



The World Wireless Beacon

Newsletter of the
Society of Wireless Pioneers, Inc.,
 P.O. Box 86, Geyserville, CA 95441 - 0086 USA

Vol. 11 No. 2

June

A VOYAGE TO FREETOWN

Aboard M/S Josiah Macy/HPFE

April 15, 1941:

By John McKinney
 SOWP 1001-P, W0AP

Returning from Recife, Brazil we docked at San Nicholas, Aruba about daybreak. We quickly cleared the customs and immigration authorities and the Dutch marines had sealed off the radio shack by pasting strips of paper from the door jamb to the closed door and then impressing their rubber stamp across the paper and door in such a manner that should the seal be removed or broken it would be clearly evident. It was wartime and the Netherlands homeland was now occupied by German troops and the colonial Dutch government was taking all precautions against sabotage and fifth-column activity.

We seldom remained in Aruba more than 24 to 36 hours, just long enough to take on cargo and depart. Within an hour we were loading a cargo of fuel oil and aviation gasoline and taking on supplies for a trip down to Buenos Aires.

A messenger came aboard and after he

visited with Captain Kenneth Wing for a few short minutes, I was called to the Captain's office and informed that I would be accompanying the Captain to the Port Captain's office that afternoon and to be available to go ashore at that time.

About 4 PM a car and driver pulled up to the gangway and Captain Wing and I were off to the Port Captain's office some mile distant from the ship. The Captain and I knew that something was up but neither of us could guess just what the surprise might be. Our best guess was that we might be going into the war zone!

We were greeted by a middle-eyed gentleman with a distinct British accent who explained the following to Captain Wing: "You will be sailing under Admiralty Orders. Leaving Aruba, you will sail eastward as though you were destined for Buenos Aires. I have a sealed packet you will carry to the ship. This packet must not be opened until you are out of the Caribbean and into Atlantic waters. In it you will find your destination and all necessary charts and

instructions you may require. I had you bring your Radio Officer (and he turned to me) to inform him that leaving Aruba he will use the radio as though he was bound for Buenos Aires but once in the Atlantic all transmissions must cease until your return voyage brings you back within the Leeward Islands."

I asked him if I might copy weather reports and should I keep a watch. He replied that I should do so but not to transmit even if called by another ship or station. The Captain had a few questions as to provisions and bunkers and was assured that all of this was already being cared for. We left the office with a large packet of material securely bound and sealed and returned to the MACY where I witnessed the captain placing it in the ship's safe.

Of course we discussed the events of the day in hushed tones and agreed that we were headed into the war zone - but where? The Neutrality Act forbade United States flag ships from

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venturing beyond an imaginary line that ran north and south through the approximate middle of the Atlantic Ocean - but we were a Panamanian-flag ship with a mixed crew and American officers. Did the Act apply to The JOSIAH MACY?

Most of the crew were ashore or asleep when we made our trip to the Port Captain's office. About the only one who was cognizant of our trip ashore was the officer on watch and perhaps the pumpman. Since we had been advised not to discuss our sailing plan with anyone, the crew of the MACY were oblivious to the excitement and apprehension within me and I am certain our Captain - although nothing ever seemed to excite him.

A few words about the MACY: The JOSIAH MACY/HPFE was built in Germany about 1930 for Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, one of several such tankers built in exchange for oil that Germany desperately needed. A diesel-propelled tanker about 550 feet in length with a beam of approximately 50 feet, she carried about 60,000 barrels of cargo and had a crew complement of 42 men. Everything about her was German including my radio equipment which was largely Telefunken with a smattering of other gear. By way of information to other radiomen, the main transmitter was a single tube AC/CW transmitter running about 500 watts and we had a 50 watt Lorenz shortwave rig covering all frequencies from 2 to 20 Mhz. The auxiliary transmitter was a quenched gap spark job, running a quarter kilowatt. The "all-wave" receiver was a gem - a four-tube TRF job (RF, Det., and 2 audio stages). It had ten bands and covered all frequencies from 10 Khz to 30 Mhz. Built in a cast aluminium case, it was practically in-

destructible and far superior to most other shipboard receivers in use at that time.

The radio room and the operator's quarters shared the rear portion of the bridge deck, directly above the captain's deck and to the rear of the chartroom bridge area. I felt I had the most favorable quarters aboard ship. This was a mid-ships tanker as were practically all ocean-going tankers of that era. On the main deck in the midship house were quarters for the mates as well as a room or two for supernumeraries should they be carried. Engineers and crew were quar-

One might ask why the chief engineer was not included in the briefing at the port captain's office. As I have mentioned several of these Panama flag tankers were German-built and when it became expedient to remove the German crews and replace them with essentially American crews (1939) the Standard Oil Company hired as many German-speaking engineers and machinists as they could find. One such engineer was our Chief. On our previous trip into Aruba (his first) he and the machinist had a mid-afternoon beer party in one of the open-front bars on the main drag in San Nicholas. Their conversation in German was overheard by a Dutch marine on patrol who objected to the chief's "Heil Hitlers" and some other boastful remarks. Both were arrested and held in jail until an hour before departure time. They were then escorted back to the ship, placed aboard and told in no uncertain terms that they were never to put foot on Dutch soil. With this verbal warning at the gangway, the Captain ordered the two to remain in their quarters until sailing time. Now on our return to Aruba neither of them left the ship and there was a marine guard at the gangway at all times to enforce the edict.

Back to the story:

We had hardly left the dock and got underway when Captain Wing called me to his quarters. He said, "Let's find out now where we are going - but we will keep it our secret for the next two days until we are clear of Grenada."

The answer was Freetown, Sierra Leone, West Africa. Beside explicit instructions for picking up the harbor pilot, there were warnings about the submarine net and mining of the harbor entrance. Included in the package were several bottles of quinine tablets and directions that these were to be placed on mess tables three days prior to our expected arrival time and to be taken daily until three days after departure by all members of the crew.

As we sailed out of the Caribbean, our change of destination was posted on our bulletin boards along with the information that ship's mail would be rerouted from Buenos Aires but there would be that no mail was to be expected at Freetown. None of our crew had ever been to Freetown, so there was much excitement and speculation over visiting a new port.

It might be well to point out that we carried no armament; Panama was not yet at war. Also, we were not blacked-out at night. About the only restriction we observed was that of radio silence.

The weather was fine across the Atlantic and we arrived within sight of the Sierra Leone coast on our 13th day out of Aruba. Admiralty orders read that we were to proceed toward the harbor entrance to a point 10 miles from the breakwater light and to wait there for arrival of the pilot boat. It was explained in our orders that our arrival would be noted from shore and that no signals from the ship were necessary. We reached this rendezvous point

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about 11 AM and cut engines.

By 1 PM, with nothing stirring ashore, Captain Wing was becoming impatient and ordered "slow ahead". We began inching toward shore. Still no movement was seen from what we perceived to be the entrance to the harbor. We had progressed to within perhaps five miles of the coast by 2 PM when a launch was observed approaching from the south. When within hailing distance, a very disturbed voice over a power megaphone advised the Captain that we were in a mine field and that we should do, the best we could to return to the rendezvous point where the pilot would board the vessel.

I was on the bridge when all this happened. Captain Wing made a remark quite uncomplimentary to the British and ordered our ship swung about. We headed back out to sea trying to follow whatever wake we had made, or rather guessing where that wake might have been were it not for current drift. Apparently we were lucky or perhaps there were no mines in the particular section we had invaded. So we inched our way back to the ten mile point and there were boarded by the pilot and a staff of British officers ready to clear the ship and issue

One of the first orders issued was for all cameras and radio sets aboard ship to be brought up to the radio room. After this was done, the radio room was sealed off; this time by sets of screw-eyes turned into the wooden door and frame and wired and sealed with a lead seal. I was cautioned that this seal would be inspected before our departure.

