

**CARL & BILLIE LINDH  
PORTERVILLE, CA 93257-1887**

26 July 1999

Dear Walt,

Here is the rest of the things from my father's papers. I have separated the pictures into envelopes hoping it will make it easier for you. The book that is enclosed was a gift from my sister Carolyn Ball to our father. On the first page is a note from her to our father. I am not sure, but think the lettering on the inside of the front cover telling about two of his ships was done by my father.

There is also enclosed a copy of letter written to my sister, Alison L. Raleigh, now deceased. This is a letter from an old friend, and fellow Radiomarine employee, of my father, Mr Harvey Butt. He included in the letter a page from one of the SOWP publications listing some CQD and SOS veterans. Until I saw this, I did not know Mr Butt had been a radio operator, and one that was torpedoed, at that. He may be one of the people in the 8 X 10 photo you already have of my father and two unidentified men with a piece of Radiomarine gear.

Writing the anecdotes about my father has brought back a lot of memories. He some times took me with him on board ships, and to KPH. I think back to what was state of the art electronics at that time, and compare it to the PC I am using to write this letter, and keep track of so many things. If he was alive today, Charley Lindh would be amazed at the things happening with electronics, and the present roll of electronics on board ships.

The biography you suggested is in a separate envelope. I made it in the form of a letter to you. I am sure there are things that I have left out. This is because of a faulty memory, which belongs to me.

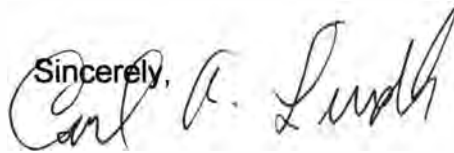
I wonder what Charlie Lindh would think of the newspaper clipping I have enclosed about the QRT for Station KFS. If Mr Dalton Bergfeldt is not a member, I will be happy to track him down so that he can be signed up. The photos appear to be very good. You may very well be able to obtain enlargements of these photos from the San Francisco Examiner, if you do not already have some.



There should be some kind of a memorial to these now dead stations, and to the people who stood the watches at sea. (I was going to say "lonely watches". However, I have heard of many friendships, and arguments, started over the radio.)

Please look upon this letter like what we used to call, in law enforcement, an "atta boy" letter. You should be very proud of what you are doing to preserve the memory of the people that really made the invention of radio meaningful. These people that sailed as operators, and manned the stations on shore were all real heroes. I think there are very few people today who recognize the contribution they made to the advancement of electronics, maritime safety, and the United States being so strong in foreign trade.

Thank you for all that you are doing in the memory of these many now silent keys.

Sincerely,  


July 26, 1999

Dear Mr Boyd,

My sister, Carolyn Ball, you, Waldo T. Boyd, of the Society of Wireless Pioneers, and some other people asked me to write a short history of my father. I cannot do this properly because he seldom talked about either himself, or his adventures. He certainly had many adventures; he just did not talk about them very often. What I have done is write down some of the anecdotes he told me from time to time.

My father was born Karl Agne Ragnwald Lindh May 6, 1887, in Vesterwik, Sweden. He said very little about his early life.

His father died in about 1894. One or more of Karl Agne's older brothers decided Karl Agne should be a Swedish Navy officer. During this training he was assigned to a training vessel. There is a photo of him and a number of what must be other very young trainees on board the training vessel, which was a sailing ship, or "windjammer".

Karl Agne either did not like being in the Navy, or did not like being told that he should be in the Navy. He left the Navy, and sailed on a collier, that was another windjammer. This may have been the Barque Princess Wilhelmina. In his papers there was a letter from the captain of the Princess Wilhelmina saying Agne Lindh had sailed as an ordinary seaman, and was sober and dependable. There is also a discharge from the ship, written in Swedish. I am told the discharge says essentially the same thing.

Next Karl Agne decided to sign on, and sail on a British ship. He thought he could learn to speak English faster, this way. His family was very upset with him. Not only was it a British ship, but the ship was to stop in San Francisco. They did not think he should go to such a sinful place as San Francisco. They were sure they would never see him again, if he did.

He did sail on this ship, however, probably as ordinary seaman. We do not know the name of this ship. Only that she was of British registry, and was a "windjammer".

From what I have been told, the ship was not a very happy one. During the trip, a group of seamen went aft to complain to the captain about food. They were particularly upset about insects in the bread. Their complaints fell upon unsympathetic ears. The captain told them they should be thankful for the insects, as that was the only fresh meat they would get on this trip.

