The official newsletter of the Morsecodians Fraternity of Western Australia (Inc.)

Editor: Larry Rice

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Morsecodians
Keeping Morse-code Alive

NEXT MEETING
The Annual General meeting
The Italian Club
18th October 2010 10 am
Please note the time and date for our next get-together. Members and non-members welcome.
MORE DETAILS ON PAGE 6.

ALBANY TELEGRAPH OFFICE 1877

Thanks to API, our sponsor.
Some of our readers may have seen an article in the West Australian of April 5th 2010 under the 'Can You Help' notices requesting information about the Dutch-Javanese radio group that monitored Japanese radio traffic from the Port Hotel in Carnarvon during WW.II. The following story explains the operation in some detail.

When the Japanese occupied Java and other Islands to the North of Australia during World War 2, they began a series of brain-washing propaganda broadcasts to the locals. These were transmitted in the Indonesian language on short range transmitters from Bandung, Surabaja, Surakarta and Batavia (now Djakarta). The Japanese did not think these broadcasts would extend beyond the range of the immediate vicinity islands.

However, by a strange quirk of fate and atmospheric conditions, they were being received in Broome, Western Australia and monitored by members of the Netherlands Armed Forces who were attached to the Netherlands Indies Government Information Service (NIGIS). These personnel, a Major and Four Lieutenants were not European Dutch, but who would now be known as Indonesian Nationals, and were familiar with the Indonesian language. These broadcasts were recorded, transcribed and taken to the Broome post office where PMG staff would transmit them by Morse code to the Perth Chief Telegraph Office. From there they were retransmitted to the Melbourne CTO and then passed to NIGIS Headquarters in Melbourne.

After a short time, it was found that radio reception was better and more consistent in Carnarvon and the operation was transferred there. Two rooms at a local hotel were taken over and used to house the radio and recording equipment while the aerials were set up in nearby mangrove swamps. It is most likely that none of the residents even noticed these, or if they did, had no idea what they were for. And so began a period of constant and discreet surveillance which was to last from 12th Dec. 1943 until 31st May 1945.

Because it was imperative that the Japanese did not learn they were being monitored, all Morse transmissions were over land lines to prevent interception. In the early months of the operation it was usual for these telegrams to be sent first to Perth and then repeated to Melbourne. And to avoid interfering with normal North West traffic, a special position was established in the Phonogram Section of the Perth Chief Telegraph Office. This was worked from Carnarvon by oscillator on a circuit imposed on a telephone line. Later however a direct circuit from Carnarvon to Melbourne was established, but this was after midnight when normal traffic was light. At that time the circuit would probably have been the longest direct Morse circuits in Australia.

In Melbourne, the telegrams were analysed and any relevant information contained in them was then sent to General MacArthur’s Headquarters. On several occasions very substantial information on Japanese troop movements was revealed and on at least one occasion, a consequent Allied Air Strike succeeded in causing a large number of enemy casualties including two very high ranking officers.

During the period of surveillance of these broadcasts, over one millions words were transmitted from Broome and Carnarvon to Melbourne. It was one of the many, but little known of, significant events in the history of Morse Telegraphy by the Post Office in Western Australia.

Many PMG Personnel were involved in this operation both in Western Australia and Victoria but those known to have been involved in W.A. are Brian Chugg (Broome), Keith Clark, Charlie Fane, Colin Hopkins and Reg Thomas (Carnarvon), John Meadowcroft and Colin Smith (CTO Perth).

Service: 12th December 1943—31st May 1945 to Netherlands Indies Government Information Service.

Total number of words transmitted: 1,013,902. Total amount of revenue derived therefrom: £4315-19-2d.
In October 1939, I married Norah Kathleen Bailey, my telephonist girl from the Williams Post Office. I was offered a small house on the edge of the Avon river near the bridge for five shillings a fortnight and we gathered some furniture from our parents and friends at Beverley Post Office. The soil near the river must have been extra good because I grew enough vegetables to supply all of Beverley.

The war with Germany began in September 1939. Perth began sending multiple long memo’s to all stations on the line with reference to ham radio operators, black out instructions, covering hoods over vehicle headlights etc and also alterations to the Post Office Guide also for phone technicians and linesmen etc. They included such as (A) (B) ..., punctuations, inverted commas, Pound signs and even fractions. This was foreign to just receiving ordinary telegrams, very tricky to a new chum telegraphist with crook handwriting and a fast jigger sending. Embarrassing to break which meant breaking all the other stations. Some of the memos took three or four forms to be posted up outside the P.O. notice boards. If I missed a word occasionally, I would ring Mr Chapman the Postmaster at Brookton and he helped me fill it in. Thank you old chappie wherever you are now.

