals three dits, and the spacing between words. In ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange) “A” = 1000001. It is a 7-bit code. A decimal “1” is “on” (you might say “dash,” or electric circuit closed). A “0” is “off” (electrical contact open). Of course, this could be represented by 1 = 1-volt-plus across an open terminal set, and 0 = 1-volt-minus across the terminals. In practice the machine (your computer chip) interprets 0-volt as the equivalent of negative voltage because a “clock signal” is overlaid at a fixed rate. Thus, the machine does the timing that the human mind once handled --and timing still exists as a factor. But you already know all this, right?

Keep the faith! CW will not go softly into the long, dark night! Walt. 2958-P K6DZY@netdex.com
Corrections/Additions to THE WIRELESS REGISTER - 1998

Changes are given on a page-by-page basis so they can be marked into your personal copy.

page 5 - change telephone number, ARNOLD, Lloyd L. 0727-SGP, 651 565-4715
- correct telephone number, ATYEO, Leonard G. 4265-V, 03. 9 848-3580

page 8 - add wife, change call, change phone number, CALLAWAY Jr, Edgar 4857-M Ed/Jan N4II 561 488-1451

page 11 - change address, D'EAU CLAIRE, Ron, AC6Y, 11955 SW Center Street, #25, Beaverton, OR 97005

page 13 - change address, FUHR Don 3781-M W8LJ 6800 McVey Blvd, Columbus, OH 43235
- Adolph “be” Galonski, KG9LO SOWP 2673-M 1103 5th Avenue, Grafton, WI 53024

page 18 - change address, KENNEDY, David D. 3642-V 715 Mountain View Rd, King, NC 27021

page 22 - change call, MEWHORTER, William J. 5189-V Bill/Anne N5PBY to N5QB

page 26 - change telephone and address POWERS, Aaron B. 2953-P, 206 870-2061, 815 South 216th, Des Moines, WA 98198

page 27 - change address ROTH, Milton C. 4000-P 4920 Viceroy Ct, Apt. 227, Cape Coral, FL 33904

page 29 - change address SLATER, Reuben W. 1196-P 3018 Lake Hill Dr, Orange, CA 92867-1910

page 31 - change address TREGER, Henry J. 2553-SGP, 908 233-0963, 2045 Jersey Ave, Scotch Plains, NJ 07076

page 39 - change call WB4AWH to N4II, CALLAWAY Jr, Edgar Ed/Jan

page 40 - change call N5PBY to N5QB, MEWHORTER, William J.
- change address AC6Y D'EAU CLAIRE, Ron, 11955 SW Center Street, #25, Beaverton, OR 97005

page 46 - re-activate membership KG9LO GALONSKI, Adolph “be” 2673-M, 1103 5th Avenue, Grafton, WI 53024

page 48 - Callaway Jr, Edgar 4857-M N4II jan0@adelphia.net

page 49 - Dole, Ronald D. Jr. 5567-M KA1EFO ka1efo@qsl.net Do1e, Ronald D. Jr. 5567-M KA1EFO http://www.qsl.net/ka1efo/index.htm
- Holl, Mike 4992-M NT7G holl@az.com
- Jefferson, C. Paul 5606-TA KB2RFK cpjeff@together.net
- Kennedy, David D. 3642-V davekennedy@juno.com

page 50 - Peterson, Jack B. 0376-V W7YJ jbp15@bendnet.com
- Reck, Samuel 5498-TA N4PS n4ps@juno.com Reck, Samuel 5498-TA N4PS n4ps@bellsouth.net

page 51 - Snow, William E. 4186-V W6UUC w6uuc@aol.com - Wells, Milton 3586-V W5JNK cote@ticnet.com

CHANGING YOUR ADDRESS?

Before You Go - Please send a note to:
SOWP HQ
P.O. BOX 86
Geyserville, CA 95441-0086

AN UNFORTUNATE MISUNDERSTANDING

by Urbano Cavina
SOWP 4774-M, I4YTE

Lizabeth was a lovely green eyed girl with raven hair with whom I was enjoying a chat. We had been introduced a few moments before, when, unexpectedly she had accepted my invitation to dance.