The captain had his wife on board. One of Karl Agne's duties was to fill the water tank that was above the lady's bath. He did this each day.

The ship rounded Cape Horn, and arrived in San Francisco shortly after the earthquake and fire of 1906. There were probably other stops along the way. They were never mentioned, however.

In the ship's load were a number of barrels of whisky for delivery to San Francisco. The longshoremen unloading the ship reported one barrel of whisky to be missing from the load. They searched the ship. Evidently some authorities also came on board to look for the missing barrel of whisky. Even they could not locate the missing barrel. Eventually it was decided that one barrel of whisky had just not been loaded.

Some time while all of this was going on, the boatswain told Karl Agne that he should not fill the water tank for the lady's bath on this day. Karl Agne told the boatswain that he already had filled the tank, and it had taken a lot less water than usual. The boatswain just smiled at this, and said nothing.

The ship sailed soon after that. When they were at sea, they were given a call to "splice the main brace". This was the only time that call was given on the trip.

There was a carpenter, or "Chips", on board who asked the captain to buy tools for him at every port. The captain always did buy the tools. He apparently figured that "Chips" might jump ship, yet he would not be able to carry all the new tools with him.

In Tacoma while Karl Agne was walking down the street, a voice called out, asking him if he was Sten Lindh. He answered that he was Sten's brother, Karl Agne.

The man was Karl Ostlund, and had known Sten Lindh in Sweden. Karl Ostlund worked for the Pierce County Engineer. Karl Ostlund took Karl Agne home to meet his wife, Hilda Marian. At some time, or another, he introduced Karl Agne to Miss Zella Maud Turner, who also worked in the Pierce County Engineer's office.

During this time in port, "Chips" was working on shore. Each morning he took his tool box ashore. Each evening he brought it back. One evening neither he, nor the tool box returned to the ship. The captain went immediately to inventory the carpenter tools. Every tool was missing. It was finally figured out the carpenter took his box full of tools ashore each morning, then brought the box back, empty, each evening. Chips jumped ship, and took with him many very good carpenter tools.

There is no discharge from a British ship, in Tacoma, in Karl Agne's papers. He did leave the ship in Tacoma, however. Miss Zella Turner said later in life she would have married Karl Agne sooner, except that Hilda Marian Ostlund pushed the idea of marriage to this seaman so hard. We do not know if Miss Turner figured in to why Karl Agne left the British ship. If Karl Agne did indeed jump ship, it would mean that Karl Agne entered the country as an illegal alien.

In any event, Karl Agne signed on to an American Hawaiian Steam Ship Line ship, possibly the SS Mexican. He made some trips between Tacoma and Hawaii, then signed off the ship in Hawaii. He signed off as quartermaster, and the captain wrote that he was the best helmsman he ever had.

Some time between when he was on the British ship and when he was in Hawaii, Karl Agne started calling himself Charles Agne. Some time later, we do not know exactly when, he dropped the third name Ragnwald, altogether. He said, later in life, that he changed his name to make it sound more American.

Charles Agne found work on a ranch on the Island of Molokai. He told about riding horses to the top of the cliff overlooking Kalawao, the leper colony founded by Father Damien. He also told of a visitor to the ranch. The cowboys put burrs under the saddle of the horse the visitor was to ride. The horse was so upset it just froze, and did not either move, or buck.

Charles Agne saw an ad in a newspaper for a person to learn radio. He answered the ad, and learned radio there in Hawaii. There are photos in his album of radio station KHK. There are also photos of people breaking up rocks to be used in concrete to anchor the guy wires for the antenna masts. Perhaps this was a part of the radio education.

Charles Agne became a United States citizen while he was living in Hawaii.

Charles Agne grew tired of Hawaii. He traveled to San Francisco. He probably signed on to a ship to do so. Some friends in San Francisco told him he did not look well. He always said this was because Hawaii has no proper seasons. He, as a Swede, he often said, needed proper seasons.

He signed on to a ship bound for Alaska. We have no idea what kind of a ship this was. In his albums there are photos of ships next to the ice in Alaska. It may have been a schooner shown in some of his pictures. There is also a picture, however, of a square rigged ship in the ice and snow of Alaska. He said he was all recovered when the ship returned to the Lower 48, however.

Some time in here, around 1917, Charles Agne enlisted in the United States Navy. He traveled through Tacoma to the East Coast where he was assigned to the USS Von Steuben, a troopship. The ship sailed between the East Coast of the United States and France, carrying troops. He eventually became a Chief Petty Officer in charge of the radio section of the Von Steuben.