Meanwhile, we were proceeding slowly past the opened submarine gate and into the harbor and our anchorage. From the numbers of ships in the

harbor it now became apparent that Freetown was an assembly point for convoys of ships coming from the Indian and South Atlantic Oceans - especially so since there were several men-of-war within the harbor - and our purpose for being here would be to fuel several of these ships making them ready for the journey north to England.

Much to the chagrin of the entire crew we were further instructed that there would be no shore leave granted in port. Our expected stay would be approximately five days as we were to tie up alongside and fuel five ships. It turned out that the five included three British men-of-war, one navy freighter and a factory whaling ship up from South Georgia Island. One cruiser we fueled was the Exeter. Another was the Achilles. I had seen them both before, off the Montevideo, Uruguay breakwater immediately after the scuttling of the German pocket battleship Graf Spee in 1939. The explanation of the "no shore leave" orders was explained by the fact that this was a small town and with the numbers of ships in harbor, the release of their crews would overtax the police force. Some of the navy crews were given liberty but supposedly they could furnish their own shore patrols.

We weren't at anchor long before we were surrounded by bum-boats - natives in canoes trying to peddle their souvenirs to our crew. In spite of the fact that the Captain had me post the usual bulletin board message about bringing pets aboard ship we managed to sail with three monkeys and one 10 foot boa constrictor. An effort to buy a trained chimp died on the vine when Captain Wing caught wind of the bartering.

There was no access to the navy vessels we fueled. They, like ourselves were anchored out and we merely tied

alongside and pumped fuel aboard. A small aircraft carrier took the aviation gasoline. The interesting part for me came with the fueling of the whaling ship. I met the chief radio operator who obtained permission for me to board. I received a tour of his ship and an explanation of the whaling process. The ship carried a crew of 400, many of whom were Indians employed in the butchering and rendering activities aboard. As explained to me there were several radio operators, each of the "catch boats" requiring one when away from the mother vessel.

The chief operator was a young man only a few years older than I who delighted in showing me his "hobby" as he called it. He took me into a small room that contained an old dental chair, a foot-operated dental drill, and a tray of dental instruments. He explained that he had had two years of dental schooling at Glasgow and had gone back to sea as a radio operator to earn enough money to complete his schooling. As this ship spent two years away from home base he had obtained not only enough money for his schooling but a good amount of practical hands-on experience. I asked him who worked on his teeth. He opened his mouth wide and pointed to some fillings he had done himself using a mirror! On departing the whaler I was given several sperm whale teeth as souvenirs. I have one yet today.

On our last day in port, the Captain called me aside and asked if I would like to go ashore for the day. He explained that he was required to do so to clear the ship for sailing and wanted me to proxy for him. I was delighted, having done this on other occasions. It was always a pleasant experience for me and usually included a drink or two at the Panamanian consulate, especially if you made a late afternoon call. I

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could sign the old man's name as well as he, having done so hundreds of times on crew passes. I found the 1st Assistant engineer going along with me - some requirement about testing water samples at a lab ashore. This was fine with me. He was the one engineer I could call friendly.

At 2:00 PM a launch pulled alongside and Bill Mann, the engineer, and I climbed aboard. I had a brief case with the necessary ship's documents and a bundle of mail to be taken to the post office, stamped and mailed. We landed at a public dock not far from the downtown area and hailed a cab that took us to the local government building where I found the post office and the Panama consulate nearby. Mann took off on his errands and I on mine with the agreement that we would meet in the bar nearby whenever we had finished our routines.

I exchanged a few American dollars into British colonial pounds at a nearby bank, left a handful of personal mail with a clerk at the post office who gave me a receipt for the postage costs and promised to affix the stamps and get the letters underway. The place was not very busy. Speaking of mail, we were cautioned that all of it was censored. This would include any references to the fleet or geographical descriptions of the harbor, fortifications etc. Engineer Mann took advantage of this by mailing a letter to his wife in Boston saying: "Dear Ann: I know this letter might be censored but I want to tell you a little about Freetown". He then took a razor blade and cut a large rectangular hole out of the page and at the bottom edge he signed "Love, Bill". I never found out whether that letter ever passed the censors!

I finished my business at the consulate but was not offered a drink. The Panama consulate in Freetown, as in so many smaller cities was a vice-consulate combined with many other vice-consulates of smaller nations and the ceremony was handled by a clerk who accepted the necessary fees and stamped the documents. So as soon as I could, I headed for the bar where I found Mann already waiting and on his second drink.

There wasn't much to downtown Freetown - A few low-profile government buildings' a small business district with perhaps two or three hotels and a half dozen bars or pubs. The Freetown population of course was predominantly black - and poor - a typical overgrown African village. If there was any "nightlife" it was well hidden, but then we were not looking for it as our instructions were to "be at the coaling dock by 7 PM" where the launch would be waiting to ferry us back to the MACY.

The bar (or pub) we had chosen was one of three we spotted in the downtown area and the most inviting. Situated on a street corner, its two sides were open to view of passers-by when the corrugated metal overhead doors were opened. Ceiling fans, as in the movie "Casablanca" provided the only "cooling" for the patrons. The bar was not crowded but several tables were filled with uniformed British naval personnel and I could spot but one female on the floor. She appeared to be an East Indian or Hindu and was wearing a very loose-fitting gown and moving from table to table. As she would leave a table, the men would let out a loud laugh. As she drew nearer it was evident what the laughter was all about. She would have the one of the sailors stand a shilling coin on edge on the very corner of the square table. Then she would edge up to the table,

lift her dress and on her tiptoes remove the coin without using her hands. Then she would drop the coin into her hand and challenge the occupants of the next table. All Hell broke loose when one sailor heated the shilling with his cigarette lighter when her back was turned and then called her attention to his waiting coin. That one hit the floor at the same time that her hand crossed his face, almost knocking him from his chair. She had a good command of profanity and remarked "It's happened before" and then went on entertaining the crowd.

We remained there for perhaps two hours sipping whiskey and water (it isn't called Scotch in the U.K. or the colonies). Before we left, a fortune teller began circulating from table to table. She engaged me in conversation and I finally consented to having my palm read. She had me pegged as a Canadian (there was probably a Canadian ship in harbor). I was single (wrong). I was a deck officer (my hands were clean). It was fun and what can you expect for a shilling or two? We purchased a couple of bottles of what we had been drinking, found a cab and headed for the "coaling dock".

For many years Freetown, like so many ports around the globe, had been used as a coaling station; a port equipped for the storage and handling of coal used as fuel for steamships and naval vessels. Although there were very few such vessels still in use in 1941, the Freetown facility was still intact and operable. Since Sierra Leone was a former British colony, English was the official language and we had no problems conveying our wishes to the native cab driver who took us to the gate of the compound surrounding the coaling facility. The gate was unlocked and we proceeded to the office

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Where we were surprised to find the door locked and our pounding on the door was to no avail. But there was a light burning within the office so we assumed there was probably a watchman on the grounds and we would eventually find him. Meanwhile there was nothing to do but proceed dockside and await our launch. It was still broad daylight and my watch told me we had a thirty minute wait. We found what we considered a rather clean set of steps - nothing is 'clean' within a mile of a coal loading facility. We sat down, opened one of our bottles and waited. We were in a remote corner of the bay, perhaps three miles from downtown and it was extremely quiet. There were no ships nearby nor any other sign of life. We began to wonder why we were told to pick up a launch at this remote spot.