After a few dances we sat by ourselves at a table not far from her girl friends. With eyes moist with emotion, we were putting out feelers to get to know each other better. We were speaking in a mixture of Italian and Spanish, amused by the respective pronunciations and this was exciting us yet more.

“Good evening ‘MARCONI’, enjoy yourself”. That was the friendly greeting with which the Chief Officer addressed me as he passed our table, dancing a lively South American samba with his blonde companion. I reciprocated, almost irritated by his presence, for it reminded me that within a couple of hours we should be sailing, and that was the last thing I wanted at that moment.

“Are you a ‘MARICONI’?” was what I heard from Lizabeth in a surprised tone. “Claro que si” (for sure I am) I answered, emphasising the frequent use that Spanish do of that phrase. Misled by her pleasant accent, with a certain pride mixed with gentle irony, I remarked “yes I’m MARICONI of a large Italian ship”. After that moment I noticed a certain cooling-off towards me. In a short time our conversation died and Lizabeth left me and went back to her girl friends. Sniggering they went away leaving me rather disconcerted. I abandoned the dance and sadly returned on board, muttering, “I can’t

(continued next page)
AN UNFORTUNATE MISUNDERSTANDING - From Page 6

understand how women think".

Only later, when the ship had sailed, I realised the mistake caused by the glorious appellative "MARCONI" of which I was so proud, and so grotesquely pronounced by Lizabeth. I had misunderstood that the meaning in Spanish of "MARICON" is the word of "GAY"

BOOK LIST

By Charles P. Krause
SOWP 1412-V, N7ESJ

(continued from The World Wireless Beacon December 1998, page 13)

References. Birgitta Gustafson's book list which appeared in WWB, June/July 1998 starting on page 6. Some additions to her list which are real goodies!

Harding, Stephen, Great Liners at War - Chronicles the military adventures of the world's great liners, the largest and most famous passenger ships such as the America, Lusitania, Vaterland, Normandie Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth.


Hinsley, F.H. and Stripp, Alan, Codebreakers - The Inside Story of Bletchley Park

Kahn, David, Seizing the Enigma - The Rush to Break the U-Boat Codes ... Hitler's Spies ... Kahn on Codes ... The Codebreakers.

Leaser, James, Boarding Party! The Last Action of the Calcutta Light Horse - This action curtailed the activities of the U-Boats in the Indian Ocean.

Lavin, Donald, Ultra goes to War ... The American Magic, Codes, Ciphers and the Defeat of Japan.

Milner, Marc, The U-Boat Hunters - The Royal Canadian Navy and the offensive against Germany's submarines.

Prado, J. Combined Fleet Decoded - The History of American Signals Intelligence against the Japanese.


Runyon, Timothy J and Ian M. Copes, eds., To Die Gallantly, The battle of the Atlantic.

Shillen, Hugh, Spies of the Airways - A History of the Y sections in the Second World War.

Spector, R. H., Listening to the Enemy - Key documents in the Role of communications intelligence in the war with Japan.

Syrette, David, The Defeat of the German U-Boats.

Smith, Peter, Artic Victory - The story of Convoy PQ18.


Steven, David, U-Boat Far from Home - The German U-Boat offensive against Australia.

Tarrant, V.E., The Last Year of the Kriegsmarine May 1944 to May 1945.


Traffic Analysis (Radiotelegraph), Fundamentals of Department of the Airforce. AFM100-80

U-Boat Commanders Handbook by the High Command of the German Navy.


Werner, Herbet A., Iron Coffins - A personal account of German U-Boat battles of World War 2.

Member Correspondence

Dear Sir:

Thank you for a nice newsletter I read cover to cover. Your spot "Dues Time" reminded me to send in my dues. I also want to thank you for the nice letter regarding CW on armed forces day.