A watch he was required to stand in port was watching the coal being taken on board in chutes for the bunkers. He was supposed to watch for bombs that might come in mixed in with the coal. He said the coal was moving so fast and in such a large quantity, no one could have seen a bomb, let alone stopped the flow to remove an explosive.

Miss Zella Maud Turner traveled from Tacoma to the East Coast, where she became Mrs Charles Agne Lindh. They were married in October of 1918, by a Marine Corps Chaplain.

After his discharge from the United States Navy, Charles Agne sailed on several ships as radioman. He was on the SS Congress when it burned off Coos Bay, Oregon.

There are several pictures of this fire in his photo albums. I do not think he was the person who took the photos. The captain is the last to leave the ship at a time like this, and the radio operator would leave either with, or just before the captain. The radio operator was kept quite busy on board a ship in distress.

He sailed on the Great Northern. He sailed on Matson ships, also. He sailed on one of the SS Lurlines. He eventually went to work for Radiomarine Corporation. Radiomarine was a branch of RCA.

During the early 1930's Charles Agne was an operator at radio station KPH, for Radiomarine, located at Marshall, California, on the coast, in Marin County. He drove there from Albany, California, each morning. He left the house at about 4:00 AM, took a ferry boat from Richmond, California to Marin County, then drove on to Marshall. I do not remember what time he arrived home.

I do remember he bought himself a "bug" during this time. I remember him standing at the mantel in our living room, practicing with it for what seemed to me to be hours on end.

I remember one summer in about 1938 when he could not take time off for a vacation. The company was busy installing "auto alarms" on ships. These were alarms that would automatically sound whenever an SOS signal came in. He and I did take a week-end trip to Sequoie National Park for some trout fishing that summer.

Cargo ships usually carried only one operator, who was expected to stand by the radio at all times. I remember visiting some radio rooms on cargo ships. The radio man's bunk was in the radio room. Even so, from time to time they would miss SOS calls from nearby ships. These auto alarms were to awaken them if an SOS should come through while they were sleeping.

Charles Agne also set up exhibits at the San Francisco International Exposition, on Treasure Island, in 1939 and 1940. He really enjoyed doing this.

There was also a radio program in the late 1930's, each Sunday morning, called "The Magic Key". We never missed it. I do not remember what the program was about. I do remember the morse code coming from the "Magic Key", however.

During World War II Charles Agne was very busy getting proper radio gear on the ships being built on the West Coast. We in the family saw him only occasionally. Also, during World War II the U S Army offered commissions in the Signal Corps to some of the people who worked for RCA. Charles Agne thought this over, and talked to the family about it. He finally decided he would stay with Radiomarine, rather than take a commission in the Signal Corps. He later found out that those who had accepted the commissions had ended up in the Quartermaster Corps, rather than the Signal Corps.

When RADAR first became available to merchant vessels in the mid or late 1940's, Charley Lindh managed to install a Radiomarine RADAR on a passenger ferry traveling between Oakland and San Francisco. He took shipping people on board to demonstrate the RADAR. He particularly enjoyed having them watch the RADAR scope as the ship pulled in to the dock. He asked them to look up from the scope when they could no longer tell where the ship was in relationship to the dock. He enjoyed the look of surprise when they looked up and found the ship was within the dock, only feet from tying up.

Charley Lindh worked for Radiomarine until he retired. In the mid thirties he worked for them for a couple of years in Seattle, Washington. For the last couple of years before retiring, he worked for them in Boston, Massachusetts. The rest of the time he worked for Radiomarine at 16 First Street, in San Francisco, California.

After retiring from Radiomarine Charley Lindh had a few part time jobs. He had a job working at the Oakland ferry terminal. He also had a job in an ice cream store. Mostly, however, he was involved with the American Legion, Post 292, in Albany, California.

He returned to Sweden after having been gone for more than sixty years. Many of his family were still living. He was quite pleased that he could still get along in his native language.

Zella died, from cancer, in 1965. Charley Lindh continued living in Albany, California. He did manage to attend some retirement dinners for friends leaving Radiomarine. He also took a trip to visit me and my family when we were living on the Island of Saipan, in the Northern Mariana Islands. Eventually he gave up driving, but continued to make it on his own.

He fell and injured himself while riding a bus one day. After that he moved to a convalescent hospital. He eventually died there in May, 1977, just a few days before he would have attained the age of ninety.

Sincerely,  