Seven O'clock came and went and no sign of life was seen or heard. We would catch a glimpse of a launch or small vessel in the distance but none ventured our way. Tired of sitting, we decided to explore our surroundings all the while keeping a watch for our ride.

By this time neither Bill Mann nor I was feeling any pain and our white duck trousers and white shirts were anything but white. We were happy but somewhat concerned that we had not been picked up - nor had we seen any sign of life around the coal docks.

Making our way back toward the coal storage sheds, we climbed ladders and stairs until we found ourselves some fifty or more feet above the main pier. From here a narrow-gauge rail line sloped down to the pier below and sitting on the crest of this "hill" were three small hopper cars loaded with coal. The temptation was too much!

We only sent one car down the slope! Since we were not riding the car to brake it, it got up to a fair speed by the time it hit the dock. The derailer near the end of the pier sent car, coal and all crashing overboard and into the bay! So much for that mischief.

It was now getting dark and still no sign of our transportation, but we did hear signs of life and not too far from us - jungle drums - shouting - singing! It all was coming from over a small hillock to our south. We had to investigate. Climbing down from our perch we crossed an open space and walking around the hillock, we came to the compound fence, some 8 feet high. We could now see the glow of a camp-fire and were able to approach along the fence to within perhaps 100 yards of the action. Through some small trees and brush we could make out some sort of a ceremonial dance in progress with several African natives singing and dancing. We watched through the fence wires for several minutes until one of the participants noticed our intrusion. With a whoop the entire assemblage broke and ran toward us. It didn't take us long to retrace our steps back to the dock all the while wondering if we would be followed. But we weren't, much to our relief.

It was now past 9:00 PM and we came to the conclusion that we would need to find a way back to the MACY. Due to blackout restrictions the harbor was dark, as was the city of Freetown. We were beginning to sober up, mentally if not physically.

What to do? Luckily there was a bright moon and a clear sky overhead as there were no lights on the dock and few to be seen elsewhere. Mann suggested that I stay and watch for the launch while he would go out the front gate and try to find a telephone or someone in authority who might

arrange for our return to our ship.

It was a long wait. It felt like eternity, waiting there in the darkness and hearing nothing other than the beating of the jungle drums over the hill; but these ceased after half an hour and then - only silence. The temperature had now cooled off somewhat to perhaps 90 Fahrenheit from a daytime high of 100 or better. We were 10 degrees north of the Equator. I would have given ten dollars for a tall glass of ice water. The liquid refreshment in the open bottle was not the thirst quencher I now craved.

It was somewhat after ten o'clock when I heard Bill coming back from the direction he had gone. He had good news. He found a helpful citizen who called a policeman who, in turn, contacted the Admiralty office. They would send a launch to retrieve us within the hour. (We later found out that there were two so-called coaling docks, one much closer to town. We had been taken to the wrong dock!)

We heard the launch approaching in the darkness running without lights. We hailed it and slipped aboard. Now the fun began! This was the same launch that had taken us ashore that afternoon and he knew the location of the MACY; still alongside the whaler, - or so he thought. She had been moved to a different anchorage. There were perhaps two dozen merchant ships in the harbor, but none were carrying lights. It took what seemed like another hour to locate ours.

In moving our ship the Captain had taken in the companionway ladder preparatory to sailing at dawn. So as we pulled alongside the MACY, the Mate on watch had a seaman lower a jacob's ladder so we could board. This was a joke. Neither Bill nor I were in

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any condition to climb up some 20 feet of swinging steps. I tried and damn near fell into the drink as I reached out from the bow of the launch. The deckhand reached out to keep me from falling overboard and I swung smack into him, knocking him into the drink. So much for the jacob's ladder approach. A cargo net came over the side and Bill Mann and I were ceremoniously hauled aboard like so much freight, all to the raucous laughter of a dozen or so shipmates who had assembled for the show. I held onto the briefcase but lost both our bottles through the net. The launch crew had free drinks on us that night!

Someone helped me to my room that night. I awoke in time for breakfast (!) probably settled for coffee. Can't remember. I do recall the Captain glaring at me and saying something like, "You were a pretty mess coming aboard last night, Sparks!"

We had gotten underway at daybreak and had already dropped the pilot and were on our way westward toward Aruba which was certainly not much of a liberty port but now appeared to be exciting this crew.

(the conclusion of this story will appear in the next issue of The World Wireless Beacon)

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Your Sparks memoirs are welcome

Send to: Editor WWB
5319 Sierra Vista Rd.
Murphys, CA 95247
USA

Member Correspondence

Dear Waldo:

Enclosed check is for another year's dues. Not sure when it is due; however, I think it is sometime this Spring or early Summer. I was quite surprised when the 1998 directory arrived, to see how much the Society had grown over the past couple of years. We had gone so long with little, if any growth over the years. I am also a member of the International Morse Preservation Society and have found that Morse is alive and well on all the amateur bands. The increase of activity on the CW bands is most gratifying. I have been an active ham for 56 years and only work the Morse bands and up until a few years ago it was hard to find many CW signals on the bands. I think that the younger hams have found that it is too expensive to operate SSB due to the high power necessary to push a voice signal and the more expensive antenna systems required.

I think the Round-up was a great success, with just a minimum time on the key I worked over 60 stations and the most gratifying was just talk awhile with each one, not like the contest people who pass RST and numbers. So if God willing and the creek don't rise, I will be up again next year at Round-up time.

Please pass the word to Ted W8TP that I thoroughly the Beacon Newsletter, and my congratulations for a job well done.

Regards

Ted Bouton

SOWP 1292-V, K3CJQ

Dear OM, Waldo,

The enclosed bank money order is for renewal of my membership #3509-V.

I enjoy reading our magazine "The World Wireless Beacon" and was particularly pleased to see, in Vol. 10 No.4, the article by Marshall Killen (2226-SGP, VE3KK).

It was my great pleasure to have known Marshall fifty years ago when he was VE1MK and resided at Sydney, Nova Scotia. At that time Marshall, along with his job and raising a family, was Squadron Controller for "The Cabot Squadron" of the Air Force Amateur Radio System. In addition, as I remember, he was Commanding Officer of a very active Air Cadet Squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

My trip across the Atlantic in wartime was on the Armed Merchant Cruiser "California" and, like Marshall, I was called upon to assist the crew. However, I didn't get to operate the radio. My job was to run the elevator from the galley to the officers pantry. That job had its perks as you might imagine. When not on duty I often read the "Blinker" messages being passed between ships of the convoy,

fraternally,

Wylie Barrett

SOWP 3509-V, VY2YN

Dear Waldo:

The Beacon is very enjoyable and I look forward to receiving my copy. Your work as secretary is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely

J Anthony

SOWP 3245-V, G3KQF

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S COLUMN

From Secretary Waldo T. Boyd
SOWP 2958-P, K6DZY

EXCELSIOR, SOWP!

Anyone who has mislaid his dictionary may translate that as "Onward! Upward!" Far from sitting back and observing The Society of Wireless Pioneers become a "last man club" as our SSGP's and SGP's close down their Earthly watch, your president and secretary have established an official "Point of Presence" on the Internet.