I wrote several letters one of which I sent to the chief of Navy MARS, who runs the AFD program. No answer received so am in hopes CW will be on the program. Also today's mail from the chief, giving me congrats for 35 years in Navy MARS.

Actually all my years as net control for the many CW MARS nets ended with the CW shut down. I was able to use RATT mechanical and later digital until the packet system was employed so now I stand as a warm body when need in an emergency. The war years (continued next page)
Dear Mr. Boyd:

I'm sorry that I'm late with the dues for 1999. I hope to be more punctual in the future.

I would also like to say that I enjoyed Mr. Jack Kelleher's article in the December 1998 Beacon. As a retired CAA/FAA Communicator and Air Traffic Controller, I was there while the agency grew up. Mr. Kelleher preceded me by a number of years but I'm sure that I crossed the path of some of his cohorts. I started my CAA/FAA career in Alaska and the system was a number of years behind what was available on the Outside. CW was the main method of point-to-point communication. We did have HF Voice communications but due to atmospheric conditions they were not completely reliable. Therefore CW was our main method of communications.

At this time 'air traffic control' was in its growing period and especially in Alaska. But I wouldn't trade a minute of it for any other period. We may have been short on the latest methods but the system did one hell of a job.

I'm looking forward to the next issue on the subject and if Mr. Kelleher does as good a job as he just did, my appetite could be whetted again to correspond.

To end, I'd also like to mention to any EX-CAA/FAA members that there is an organization called "Society of Airway Pioneers" which is a group of the OLD CAA/FAA fellows; and many of them are a lot older than I am. God Bless.

Waiter J. Hamilton 5146-V

P.S. My E-Mail address is: LITTLE_KAHONNA@prodigy.net This is for any CAA/FAA person who would like the address for SOAP.

Dear Mr. Boyd:

A very Happy New Year to you! Enclosed are my 1999 dues. I am now retired since Dec. 5, 1995 after leaving my last ship, the SS Matsonia in Long Beach, CA where I was the relief MREO. I am still convinced as ever, that an unwise decision was made by the U.S. government to permit the release of the Radio Officer duties to no-one in particular, and especially to the bridge personnel. The bridge personnel have no time in emergencies to handle the radio communications work, let alone their own duties... as observed by my familiarity with the bridge as an AB helmsman and a Radio Officer over a 61 year period.

Arne F. Hanson 4589-V, KA2MLB

Sir:

I enjoyed the latest "World Wireless Beacon" especially the article by Tom Dixon. I wish I had kept my SWL logs from 9KK and A9M for I used to monitor them regularly when I lived in Dhahran. There was always some excitement in the Gulf such as the time HZY put his traffic tape in backwards! (I assume it was backwards because the Morse was not recognizable).

For the information of Hank Brown regarding the "Berne List", it has for many years been published in Geneva by the ITU. It is "List V" or "List of Ship Stations". The latest copy I have is the 16th Edition dated January 1976. I would be happy to provide information from this document to anyone interested.

73

John Hudelson, SOWP 5607-M, K5DL
jhudelson@ieee.org
Dear Roundup Participant,

Many thanks to all of you for your kind words - I'll be sending your comments on to Jack Kelleher. Some of your comments will probably appear in the upcoming Beacon. As a log checker, I spent most of my time checking bonus points. Some of you will notice a change in your overall score because of readjustment of bonus points.

Overall, participation was up some this year along with propagation improvement. You are all to be congratulated on your thoughtful exchange with each other. Everyone took the time to be courteous and wish each other "happy holidays".

Coming back to the bonus points again, some of you ignored the bonus points and some of you showed points I couldn’t justify. A few words on the high scorers - you guys and gals did a beautiful job on your logs - I had very few changes to make.

On the operational side again; one of you indicated that you were using a WW2 Vibroplex. I too, used a WW2 Vibroplex. I've oftgen wondered how many operators were using bugs, keyers and keyboards. Regardless, you all sounded like professionals. I’m looking forward to the next roundup.

