



Do You Know Any of Them?

By Russell A. Hanlon, W6KJ, 299-P (with light copyediting by Bob Rydzewski)

On 16 June 1917, twenty-seven boys from San Francisco departed for the U.S. Naval Radio School at Cambridge, Mass. The school occupied most of the buildings at the Harvard University. Several of the 27 were attending the Marconi Radio School which at that time was located in the so-called Call Building, which was located on New Montgomery Street. MacKenzie was in charge of the school; no doubt many of you old timers will remember "Mac", a fine little gentleman from New Zealand. A phone call to Mac from Lieut. Stevens who was, as I recall, Marine Superintendent for the Marconi Company located in the old Sheldon Building at 2nd and Market Streets. Lieut. Stevens was a Naval Reserve Officer. Mac was advised that if any students would be interested in going back to the Radio School at Harvard [he should] send them to his office and they could enlist in the Reserve. Several of the fellows, I being one of them, went to the old Sheldon Building and put our names on the dotted line.

In a matter of 2 weeks we were called to active duty and on our way. Boarding one of the Santa Fe ferries we shoved off for Pt. Richmond where we boarded the train. The 27 of us had a Pullman car to ourselves. In charge of this motley crowd was Chief Radio Electrician Allen C. Forbes, who by the way was the only man in uniform. Forbes was an old timer in the Navy and really knew his way around. To illustrate the fact [that] he knew his way around, while en route he telegraphed the 12th Naval District for permission to have our car side-tracked at Buffalo, NY. This was [so] that we might run up to Niagara Falls. Believe it or not, permission was granted.

On arriving at Buffalo some of us rented autos, others took passage on a local train. We were on our way to the Falls. The following day our car was coupled to the next train. Of course, we were on the Santa Fe only as far as Kansas City. From Kansas City we rode the Nickel Plate to Chicago and then the Pennsy to New York. From NY, we made our way to Commonwealth Pier in Boston, checked in, and [were] given a sea bag of clothes. Then on to "Harvard".

The course at the school was only about 4-months long, and then you were supposed to know everything a radio man should know. Even if you didn't, you were on your own from then on. On leaving the school of higher education (Ha, Ha) my orders read to report to the Receiving Ship at Norfolk, Va. After a short stay at Norfolk I was ordered to the U.S.S. South Carolina, a Battle wagon at anchor in the York River along with other ships of the fleet. This duty was for training purposes such as standing watches as a Stricker. After a few weeks I proceeded to Newport News to the U.S.S. Munindies, one of the old Munson S.S. company's freighters of 5000 tons. She was lying in the stream just off the Newport Shipbuilding Company yards. She was spanking new and our "shakedown" cruise was to France in a convoy carrying ammunition guns, field pieces, and food for the troops in France. The entire crew were Regular or Reserve officers and men, and consisted of about 75. Three radio men instead of the usual 1 on a freighter of this tonnage. In the picture there are several of the boys whose names I have forgotten as a lot of water has gone under the bridge since 1917.

73,

Russ Hanlon, W6KJ



U.S. NAVAL RADIO SCHOOL
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
JUNE 1917.

The gang from S.F.

27

#3, Fitzpatrick; #6, Harold Lee; #7, Ans. Bilger; #9, Fish; #11, Vern. Clark; #13, Thomas ?; #14, Russ. Hanlon; #15, Baker; #16 Ray Woodall; #17, Wheeler; #18 McDonald; #19, Geo. Bennett; #20, "Doc" Waters; #21, Costa; #23 Orin Mock; #24, Allen C. Forbes (chief); #25, Archie Short; #26, Russ. Livesay; #27, Grimes. All others unidentified. Photo courtesy of Lt. Russell A. Hanlon.