As many members know, we have had a "Web Page" on the Internet for some time by the good graces of Joe Gardner 5068-M K7CI, who shared his bandwidth with the Society. Prez Jack, Secty Walt and ex-editor Ted W8TP have kept wary and anxious eyes on the domain name "WWW.SOWP.ORG" hoping that no one would file for it before we could see our way clear to do so. Once a domain name is licensed it is most likely gone for the foreseeable future, and in particular, short names have become valuable commodities in their own right. When we discovered that certain enterprising individuals are filing for unclaimed names on speculation, much as was done in the gold fields of Alaska and California a century ago, we decided to nail down our SOWP name while it was (fortunately!) as yet unclaimed.

The domain name cost us \$70 for two years, and is renewable in perpetuity for \$35 yearly thereafter. There are three possible forms of the name: W W W . S O W P . C O M , W W W . S O W P . N E T , and W W W . S O W P . O R G --we selected the latter because we are a not-for-profit corporation by the domain registrar's

rules.

We have selected an on-line entrepreneur, MenagerieWeb, to help us establish a professional appearance on the Internet over the coming year, beginning with many of the pages already designed by Joe Gardner. If you have access to the Web keep in touch by writing-in our domain name (www.sowp.org) on your "browser" address line (the internet point of access). Write, call, or e-mail your comments and suggestions for improvements. The portal is open and there are "links" (click-connections) to our former pages which will be transferred to their new address soon, with a few changes as updates.

I favor a member serial-number-keyed entrance portal to our list of internet-using members rather than have our e-mail addresses freely open to the public. The listing would be in three columns: Surname, Line 1, and the e-mail address. The Home Page would be open for everyone along with our "Invitation," and the application blank. The thought behind this is to reduce the number of "SPAM" messages that can be expected if an address listing is generally available to the internet.

Jack has suggested including links to back issues of The Beacon, plus brief previews of upcoming issues. It's possible to have a "chat" section, with scheduled times when we can all meet. We can enhance our cw operating through use of the internet if we use it to advantage. Since we cannot hope to stop the decline of CW, we can at least "join 'em," and keep in mind that the internet will be opting off the 'phone lines for wireless in the not too distant future. It happened a hundred years ago when the telegraph lines gave way to CW wireless; dare we declare that it will never happen again? Who knows what new combinations of CW/Net operations will be devised now that the

door is open?

We regret the lateness of the March and June issues of the Beacon. We may or not be able to get the September issue out on time, but by December we should surely be back on schedule.

73 --Secty Boyd.

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WELCOME - NEW MEMBERS

A warm "Welcome Aboard" to the following who have joined SOWP since our last issue.

(Add to Section I of your 1998 Wireless Register).

HENDRICK, William L. 5615-V Bill-Bl/Carol W7YUY 541 345-8822 2768 Chad Drive, Eugene, OR 97408-7306 behendrick@aol.com

ZIELINSKI, Donald P. 5616-M Don/LaVon K0PV 806 797-9697 P.O. Box 42, Wolfforth, TX k0pv@odsy.net

SALAZAR, Charles B. 5617-V KC6B Lomita, CA

MORGAN, Joseph F. 5618-V Joe/Viola W5PRV 830 257-5172 624 Kerrville South Drive, Kerrville, TX 78028, 1945 USNR NATTC, Memphis joew5prv@kfc.com

McGAVRAN, Harry G., Jr. 5619-TA Harry/Lauren W5PNY 505 667-4050 323 Potrillo Drive, Los Alamos, NM 87544-3853 w5pny@worldnet.att.net

HILL, John B. 5620-TA JB/Reba W5HX 770 973-7265 1951 Benthill Drive, Marietta, GA 30062-5829 w5hx@mindspring.com

NASLUND, Rubert S. 5621-TA Rube/Ruth W9LL 847 824-0783 178 North 8th Avenue, Des Plaines, IL 60016

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WELCOME - NEW MEMBERS (from page 7)

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GLOBE WIRELESS PRESS RELEASE

Globe Wireless' and Marinet Combine to form Full Sen- rice Marine Communications Company

Liverpool, United Kingdom & Foster
City, California, USA (May 10, 1999):
Today Marinet Systems Ltd. and
Globe Wireless, LLC. announced the
combination of their companies. By
merging the best of satellite and high
frequency (HF) radio, the companies
will offer unique products that provide
tremendous benefits to consumers of
marine communications. These prod-
ucts will include a least cost routing
Email and data transfer capability that
capitalizes on the expertise of both
companies.

Together, the companies provide truly
global services to the 2,800 vessels that
use their products. They have oper-
ations in 16 countries, sales offices
and agents in 15 countries and over
100 trained installation and repair tech-
nicians working for more than 50
marine electronics firms in all of the
major and many of the smaller ports
worldwide.

Marinet pioneered the introduction of
electronic mail and data communica-
tions to the maritime industry using
Inmarsat services more than ten years
ago and are now widely recognized as
the market leader in this rapidly grow-
ing area.

"We are extremely pleased about
bringing these two companies
together," said Alan Leach, Manager,
Sales & Marketing for Marinet. "The
combination of the companies means
that ships will have a unique choice
from a single provider to use the most
appropriate method of connecting ship
to shore whether via HF radio or
satellite."

Globe Wireless has over 85 years of
experience serving the marine industry,
and has used software and digital
technology to modernize HF Radio
communications during the past
decade. Like Inmarsat, Globe Wireless
owns a worldwide Network that it uses
to move messages and data around the
world.

"This combination will produce better
marine communications solutions for
customers," remarked Richard John-
son, Vice President of Sales for Globe
Wireless. "Customers now have a
single supplier that offers the full
range of marine communications
options, all at the most cost-effective
rates available."

ROUNDUP COMMENTS

Selected comments from 1998 SOWP
Roundup Participants

Brad, W0SDX: enjoyed every minute
- met new guys & gals; renewed old
acquaintances **Bob, KA2ZNE**: 10 M
vy QRL with contest so little chance
for SOWP contacts **Walt, W6ASH**:
Interesting QSO with W6JV - he & I
both EE graduates from UCal/Berke-
ley & both worked for Dollar Line in
30s **Johnny, W9ZEN**: Enjoyed
Roundup tho only made Thurs & Fri
sessions "**SP**", **W8PQO**: Rough log
has more credence than smooth log
(you betcha,, SP de W4ZC) **Ben,
N6SL**: Ben made 87 contacts in 8
hours with 50 watts (great going, Ben
de W4ZC) **Joe, PA0GNO**: 5-bander
with HB9XJ, 3-banders with HB9BY),
K2LP, W8KJP & W4ZC **Borge,
VE7VB**: The only test in which I
participate; many great ops in SOWP;
Bill, W8ROV: Not many contacts;
but wanted to give the 'serious' guys
credit (Thanks, Bill; we hope every-
body does the same) **Jack, N7WO**:
Great roundup - believe we would have
had more contacts w/o the 10m contest
Fri & Sat. (Ed: That was ARRL 10m
worldwide; we should try to avoid next
year) **Bob, W6BNB**: a lot of fun;
sorry was QRL & could not put in
more hours **Mort, W6JU**: Antenna
is random wire on roof, so have to
work hard for what I get, but it's a lot
of fun **Joe, W7IZE**: Having higher
bands open was nice change despite
contest QRM on ten mtrs **Mike,
NT7G** (first-timer): This common
bond for SOWPers was a real kick.
Was "GMDSSed" out of my ship job.
Mebbe increased activity because more
on beach for same reason? **Jack,
W1HDC**: Ten was wide open but
nearly useless due to contest QRM
Rusty, K2LL: I did enjoy the little
time I could be on.