73
John Swafford, 783-V
W4HU

RESULTS ANNUAL SOWP INTERNATIONAL QSO RUNDUP DEC. 10-12, 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PTS</th>
<th>FIRST NAME</th>
<th>LAST NAME</th>
<th>CALL</th>
<th>CITY STATE/ COUNTRY</th>
<th>SERIAL #</th>
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<td>W8KJP</td>
<td>Orlando FL</td>
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<td>John H</td>
<td>Swafford</td>
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<td>Nohns</td>
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<td>Skinner</td>
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1998 SOWP ROUNDUP COMMITTEE

Ted Phelps 881 - W8TP
Jack Kelleher 2581 - W4ZC
John Swafford 783 - W4HU
SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES FOR YEAR 1998

RECEIPTS:
- Dues/Donations ................................ $11,244.00
- Interest Earned ................................ 821.31
- CA Tax Board Refund ...................... 144.97
- Legacy of Jack L. Sykes 2431-SGP 822.95

Total Receipts .......................... $13,033.23

On Hand 12/31/97 ........................... 24,250.11

Total ......................................... $37,283.34

EXPENDITURES:
- Headquarters Expense ...................... 1,786.58
- Publications Costs ......................... 5,200.81
- Rent ............................................. 4,800.00

Total Expenditures ...................... $11,787.39

On Hand 12/31/98 ........................... 25,495.95

$ 1,245.84 Gain

/s/ Lorin G. DeMerritt Treasurer

Member Correspondence

Dear Mr. Boyd:

Enclosing my check for $30.00 for two more years dues to SOWP.

My memory fades a bit with the mass of correspondence which is generated here on maritime historical matters, but I'll write again with a renewed request for some assistance.

I'm enclosing a simple list of steamschooner names with call signals, which of course was only a fragment of the total number of ships on the Pacific Coast in the hey-day of the coastwise trade. MY guess is this list is dated somewhere in the 1920's.

I am working with a few others, but not many, on a major project of trying to compile as complete a history of the coastwise lumber ship trade as can be done at this late year in the century. I note in one of your latest issues that one of your members Earl Thoms whom I did not know had sailed in coastwise ships. This got me to thinking there may be a few other old hands in your membership, on the Coast, who might have sailed in steamschooners when proper marine radios were still used and nightly reporting was a regular routine, with positions and ETAs being sent to owners. To my knowledge, little or nothing has been written in detail about the use of radio on coastwise lumber ships, though I have learned a little about the implementation of radio on such ships carrying more than 50 passengers after 1912. The daily practice and even a description of what kind of radio was common to the ships is the missing link in this history.

If any of your members are old steamschooner hands, I'd appreciate hearing from anybody at his convenience.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Huycke 5341-TA

MISC STEAM SCHOONERS

SS Multnomah .......... WMA
SS Willamette.......... WSW
SS Klamath (W)........ WSX
SS Wapama .............. WMG
SS Yosemite ........... WQY
SS Celilo .............. WMF
SS Wahkeena .......... WMS
SS St. Helens .......... WNY*
SS Centralia .......... WSN
SS Coronado .......... WSO
SS Norwood .......... WSG
SS Northland .......... WGJ
SS Nome City .......... WMC
SS Idaho .............. WOO
SS Redondo .......... *WBM
SS Vanguard .......... WNZ
SS Greenwood .......... WLL
SS Stanwood .......... KDH
SS Alliance .......... 
SS Phyllis .......... KEA
SS San Ramon .......... WNW
SS Florence Olsen ..... WPK