Towards the end of 1940, I was transferred as Postal Clerk to Meekatharra. One of our baby girls was not well and Norah my wife said: "No Meekatharra". So I applied for the 1941 telegraph training class in Perth. Mr Webb the District Inspr at Narrogin thought he was helping me by changing the appointment to P.C. Bunbury. I advised him I thought it important to learn typing and advance further in telegraphy and after another morse exam I was accepted in the training class and met up with Clarrie Hutton again.

We found a small home to rent in Willis St Victoria Park. The trams were great going to and from the Perth GPO except we always had trouble trying to get our twin pram on them and struggle inside with a baby in each arm.

All of 1941 we went to school, back room of the 3rd floor. Half day alternating each week operating on the suburban morse lines, 95% sending and 5% receiving. Once a week after G.B. and a meal we had night classes until 9 pm—a long day.

Just before Christmas, we passed our final exams and became rostered telegraphists. I remember my first midnight to 6 AM shift. When I walked down the aisle to sign-on, passing line Nr 65 Broome calling with his –WHR–, Ernie Elliott who worked the midnight shift permanent told me to take BM’s WHR which I did. Very pleased I was. Also to work the Murray Multiplex systems and finish off press to the Kalgoorlie Miner on the old Teletype system.

There were many great telegraphists in the room over the war years. It was good to work with them even duplexing to the busier offices until the teleprinters –Creeds– took over.

Telegrams from soldiers stationed at military camps, the office of origin was always deleted and very few words in the text. Moora was a huge military station and we duplexed to Moora. Victoria Park was a very busy office so on pension days I worked the telegraph to relieve the PC’s for counter duty. Vic Park received well over 100 telegrams a day and in between I assisted on the counter with stamps and postal notes etc. The telegraph occupied most of my time. Every time I now pass the Vic Park PO I remember getting off the tram and passing through those front doors but how it has now changed inside.

*I still remember the call sign of every post-office in West Aust, and call them, who were on each line, from my dial-up set at home, but no-one answers me — I will keep trying.*

In one of the early war years, I was one of about 10 telegraphists selected to meet the two large ships transporting soldiers overseas. Bert Reardon was in charge. I remember it was a misty overcast morning and on the way out of the harbour, the ships were signalling by light morse. Bert could read it. I found it difficult as I had never experienced it before. Many of the soldiers had won money playing two-up, and many sent money to wives and mothers because we did a huge amount of money order and ordinary telegrams.
The Simplex Auto

Adjustment of the SIMPLEX AUTO

These machines, properly adjusted and competently handled, will carry as reliably as the firmest hand sending on all workable circuits, without the changing of any adjustment save that which regulates the speed. It is absolutely essential for the successful working of these machines that they be in perfect adjustment.

If your signals are not coming out clearly on your local sounder, do not conclude that your SIMPLEX AUTO has suddenly gone out of adjustment and endeavour to adjust it to your sounder. First check the adjustment of your SIMPLEX AUTO to see that it is in accordance with the standard settings (detailed below) and then adjust your relay and sounder. Every genuine SIMPLEX AUTO is accurately adjusted before leaving the factory and it is best not to tinker with the adjustments.

However should the operating table not be perfectly level, it may be necessary to slightly alter these adjustments.

As the dashes are not mechanically made by the machine, no particular adjustment for them is necessary. Regulate the gap between the dash contact points to suit your “touch”.

There is only one correct adjustment for the dot contact points of the SIMPLEX AUTO and whether your line is three miles long or three thousand miles long.

THIS ADJUSTMENT MUST ON NO ACCOUNT BE VARIED.

A general principle- Changing the rate of vibration varies the length of both dot and space proportionately, while changing the relation of the dot contact points increases one at the expense of the other. (In this statement the word “space” refers to the spaces mechanically made by the machine in a stream of dots).

LIGHT SIGNALS.

If a receiving operator states that the signals are light and the circuit cannot be improved, the remedy is to lengthen the dots by reducing the speed of vibration, not to change the relation of the dot contact points.

HEAVY SIGNALS.

If a receiving operator states that the signals are too heavy and the circuit cannot be improved, the remedy is identically the same as in (1), namely, reducing the speed of vibration, as that will increase the length of the spaces.

ADJUSTMENT OF DOT CONTACT.

The correct position for the dot contact points is as follows:- When the handle is slowly pressed across to the right the vibrator comes to a standstill in the central position of its normal swing. Turn the dot contact adjustment screw until the points just meet. (The circuit should close when the points meet).

To regulate the speed of the dots, slide the weight along the bar of the vibrator. It is not necessary to unscrew the grub screw. Do not vary any of the other adjustments.

The vibrator must vibrate without bumping against the releasing arm. If it is allowed to bump a false dot will be the result. See that there is sufficient clearance to prevent this. Should it bump, give the arm a little more play by slightly unscrewing the outside lock-nut and screw situated to the left of the lever. The inside nut is merely for varying the spring tension on the dot side of the lever. The lever of the P.M.G. model is jointed to allow the handle to be adjusted to a comfortable working height. Adjust the tension springs so that the touch of the lever handle feels best.