(Continued on Page 10)

SOWP NETS & SCHEDULES / UTC

EFFECTIVE 04 APR 1999 TO 31 OCT 1999 - (DAYLIGHT TIME in North America)

NET NAME	DAY	TIME(LOCAL)	DAY	TIME(UTC)	FREQ.	NCS	ANCS
VANCOUVER B.C.	SAT.SUN	0915-P/T- 0945	SAT.SUN	1615- 1645	147.54	VE7AAT-Art FM SPX	VE7YL- Elizabeth
HAPPY HOUR(No. Calif)							
	M-F	1700-P/T- 1730	M-F	0000- 0030	(SSB)	W6TQU-Hap	WB6WHK- Sherrill
HAPPY HOUR(So. Calif)							
	MON,THU	1600-P/T- 1630	MON,THU	2300 (CW) 2330 (SSB)	3745 3947.5	W6VFT-Ben	K6ICT-Ker
20 Meter Net	MON	1900 E/T	MON	2300	14055	W8PQO-SP	
ART SCHERMERHORN	MON	2000-E/T	TUE	0000	7052	N6SL-Ben	W8TP-Ted
WSFEC Memorial	MON	2100-E/T	TUE	0100	3555	W8PQO- SP	W8TP-Ted
CAPITAL AREA (SSB)							
	TUE	1000-E/T	TUE	1400	3966	W4ZC-Jack	W4HU-John
JACK BINNS	TUE	2000-P/T	WED	0300	3555	W7PN-Curly	W7FLF-Tuck
	+TUE	1700-P/T	WED	0000	3555	"	"
+(Usually for a few weeks in Oct-Nov-Dec when propagation poor at 2000-PST)							
OSCAR HARRISON	THU	1100-E/T	THU	1500	14055	W0AP- Mac	
MEM. TRANSCONTINENTAL NET							
RICHARD JOHNSTONE	THU	2000-P/T	FRI	0300	3555	W7FLF-Tuck	W6EJB-John
(Pacific Coast)	(NET CLOSED JUNE THRU AUGUST)					ROLL CALL & BULLETINS	
CAPITAL AREA CHAPTER 10							
	SAT	0930-E/T	SAT	1330	7090	W4ZC-Jack	W4HU-John
H.K WARNER MEM.							
YANKEE EAST COAST	SAT	1030-E/T	SAT	1430	7052	KA2ZNE-Bob	
SWISS (Edelweiss)	SUN	1015-Local	SUN	0815	7027	HB9XJ-Hans	
SOUTHEASTERN							
	SUN	1400-E/T	SUN	1800	7052	W0ABO-Dan	W4WNY-Lan

This schedule sheet shows net times for the months of APRIL thru OCTOBER. These nets maintain the same local starting time throughout the year. From April thru October (Daylight Saving Time) they begin as shown above by the UTC clock. During November thru March they begin one hour later/UTC.

- SOWP HIGH SPEED CODE PRACTICE and CERTIFICATION TEST INFORMATION -
George Hart, W1NJM, regularly conducts high speed practice sponsored by SOWP throughout the year on Thursdays at 0130 UTC (Wednesday 2030 EST or 2130 EDT) on 3523 and 7023 kHz. This sked therefore changes its local time but not its UTC time. W1NJM no longer gives certification tests. Practice speeds are from 20-65 wpm in various increments, decrements and sequences as announced.

Raymond V. Evans, K7HLR, conducts two practice schedules on 7056 kHz at 0700 & 1700 Mountain Time daily (1400 UTC & 0000 UTC Nov. thru March; 1300 & 2300 UTC April thru Oct) with speeds 5 to 40 wpm. (Note: During winter months, EST + 5 hours = UTC. During summer months, EDT + 4 hours = UTC.)

Note: Send changes/corrections to Earl Wilson, Jr. K6GPB, 5319 Sierra Vista Rd., Murphys, CA 95247. Tel: (209)-728-8316.

ROUNDUP COMMENTS -

Continued from Page 8

Ed, W1YT: Great get-together - Sorry I didn't get started sooner
Lindy, W1ACL: Lots of fun having QSOs with so many members this year
Dean, W8IM: Activity seemed to be up. Good to enter into a non-pressure "Contest"
Bill, G3BOK: It's great to meet other members - wish there was more day-to-day activity on 21 MHz
Bill, W3PYK: Had a good time. Tnx for my #1
Kemp, K7UQH: My first SOWP QSO party! Looking forward to next year
Phil, W3FZ & Pat, K8LEN: suggest SOWP consider two parties a year, like QCWA
Tuck, W7FLF: As in the past, it was fun
Esther, KA4IFF: had 'telephone signal report from VK3DXM in Melbourne!
Bill, AC5BG: Strong silent type - 211 points & tied with Glenn/W7GS for 5th place
Hans, HB9XJ: Excellent, detailed report on band conditions; and best non-US score
Glenn, W7GS: Fewer QSOs than last year but more 3-banders (Ed; bottom line was 211 points and #4 overall. Good going, Glenn!)
Earl, K2IC: Worked so many old friends for 1st time in a year. Great to hear lots of GOOD CW
Josh, AE2L: Good turnout this year compared to years past.
Gus, KA7MGM: Really enjoyed the Roundup -laid back, lots of fun, and beautiful CW
Milt, KJ1T: Ten meters was useless. Should be much more fun next year.
George, W6NVN: Very nice informative letter from George - who placed #3 overall. Tnx for personal comment, George.
Harry, W4ZCT: Happy to have QSOed the entire R=(Roundup) Committee (ed: Harry, W4GC and I have to send our calls carefully during contests/parties to avoid mistakes, hi).

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 12 - change address, ELDRIDGE, Robert C. 3634-V S1 C0 Erickson Road, RR1 Pemberton, BC Canada V0N 2L0

page 13 - change address, GALONSKI, Adolph E. 2673-M 240 S Lar-Ann Street #2, Belgium, WI 53004

page 22 - change address, MOBERLY, Richard G. 1163-P 1681 Hekpa Drive, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

page 28 - change handle/spouse phone number, SANDBERG, James W. 3151-P Sandy/..... 760 745-6940

page 48 - Barrett, Wylie 3509-V VY2YN wylie@pei.sympatico.ca

page 49 - Galonski, Adolph E. 2673-M KG9LO galonski@execpc.com

page 51 - Silvern Leonard C. 2068-V K6RXU syslabs@ieee.org & k6rxu@arrl.net

----- O -----

Society for the Preservation of Antique Radio in Canada

Editor World Radio,

Enclosed you will find a complementary copy of *THE STORY OF THE WEST COAST RADIO SERVICE* by Larry Reid, The SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF ANTIQUE RADIO IN CANADA (SPARC) have taken over the entire remaining stock of this publication. We are making a free offer to anyone interested in obtaining a copy, while the stock lasts, providing they take out a membership in our Society. A one year membership and free copy, including mailing and handling, is \$12.00 (twelve dollars) in U.S. funds. Due to

the exchange rate the price is \$15.00 (fifteen dollars) in Canadian funds.

S.P.A.R.C. is a Canadian federally registered non-profit society. All money received will go to the upkeep, maintenance, restoration and other expenses. The museum is operated entirely by volunteers. Enclosed also is the society's last bulletin and a descriptive brochure.

I am sending this along to you in case some of your readers may be interested in obtaining a copy of the book and also help support our project. If you would like more information please send me an email.