(continued - next page)
Member Correspondence

From Page 12

SS J.B. Stetson ...... WVUE
SS Horace Baxter ........ WOF
SS Fred Baxter.......... WOG
SS Fort Bragg .......... WST
SS Carlos ............. WNC
SS Fran. H. Leggett ... (W)WNG
SS Geo. W. Fenwick...... ___
SS General Hubbard...... WMT
SS Johanna Smith...... WHZ
SS C.A. Smith ............. WEL
SS Nann Smith ...... BO WBO
SS Adeline Smith ...... WHS
SS Noyo ................ *WRJ
SS Aroline .......... *WRJ
SS Falcon .............. *WRF
SS Fifield .......... *WRF
SS Navajo ............. WNJ
SS Portland .......... P3 WNV
SS Paraizo ............ WRI
SS Riverside ........ *WBM
SS Speedwell .......... WQS
SS Stanley Dollar ...... *WSD
SS Redwood .......... *WSD
SS Silverado .......... WRC
SS El Dorado ........ KMOI
SS Francis Hanify....... KRA
SS Lake Francis ...... KTAO
SS Tiger .............. KIT

Note (*) Similar call signs. Ships sold and name changed but not call letters. For instance, the SS Aroline name changed to the SS Noyo and then to SS Admiral Goodrich. Calls all were WRJ.

Waldo,
I was having trouble sleeping the other morning early. As I was lying there my mind (?) came across KPH. Some random thoughts about KPH. I was a military Radioman first (43 to 59). Came to the RCA Station in the spring of 1959 to work in the point-to-point department. They were in the same building with KPH, but of course, KPH was hidden away in a back corner of the building, while RS (pt to pt) had the whole upper floor of the building. I did the equipment maintenance for both of them for a few years. That was in the days of the mecanical printers, with a lot of paper. Everything in KPH was covered with 'chad.' Whenever I had a KPH receiver on the bench, the first thing that had to be done was a thorough vacuuming. FG (Frank Geisler) was the manager in those days and insisted on having every band being monitored on a speaker. Imagine this room with 5 or 6 bands on speakers, mechanical printers and perforators clanking away - it was a cacaphony! Every now and then FGS voice would come booming out of his office, "So & so is calling us on 12 or 16 or 8 or whatever. He could pick a KPH out of any kind of noise! When I went to RS they had an opening at KPH but I was told KPH would probably be shut down in a matter of months, so I opted for RS. Of course satellites, etc. came along and RS was shut down in the 70s, but KPH was still going strong. When RS went QRT I left for awhile, but ended up back at KPH. I loved it! I had always wanted to go to sea in the Merchant, but never made it. My seattle was all US Navy. So being an Op at KPH was the next best thing. We had some terrific Operators there. In my mind the best of all was WM (Bill Meloney), smooth & effortless, always looked like he was just loafing along. We shared rides to work and often on the way home I would say "Boy, I handled 105 messages today, how did you do?" "Oh," he would say, "140 or so." Another was AH (Arnold Hanson) who could copy messages that I couldn't even hear. We had a very low noise level, so a signal under that was really weak, but it didn't seem to matter to Arnold - telepathic I guess. Then there were the Shipboard Operators. Maybe it was just me, but some ethnicity seemed apparent. The Philipinos seemed to have a propensity for dots. A 5 could be 8 or 10 dots, a 6 might have 7 or 8, etc. The Japanese were meticulous - everything had to be letter-perfect. The Greeks were generally good & we made many bucks at Easter. Boy, those 'Chrona Polla' messages would really stack up. The Russians had some real speed demons - they would have a 'Mothership' with their smaller fishing vessels, who had to send a report to the U.S. on how many pounds of each fish they caught & processed. These messages were mostly numbers, but some of those guys could really keep you hopping to keep up.

Oh for the days when the Traffic List would end and we would 'peel 'em off' and have QRY lists over 20. Sometimes you couldn't finish up your QRYS' before the next List went out.

Later they got computerized, FG was gone so no speakers. It was eerie walking down the hall to the Operating Room. That deadly silence! I never did get used to that!

I'm very grateful I at least got a few years in there before the end. I went out to the Station on that least day. Not a happy one! The building still belongs to MCI and the hope is they will turn it all over to the Point Reyes National Seashore. If so, the Park people are hoping to turn it into a Wireless Museum. With that in mind

(continued next page)
Member Correspondence -
From Page 13

they have compiled a file with pictures, etc. and have had a couple of us locals identify as many people in them as we can. Lets hope that comes to pass.