KEEP THE CONTACT POINTS CLEAN.

OIL THE MOVING PARTS OCCASIONALLY WITH SEWING MACHINE OIL.
HamFest
Cyril Jackson Sports Centre Ashfield 1st August 2010

In attendance: Ian Darroch, Jack McShane, Ron Tyler and Huck Fathers.

Received from John Sparkes VK6IX Secretary Northern Corridor Radio Group Inc.

"On behalf of the Committee and Members of the NCRG Inc. I want to thank your team for putting on such a great display at HAMFEST 2010. I very much enjoyed having my telegram sent the old fashioned way as did many others. Please pass this on to all your members for me. We hope to see you there again next year and in the meantime, we look forward to a fruitful association to establish a Morse display and museum at Whiteman Park.

All the very best to you and all your members. Best regards, John Sparkes VK6IX Secretary NCRG Inc."

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**TELEGRAPH CODE.**

**NOTICE TO OFFICERS.**


The phrases are arranged alphabetically according to the most important word in each. For instance, phrases relating to telephone are included under "Telephone" in cases where the word "telephone" is mentioned. Other phrases affecting telegrams will be found in alphabetical order according to the principal word such as "delay", "reply paid", etc. In some cases a phrase is duplicated under another letter and in such cases the code word is placed in brackets after the phrase. For instance, under the heading "CASH" the phrase to which the code word "CASH" relates appears also under the heading "REMITTANCE" with the same code word in brackets, thus (CASH).

In coding phrases which include blanks, the code word is to be written first, followed by the blanks filled in proper order:

Example—Account No.—(630) for—(630) in favour of—(J. Smith) forward to you by payment on—(16th July). "Reply at once cease delay in returning to Head Office" is to be written—"Aur 500 120 J. Smith 16th July."

When a telegram is sent in reply to one in which information has been asked for by means of a code word, the same code word should be used, followed by the information asked for, in cases where the reply phrase has not been allotted a special code word; example—

Telegram received—"Addr."

Reply telegram—"The 2nd Addr. Yrs." (Your telegram 2nd instant applicant agrees to pay the cost of alteration).

Where portion of a phrase appears in square brackets [ ] the intention is that such portion is an alternative reading.

This book is to be kept up to date in accordance with printed notices of amendment which will be issued from time to time.

These Code Words are not to be used in Letters.

H. P. BROWN, Director-General.

Melbourne, 1894.
VALE  Albert John Leslie Meadowcroft.  
18th December 1924—5th September 2010

John commenced his telegraph career as Telegraph Messenger North Perth on 5th Feb 1940. Although not yet qualified, John first worked morse lines 16th October 1940, sending his first telegram by morse from North Perth to Perth CTO under supervision. He passed his 20wpm test on 21st May 1941, attending Telegraphist-in-Training class 29th July 1941, qualifying as Telegraphist January 1942 and eventually appointed to vacancy October 1943. During 1944, 45, 46 he qualified additionally as Postal Clerk and for various periods was provided on loan for relief duties to Postal Services Division—metro and country relief. In 1947 he did a 6-month exchange of duties with a Telegraphist from Sydney CTO. In March 1958 he was promoted to Traffic Officer (Telegraphs). During 1960-62 he was provided on loan as Instructor Training School for Telegraphists, Postal Clerks and Traffic Officers Perth.

John studied German to enable him to apply for a position within the Australian Immigration Dept but was unsuccessful, however he kept up his German speaking ability and regularly took holidays in Germany. During the period Sept. 1965-1972 he spent 7 years as Traffic Officer at PMG HQ Melbourne, in the latter part of 1972 he was promoted Manager CTO Perth. He retired as Manager Administrative area in Telecom Australia January 1985. He was an avid stamp collector and never adapted to a jigger, using a straight key for the whole of his career. Allan Greenslade remembers John was brought in to work at Victoria Park on pension days when payments were made in cash. Alex Grant in his memoirs wondered if John remembered being sent to Moora, a huge military station during the war. John was our current Vice-President.  

RIP John

COMING EVENTS 2010

Perth Royal Show 25th Sept to 2nd October
Gidgegannup Show 30th October
Railfest 31st October  Bassendean

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Members are reminded that our meeting on October 18th will be preceded by the Fraternity’s AGM, requiring adoption of the audited financial report for the year ended 30/06/2010 and election of officials for the ensuing year—i.e.: a President, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer and Assistant Secretary.

In this regard, members should note that our previous highly esteemed Vice-President is sadly no longer with us and therefore not available for re-election.

Nominations for the various positions will be accepted by the Returning Officer, c/o the Secretary, up until the calling of the election at the AGM.