Yours

Al Miller

SOWP 1089-P, VE7KC (since 1933)

----- O -----

Member Correspondence

Hello Mr. Boyd

Recently I visited USS Missouri and USS Bowfin at Pearl Harbor. It reminded me that at one point of WWII the SS Green Gables Park (a 10,000 ton Canadian freighter) was sent to Oakland and San Francisco to load war materials for the South Pacific. We loaded torpedoes as part of our cargo and delivered them to Brisbane Australia. During this voyage we were considered a U.S. ship and carried a U.S. Naval officer aboard. He was to be reassigned in Brisbane. Upon arrival in Brisbane, an American Naval officer came aboard and asked us to sign a document that would assure us a ribbon (medal) for service in the South Pacific (merely an area service type ribbon). At the time (for whatever the reason) my shipmate and myself did not sign the document. I have

(continued next page)

Member Correspondence -
From Page 10

written the U.S. Navy in Washington DC but could never really get any satisfaction even though I included documentary proof. Do you have a suggestion where and who we might contact in this regard?

Sincerely

Alex White 1655-V

Dear Sirs:

... Last year I had several copies made at Kinko's of my autobiography - mainly of my career as a Radio Officer. "The Last SPARKS" which retraces my "adventures" sailing from 1955 to 1965 aboard tankers, oreships, dredges, etc. of D.K. Ludwigs National Bulk Carriers (universe tank ships) with Photostats and reprints of original photos and documents from my personal file. This Spring I intend to compose an addenda to my memoirs retracing my sailing years - 1979 to 1990 - as a Radio Officer of the U.S. Merchant Marine. I think my document will be of particular interest since the ship going Sparks has, like the square rigged clipper ships, joined the ranks of a "disappeared species." There is no organization like Green Peace trying to save him. The Radio Officer has been replaced by an automated device called GMDSS communicating at the push of a button via satellites. Morse code is only used now by faithful radio amateurs. Please mention my "literary endeavours" in your next bulletins. Maybe some rare person collecting maritime memorabilia or nourishing his/her nostalgia for the good old times may be interested in my book. Many thanks for your interest.

Very cordially yours, With sincere 73's

Robert Lion

SOWP 3138-M

Koping March 28, 1999

Hi Earl

I got an interesting letter from a non-member of SOWP -- but all the same an eager reader of the WW Beacon, Wendell Benson, and send you a copy to use as you please. The book "Operation Drumbeat" by Michael Gannon seems to qualify to be mentioned in the book list, I do not know if Bill Hall's story already has been told in the WWB. I hope you have a register of some kind to check what has been published, or perhaps you can make Bill a phone call. If his narrative has not yet appeared in WWB it is well worth to do so,

73

Birgitta Gustafsson

SOWP 3854-M

WENDELL R BENSON

110-40 72ND AVE APT 2A

FOREST HILLS NY 11375-4931

14 March 99

Hi Birgitta,

I am writing you concerning your Book-List in June 98 SOWP Wireless Beacon. I am not a member of SOWP but I know a member and ask to see his copies. I am a member of a similar organization--Veteran Wireless Operators Assoc. I am suggesting a book not on your list or on Charles Krause book list in Dec. 98 Wireless Beacon. The book is "Operation Drumbeat" by Michael Gannon published by Harper & Row (Perennial book division) in 1990. It is a very thick large soft-covered book.

I went to my local library this week and checked the library catalog which briefly described the book as: the dramatic true story of Germany's first U-boats attacks along the American

coast in WW2. It is the story of U-123.

I read the book a few years ago as a result of a couple of letters I received in 1994 from William (Bill) Hall who is a SOWP member. The book is very factual with cables obtained from the Chief Of Naval Operations office.

The letters from Bill Hall were very emotional concerning an event described in the book--something he had been wondering about for 52 years Bill was an operator at Mackay Radio coastal station WAG in Thomaston Maine It was January 12th 1942 and Americans were observing Radio Silence on 500KC. He was on watch on 500 but he was bored so he swept his receiver back and forth from 490 to 510KC. Suddenly on 490KC (off 500 where the transmitter should have been) he heard an SOS from a British ship (Cyclops) who had been torpedoed. He went down to the basement of the station and turned on the rectifiers to the WAG transmitter. He sent the auto-alarm signal and repeated the SOS message on 500. There was complete silence on 500 afterwards and that is why he wondered what happened to the ship until he read the story in Operation Drumbeat at 52 years later.

He had given the message to a naval officer present at his station who had relayed it. His broadcast had been copied by VCS Halifax who had a line to Naval Headquarters in Ottawa and HF circuit to England. It was also copied by USN Charleston who informed USN Boston. They informed Dockyard Halifax which was the ships destination. The Distress was 180 miles south of Halifax. Aboard Cyclops 5 out of 30 Europeans and 93 out of 151 Chinese were lost before they could be rescued by two Canadian mine sweepers who had been dispatched because

(Continued next page)

Member Correspondence

From Page 11

of his message. Bill Hall mentioned -"So for a few minutes I was the only USA person to know that the enemy was present--."

Incidentally, Charles Krause mentions in his list "U-Boats Against Canada" by Michael Hadley. Bill Hall said he has a black and white photo of the first lifeboat coming alongside the sweeper taken from this book. Bill Hall is now 90 years old. I spoke to him a few weeks ago in Friendship Maine 207-832-4830.

73 Wendell R. Benson, WW2G

Dear Mr. Boyd:

Yes I did receive a nice certificate from SOWP which I have posted on my wall. The information you provided is accurate.

Being in Air Rescue (Third Air Rescue Squadron) we operated as near to the front lines as possible. On the date of the incident we were operating out of K-13, Suwon, Korea. We received the notice of th downed pilot and immediately proceeded toward K-18, Kangnung which was an abandoned airstrip on the west coast in North Korea. Upon arrival we saw the F-51 on the side of the air strip and other f-51s were flying up and down on each side of the runway almost at ground level while firing their guns. We decided to make a short field landing on the PSP (Pierce steel plankings), place the props in reverse and hopefully grab the pilot inot the plane and use the rest of the runway for a quick take off. For some unknown reason the co-pilot placed the props into reverse when we were sill about 50 feet in the air. The aircraft stalled and we hit the end of

the runway on our nose. The nose gear came into the cockpit between the pilot and co-pilot. We skidded to a stop and armed Koreans came onto the airstrip from both sides. Fortunately, but without our knowledge, the were a group of South Korean troops with several U.S. advisors who were off shore and landed just as we arrived.

Of course the nose gear was damaged, one flap was gone and the main landing fear was sprung. Fortunately my radio and an antenna were intact and I still had battery power. I tried to call our base in South Korea with negative results. I then sent an SOS which was picked up by our headquarters in Tokyo. I explained our situation in plain language since I did not have time to encode the message. By this time it was dark and headquarters advised us to stand by and they would send an aircraft early next morning to pick up up. Next morning a C-47 appeared and I gave him landing instructions. Aboard the aircraft was our squadron engineering officer and several mechanics. To make a long story shorter the Colonel had the mechanics lower the nose gear, welded it into place, removed the one flap and by himself flew the aircraft back to our base in Tokyo. Our crew, with the F-51 pilot were flown back to our squadron headquarters in southern Japan (Ashia).

A sequel to this story follows: I was stationed at Tokyo International Airport in 1956 and my office overlooked the taxi strip. I could not believe my eyes when an SA-16, painted black, taxied by and the tail number read 9086, the same aircraft we crashed in North Korea. The aircraft was parked in a secure area since it was assigned to a classified mission.

This is the background of that particular mission as I remember it. I was with

the 3rd Air Rescue Squadron from August 1950 to July 1952 and in that period of time our squadron saved over 4,600 lives in all of Japan, Korea and adjacent waters.

I hope this information will be useful to you.