Finally, on Field Day 1999, the local Ham Club (WMARS) will again be operating from the old Marconi Site at Marshall, Ca. Our Call will probably be W6RSI, and this year I will see what can be done about making up some QSL Cards for those that might be interested. They, of course, would be on an answering basis. We would send one in reply to received cards. I will be in touch on this as things firm-up.

73,
Dick Flint 1391-V K6JOQ

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Morse code officially goes out of use at sea (AP, 31 Jan 1999)

LONDON - SOS. Morse code officially goes out of use Monday for most ships in distress at sea. The International Maritime Organization set Feb. 1 as its target date to replace dots and dashes with a satellite system the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System that can pinpoint the location of a ship signaling for help. The new system is mandatory for all international freighters over 300 gross tons, all passenger vessels and self-propelled oil drilling units. Coastal freighters, most fishing boats and pleasure craft are exempt.

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Another remark or two won't hurt...
Walt.

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Thought I might see some comments ref the official demise of Morse as the ship-to-shore emergency monitoring system. Would have started digging my six foot hole but the ground is too damned hard here in northern Pa. Sam F.B. gave his first public demonstration of the electric telegraph 1/6/1838. Long live the “ditty chasers”
Monk Delmotte

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Re Hank Brown’s memo to you in the Dec 98 WWB;
The time-tick station we used in WWII was NSS WashDC
There will be a world-wide event marking the closing of KW. See: http://homepages.enterprise.net/dbarlow/
As ships U.S. and Foreign are rapidly converting over to GMDSS they are throwing the Berne listings over the side and Hank should be able to catch a set before it hits the water. (I sent Hank a letter)

73 de Ray Maurstad W3HUV 2964-V

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Book Report Information
Provided By Bill Jackson
SOWP 3612-V, W6HDP
Dir. S.W. Chapter
(By George McGinnis,Capt,USN, Ret.) Reprinted from the Cryptolog
Published by Navy Cryptologic Ass’n.

THUNDER BELOW
This is a WW2 story of the U. S. S. Barb, a Navy submarine and will introduce you to a great Commanding officer and how he inspired the men of his ship. The book covers WW2 patrol number eight through 12 from April 1944 to 7 August 1945 of the USS Barb. Lieutenant Commander E.B. Fluckey, later Commander, retiring as Rear Admiral was the Commanding Officer of the Barb. The patrols started in the Kurile islands, where icebergs were often seen, working their way to areas between Southern Japan and Taiwan.

Every patrol showed the high quality of leadership, intelligence, daring and determination of Fluckey. His operation of Barb more closely resembled that of a destroyer. As an example, during his first patrol, a Japanese merchant ship was sunk in frigid weather. He brought the Barb into the wreckage and found one sailor still clinging to life. The man was brought aboard, revived and after realizing how lucky he was to be rescued by the Barb became a valuable source of intelligence and a willing worker aboard the boat, often helping to load torpedoes. He provided information on ports, ship routes and mine fields and as a result he was made an honorary torpedoe-man. His knowledge of mine fields probably saved Barb from destruction.

The Fleet Radio Unit in Hawaii get credit for supplying considerable Japanese convoy information that contributed to Barb’s success. There is one humorous incident involving President Roosevelt who was visiting in Hawaii. The President wanted to take some home movies of The U.S.S. Barb arriving in port. Fluckey was obliged to approach the dock, all flags unfurled at high speed to make a dramatic scene for the President to record on film. The President was not satisfied with the first few attempts and had him repeat the process. Finally, Admiral Fluckey approached the dock at full

(continued on page 16)
**SILENT KEYS**

With Deep Regret, we report the passing of the following SOWP members as they join our Chapter Eternal. We send our sincere sympathies to those they held dear.