73

Jimmie Burousas

SOWP 3852-V, NO4V

Dear Mr. Wilson:

I think this is the first communication you have had from me. I have been dealing with Ted for so long that it is hard to think otherwise and I am not sure of the publication or closing dates.

The last issue was very fine and in the future I will do all I can to help from this area. I was in SF from 68 to 74 and at the early formation of the SOWP. I have # 58-SGP and was secretary of the GG chapter for some time. I sure use to enjoy the lunches we had at the Villa Chartier and the Inns north of town.

I retired from 40 years in RCA marine in '74 and came back to Seattle and started up my own marine business. It's still going but at a very much slower rate. I'm now 86 and will be 87 in July. Just lost my wife of 66 years to kidney cancer and 7 months of nursing her with others helping. I got off track on some of my stuff.

I have been secretary for 15 years here along with John Dudley the director. they won't let us quit.

Our attendance is dwindling, down. This time we decided to join with the QCWA and see how that goes as many belong to both.

(Continued next page)

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.

BOLVIN, Charles J. 2716-P, K4KQ, Deltona, FL. March 8, 1999. Reported by Waldo T. Boyd and in QCWA Journal, Summer 1999.

BOOKWALTER, Robert L. 5423-TA, W8DGU, Venice, FL. No date or details. Reported in QCWA Journal, Spring 1999.

BUCKLEW, Morris T. 2232-V, W4UR, Falls Church, VA. No date or details. Reported in QCWA Journal, Winter 1998.

CUSHING, Edward W. 2996-P, W1SHW, Bristol, CT. No date or details. Reported in QCWA Journal, Winter 1998.

DARRACOTT, Charles R. 3155-P, WD4OCW, Williamsburg, VA. No date or details. Reported in QCWA Journal, Spring 1999.

DEDRICK, Otto Fred 3741-P, W6NGK, San Pedro, CA. No date or details. Reported in QST, Apr. 1999.

EVANS, James Lawrence, Jr., MD 1361-P, W2BBK, Englewood, NJ, Jan. 15, 1999. Reported in Spark Gap Times, Apr. 1999.

FROHRING, Lloyd W. 4110-V, W8PMJ, Chagrin Falls, OH. No date or details. Reported in QST, June 1999.

GUNTHER, Frank A. 3957-SGP, W2ALS (sent by Walt - 6/1)

HEMMES, Rene T. 2595-P, WE4R, Dallas, TX, Mar. 19, 1999. Reported on SOWP West Coast Net. He graduated from marine radio school in NYC in 1930 and hired on with Radiomarine Corp. Stared working small beam trawlers out of Boston. Later assigned to Eastern Steamships liners. Chief radio operator aboard SS

St. John in 1939 and participated in evacuating Americans from Europe, with a similar run the following March aboard Evangeline. Spent most of World War II as chief instructor teaching correspondence courses to 6,000 U.S. Navy radiomen.

MACLAREN, Harry A. 1111-SGP, W5FGO, Gretna, LA. No date or details. Returned mail.

MARTIN, Ronald G. 81-SGP, W6ZF, Napa, CA, Mar. 16, 1999, age 91. Reported in QST, June 1999. In 1925 he went to work for Dollar Shipping Lines as a shipboard wireless operator. In 1928, he became supervisor for communications for the Hearst Publishing Co. (San Francisco Examiner) traffic handling radio station, KUP. Prior to WWII Ron was a key communication participant in several international exploration activities including the flight of the Southern Cross to Australia, the Dole Race to Hawaii, the Admiral Byrd Expedition to the South Pole, Sir Hubert Wilkins Expedition to the Antarctic, the maiden flight of the China Clipper, and the dirigibles Shenandoah, Macon, and Akron. He was very active in formation of the Army Airways Communication System in WW II. A founder of the Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS), he continued involvement with the program until his death. A "Charter Member", one of Bill Breniman's first 100 to join SOWP.

PERRINS, Francis G. 4444-V, W7EJW, Seattle, WA. No date or details. Reported in QST, Apr. 1999.

TITTERINGTON, John "Jack" 1628-P, W1EOF, Providence, RI, March 10, 1999. First Rhode Islander to earn ARRL BPL medallion for message handling. Reported in The Providence Journal and in QCWA Journal, Summer 1999.

YOUNG, Frank R. 1015-V, W6OPQ, Benicia, CA. No date or details. Reported by wife.

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.

----- O -----

**Member Correspondence -
From Page 12**

We had the pleasure of a visit from Bill Breniman and Ruth a few years back and he and I have been close for all these years. I spoke to him the day after Ruth died and was very sorry for him and at age 98. Gee, I'm only 87, married 66 years.

One of the things I am writing for is the notice of the passing of one of our very faithful luncheon attendees and members. Francis Perrins W7EJW #4444-V who passed away last Dec 4th. I sent a note in to you but you may not have received it. He had only one arm and his wife drove him to the luncheons. I do not know much of his history but she told me that he did go to sea quite a bit. She mentioned one ship, the COLUMBIA, Alaska SS Co. He was a very faithful attendee. I do not know what he died from.

Our chapter lunch last October was affected by the burial ceremonies for Earl Thoms W7DJ, a veteran. Many went to the services prior to our meeting. He was even famous as being one of a very few who were called to San Francisco to celebrate being a survivor of the 1906 disaster in San Francisco.

I am trying to get back on schedule after losing my XYL. I take part in all the nets.

Good Luck with your efforts..

73 Don Newman

SOWP 58-SGP, W7CO

Coast Station KOK Operations in the 60's, 70's, 80's.

by Ben Russell

SOWP 1853-V, N6SL

I lived in Southern California from 1951 to 1978 and visited KOK several times. At that time the bulk of marine ship to shore written traffic was on CW and in the Southern California area there were two commercial marine telegraph stations - KOK and KSE. The intense competition between these two stations caused them to keep an excellent watch for weak signals on 500 kHz. If one station missed a call on 500 kHz, the other station would call someone on his traffic list in an effort to get the message intended for the other station. KOK installed a special receiving loop for 500 kHz which favored the ships up and down the Pacific coast. The heterodynes between broadcast stations on 570 and 1070 kHz make receiving weak signals very difficult. The art of "stealing traffic" became highly honed by operators at KSE and KOK.

KOK had 7.5 KW into a 300 foot vertical, a backup 1 KW emergency transmitter, on 500 kHz, and 3 KW transmitters/excitors on 6, 8, 12, 16 and 22 MHz. Two power amplifiers (about 20 KW) with water cooled tubes and tank circuits which were used on 12 and 16 MHz during the day and the 16 MHz amplifier was switched to 8 MHz at night. A 20 KW on 8590 with a center fed double extended ZEPP at 90 feet produced a great signal to the tip of South America and most of the Pacific ocean. All transmitting HF antennas were rigged between 90 foot poles and fed with open wire transmission lines. The station was in the middle of a group of dairy farms. As tracts of houses were constructed nearby, many residents would come out to the station to blame any poor

TV reception or TVI on the KOK operation.

Receiving antennas were located about 1000 feet away and consisted of dipoles at 90 feet. To receive the HF bands, a group of crystal converters were used with output on about 2.7 MHz. This range was tuned with RCA AR-88 receivers which permitted the operator to scan the calling bands on several bands at one time. Generally H/F was in one ear and 500 kHz was in the other ear using split phones. When a ship was heard the converters on other bands would be turned off to minimize noise and QRM.

In 1960 coast stations were permitted to send continuous traffic lists. So when traffic was cleared, the operator would cut the call from the tape. These endless tapes were used as the CW "wheel" to permit ships to tune in and find the best band. If a ship sent a message to be delivered in the Los Angeles area, it would be typed on message blanks and phoned to the addressee. Traffic out of the area was put on a model 15 printer which was connected to Western Union in downtown Los Angeles. The operator would copy traffic direct on the printer but had to change the message preamble in his head from the ship format to the WU format. OBS or weather messages were typed directly on another printer where a tape would be punched. When a group of OBS messages had been received, they would be forwarded to the NWS at one time.

The operators at KOK had to monitor up to 4 HF frequencies and 500 kHz at all times to receive traffic, answer the phone, and run into the back room to tune big transmitters, tune amplifiers, stop cooling water leaks, and even answer 500 kHz calls from the transmitter room. There were test keys in the transmitter room on each transmitter plus 500 kHz was on loud

speakers. So if a ship called while the operator was changing the big amplifier from 16 to 8 MHz, he would answer from the transmitter room and then run to the operating position in the next room to handle the traffic. During week days KOK had two operators on duty during the day and evening and a single operator from midnight to 8 A.M. Each shift was 8 hours long and "breaks" were made during traffic lists, etc. The operators could recognize the fists of many of the calling stations before they signed and were able to copy accurately some extremely questionable fists. Coast station operators had to copy a great variety of notes at speeds from 10 to 40 wpm. In the late 50's and early 60's nearly all sending was done using straight keys, bugs and sideswipers. The electronic keyers and keyboards had not become popular yet. One of the best bug fists on the West coast was Herman Friend who worked rotating shifts filling in days off of the other operators.

KOK went off the air in the mid 80's because their lease expired and the cost of renewing it greatly exceeded the possible revenues that could be generated by declining traffic.

----- O -----

QRD to a new QTH?

Please let us know...

Before You Go!

to: Exec. Sec. Waldo T. Boyd

P.O. Box 86

Geyserville, CA 95441

**" HOYE EL BARCO
SEÑOR: TRA-BA-JO TRA-
BA-JO..."**

**(Listen to the ship mister: work
work work...)**

by Urbano Cavina

SOWP 4774-M, I4YTE

These were the words used by the "gallego" ship's boy, to imitate the monotonous and incessant panting-puffing, rhythmically stressed by the big funnel painted with the colours of the Charter Company; the Black Star Line.

At dawn M/V Activity/HOWZ after having stopped one day in Las Palmas for bunkering, resumed her journey out to sea. Cautious and dignified like a bourgeois old lady, she headed due to south. She was coming from London with a mixed cargo bound for West and Southern African ports. She would receive by radio the ports call, from time to time during the voyage. This was the usual procedure for a "going-in-search-tramp" that she was.

As I used to do every morning when at sea, I shunted the radio time signal coming from the Paris Scientific Observatory for 0600 hrs into the chart-room. After an accurate winding up I reported the slight timetable alteration in the small correction book enclosed in the protection case of the delicate chronometer. A real technical jewel, supported by gimbals against ship movements and vibrations, also protected by isothermal box to isolate it as much as possible from external general influences.

Back in the radio station, I wound up and checked the elegant prominently displayed brass clock. I used to do it with ritual gestures because I was greatly fascinated by it. Perennially regulated on GMT, it's white clock face was "decorated" by red bars, to

use as radio alarm reference, and red marked silence periods (SP) for the radio telegraphic service (minutes of silence were 15 to 18 and 45 to 48 each hour). To me it was more an indispensable Sparks' (radioofficer) collaborator than a simple working instrument.

At eight o' clock I took service on 500 KHz listening particularly for the first SP, in case of any soccour (SOS) or emergency call (XXX). It was all quiet.

At the 19th minute, end of first SP, Dakar radio sent the urgent signal for general messages (TTT) preceding the warning to ships and weather forecast (WX), asking the ship on watch to listen on his work frequency. The sea was calm and the forecast very nice too.

A few minutes later I transmitted to Dakar radio our "transit" (TR) which was composed by: ship's name and position, name of both ports of provenience and destination, and the forecast executive-time-arrival; in code all resumed in : "ORA, QTH, FM, BND and ETA". It was a good habit (not compulsory) to inform MF coastal stations of your presence when the ship was entering into their range of service. With an eye on the watch to keep listening for SP's on 500 KHz, I moved on to HF.

That day, unexpectedly, although the sky was cloudless, the wind and sea were rough. According to the Captain, such a rough sea was very strange because we were in a characteristic zone of sea that for hundreds of years, had terrorised seamen of sailing vessels for it's deadly calm. Rolling and pitching was provoking shakes and heeling to the ship. The wind and rough sea noise, were breaking that monotonous "TRA-BA-JO TRA-BA-JO..." which with calm seas would have sounded like a tedious lullaby. This was

the reason I accepted this occurrence with pleasure.

Naturally, it was not well accepted by the Captain because of the reduced ship's speed. He could see no reason for what was going on. He asked me for some more WX reports to compare with the one of Dakar radio, but it was too late. I could have asked around nearby ships, but I preferred to wait for the Atlantic general report later.

I pointed out to the assistant boy waiter who was tidying up my cabin, that I would have to dine at the second sitting at 13.00 hrs, for by that time I would be free from the scheduled radiocontact on HF with Romaradio/IAR, Bernaradio/HEB and Portishead-radio/GKJ, the countries where ship-owner's and charter's offices reside. Also I would have contacted the same HF stations, in the early afternoon, to give them our "QTH at noon". It was a daily compulsory duty to do, just after the Captain and Deck Officers (Cadet included, in competition with them) had calculated the midday ship's position with the sextant sighting.

As I expected, that was all done in good time. I switched off the radio, turned on the auto alarm, and shortly I got to my seat at one of three hexagonal tables ready for dinner. I noted that the fiddles were set to stop things rolling off the tables.

We were talking of nothing in particular, when the waiter entered with the soup tureen full of chickpea soup. As soon as the Captain realised it, he sprang to his feet "now I understand why!" he screamed out, and seizing the soup tureen from the waiter's harms, he strode furiously towards the kitchen. It all happened quickly, and I was still more surprised when I was told

(continued next page)

" HOYE EL BARCO SENOR:
TRA-BA-JO TRA-BA-JO..." -
From Page 15

still more surprised when I was told that, before the terrified cook's eyes, he ordered the young waiter to throw the chickpeas overboard.

In this traumatic manner, I learnt of the superstition common to many seamen when at sea "chickpeas bring rough seas".

Thinking about it again it is not such a surprise, as it is well known that seamen living close to natural events unforeseen and mysterious, more than other men, perceive powers hidden beyond the paltry presumptions of human intellect. So it is fully understandable if they try to evoke with superstitious spells, that which other mortals may invoke through prayer.

It was for this reason, maybe, that just after the chickpea episode, the rough sea ...abated.

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The Editor's Corner

This issue of The World Wireless Beacon continues with the past experiences of our members. The lead article "A Voyage to Freetown" by John McKinney shares with us an adventure of a shipboard Sparks of almost 60 years ago. Letters from our members continue to share a bit of their personal experiences. Some of these letters have questions about a project or research that is being worked on by a member and help is being requested. Hopefully these request can be filled to provide written records for the future generations.

This issue also announces part of our future. Executive Secretary Waldo Boyd in his column informs us of our new domain name (www.sowp.org) on the World Wide Web which is part of the Internet. I hope you have the opportunity to keep in touch with this site often. This is an expansion of your organization serving you.

Your continued comments and suggestions are always welcome to share with the members.

Earl Wilson

SOWP 2841-M. K6GPB

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