**CURRAN,** John A. ‘Al’ 1268-P W1AN, Palmetto, FL. Aug. 5, 1998, age 87. He was a radio officer in the U.S. Merchant Marines and served in the U.S. Coast Guard in World War II. Reported by Dan Courtney 1156-P, WOABO and in QST, Jan. 1999.

**CUSHING,** Edward W. "Ed", Sr. 2996-P W1SHW, Bristol, CT. Aug. 5, 1998, age 90. Served as radio officer aboard Nantucket Lightship, then at Buckstown, PA airfield under CAA/FAA. Reported by wife Jenny Cushing.


**FORD,** Fred L. 4842-P W5AVF, Vicksburg, MS. No date or details. Reported in QST, Feb. 1999.


**McMULLIN,** Everett K. 5515-TA W6DSY, Prescott, AZ. No date or details. Reported in QST, Mar. 1999.


**PRIEBE,** Robert E. 1597-SGP, W7BY, Sun City, AZ. No date or details. Reported in QST, Mar. 1999.

**RICHTER,** Erich, Jr., 5367-TA, W1UWW. West Cornwall, CT. No date or details. Reported in QST, Feb. 1999.


**SIMMS,** Preston W. 2991-P W5RM, Santa Fe, NM. Jan. 4, 1999, age 83. Commissioned 2nd Lt. in the United States Army Signal Corps Reserve in 1936, called to active duty in 1941. He was appointed Lt. Col. in 1943 while a communications officer in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations. He was responsible for all radio communications from the Allied Forces Headquarters to the War Department in Washington, all other theaters of operation in the world, and all subordinate field units within the Mediterranean Theater. After the war, Col. Simms worked for Aeronautical Radio, Inc., the communications coordination organization then owned by the certified U.S. air carriers. He helped pioneer the airline radio equipment standardization program and coordinated the installation of airline communications radio stations in major cities all over the world. Reported by William Jackson 3612-V W6HDP.

**THOMS,** Earl H. 1308-SGP W7DJ, Seattle, WA. No date or details. Reported in QST, Feb. 1999.


Silent Key Reporting

Please send reports to SOWP Exec. Sec'y Waldo T. Boyd., P.O. Box 86, Geyserville, CA 95441-0086. If available, include date, age of deceased and cause of passing.

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**Ruth Marie Breniman SK:**

Ruth Marie Breniman, 91, for 67 years the beloved wife of William A. Breniman, founder of The Society of Wireless Pioneers, entered into rest 18 March 1999 in Fremont, California. The Board of Directors and Officers of the Society have requested the secretary to make a memorial donation in her name to The American Cancer Society. Cards and letters of condolence may be addressed to Bill in care of the secretary, P O Box 86, Geyserville, CA 95441.
Fluckey approached the dock at full speed, then reversed engines full, and in effect skidded to the dock, narrowly avoiding a collision with a nearby ship. Admiral Lockwood, Commander Submarines Pacific, had ordered the performance and was a bit shaken by the last event. I am sure both were glad when Roosevelt called it quits.

Barb was involved in the sinking of several Japanese ships that were carrying British, mostly Australian POW’s to Japan. These were survivors of construction of the railroad in Burma, depicted in the movie, “Bridge on the River Kwai.” Many survivors were rescued and brought aboard but many died before they could be rescued. Those located were near death and were grateful for their rescue and safe return home.

Commander Fluckey was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor and four Navy Crosses for his achievements. His Medal of Honor was presented by then Secretary of the Navy Forrestal, standing in for the President who was in poor health. This honor usually takes place at the White House.

Please begin reading this book on page 228, near the bottom of the page and continue through page 230. Now back to page 3 and continue reading. (Steven Spielberg’s DreamWorks Films has the film rights).

The book, Thunder Below, can be obtained from E. B. Fluckey at: 1016 Sandpiper Ln., Anapolis, MD. 21403, Phone (410) 263-6533. Price $30.00, Paperback $20.00.