

CQ de WA2LQO

Seventy Two Years: 1944 -2016

The official independent voice of the Grumman Amateur Radio Club.

JUNE 2016 VOLUME 89 NUMBER 6

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FIELD DAY JUNE 24 – 25 (See president’s note)

How Ham Radio Prepared Me to Become an Engineer

by Bob Wexelbaum, W2ILP

(Continued from May 2016)

You may remember the ham named Roy who had helped me learn about RTTY. Well during the week after the Florida trip I went to visit Roy, on the upstairs floor of our barracks where he bunked, to ask him a technical question. He wasn't there, so I asked a GI who had bunked near him, "Where is Roy?" "I don't know who the heck Roy is but he isn't what you think he is," said his former bunk mate. Roy's story had been kind of fishy. He claimed to be a degreed EE who had been drafted, but how could he have been drafted? Roy was over the height limit that was required to be physically classified 1-A. There is a limit as to how tall or how short a GI could be and Roy had exceeded the height limit by more than a few inches. He would have been exempt. So what was Roy? I never found out exactly, but I did remember that Roy had asked me many questions about how I had learned about Ham Radio. Roy was especially interested when I spoke about Lenny Nachemov, W2DUP, the Bronx ARRL EC, and if I thought that Lenny might be a Soviet spy. He also asked about CCNY and my non-ham Bronx friends as well as my mother's relatives in England. At the time I had not thought that Roy was doing more than making conversation, but now I connected the dots and I believed that Roy may have been planted to make inquiries that might not have been answered as truthfully, if he hadn't gained my confidence. I learned later that my profile had singled me out to possibly be a Communist Spy due to many similarities that I had with Julius Rosenberg. More about that next month.

Now I'll tell about the week-end trip that I took to Richmond, VA, with 10 or more Jewish signal school students, who were not hams and not all preparing to be Field Radio Repairman. I had been invited to join them, on a Greyhound bus from Camp Gordon, by the soldier who threw me out of my bunk for prattling too much when he wanted to sleep. The trip to Silver Springs had been made in civilian clothes, but the Jewish guy told me to come in my full dress Army uniform. One of the guys who was from VA said that we could get more discounts and better treatment if we were recognized as soldiers. This turned out to be very true. We were able to register for three rooms at a large hotel at a very low price. One of the rooms had a fully equipped kitchen. We decided to avoid costly restaurants by cooking our own meals and snacks. I was chosen to be one of the cooks when I told them that I had had some experience cooking at home. We went out to buy food to stock the kitchen, and found there were many things you could easily buy in NY that were not available in VA. Then the group split up. Most of the guys wanted to go off on their own. Some went to a liquor store to buy alcoholic beverages. I did not want to drink booze at that time. That was because I had once gotten sick from drinking too much in The Bronx. As most young kids mature, it takes time to learn what their drinking limit may be and the early experience of nausea and vomiting can lead, at least temporarily, to refusal to experiment when in uncharted territory. As I walked alone down a main street, I found myself being hugged and kissed on my lips by an elderly woman! She said in a sweet southern voice, "Thank you for your service to our nation. God bless you." Then she quietly slipped away from my arms. At first I thought that she might have been a prostitute but she definitely was not. She apparently was simply a soldier fan. If she had known that I was a Yankee I don't know if she would have kissed me, because there were still folks who had remembered the burning of Richmond during the Civil War and might only want to honor Confederate soldiers. I had never

seen anyone who would honor people in uniform in that way elsewhere....I'll take that back...because years later when I went out in London, England with the Navy crew of the Lockheed P-3 aircraft a strange old woman followed one of the Sonar operators. She grabbed and kissed his rear collar flap. The collar flaps evolved from the time when sailors tarred their hair and the flaps protected the rest of their uniforms from tar drips. Flaps became a part of the official navy uniforms of many nations, even when they were no longer needed and when sailors were no longer called tars. W.S. Gilbert brought back the word "tar" in the operetta "Pinafore" probably because it is easier to find words that rhyme with "tar" than with "sailor". I was told later by my British relatives that there was an old superstition that kissing a tar's collar flap would bring one good luck. British hams that I communicated with later were not aware of any flap superstition. Now back to VA. We Jewish GIs all attended a Jewish Reformed Temple where there was a community center in the basement. We had hoped that it would be like a USO. It was unlike any conservative synagogue that I had attended in the Bronx. Like the Jewish centers elsewhere, coffee or tea and bagels were served, however there was a different kind of sing-along that included some Christian hymns and gospel and country music that would never be sung in a Bronx schull. There were only a few single young girls there. Not enough for all of us GIs. The girls were introduced to the GIs by typical yenta matchmakers that exist universally if only to attempt to keep Jews from marrying non-Jews. This seems to be a greater problem in areas where there are fewer eligible girls than boys. In The Bronx neighborhoods where I grew up, there were always more eligible Jewish girls than boys and less of a need for match-makers to introduce any girls that were not extremely ugly. At any rate, I didn't get the chance to converse with a girl at a private table for two in VA, as a few of the other GIs did, because there were not enough girls in the Temple basement for all of us. We finally returned frustrated to our hotel rooms. We cooked up a basically kosher dinner, which included a herring salad and Italian style spaghetti with tomato mushroom sauce and zucchinis. I drank Pepsi Cola and the others drank the booze or beer that they had bought for themselves. We all watched Black and White TV and continued drinking and snacking on the pretzels, chips and salted nuts that we had all bought as a group. One of the guys tipped the hotel elevator operator a dollar to get him to send "professional female entertainers" up to our rooms. I fell asleep in the room with the kitchen. The following morning I was one of the first to wake up. The guy who had tossed me out of my bunk at Camp Gordon also was an early riser, in spite of the fact that he was hung-over. He winked sarcastically saying that he didn't want to wake me up for the sexy orgy that was going on in one of our other rooms, because he was being more considerate than I had been.

I received my certificate of having been qualified in the Field Service Repair Course (1648) at The South Eastern Signal School dated 24 March 1954. It was signed by two Signal Corps Commanders and a Signal Corp Secretary. I also received a certificate of Honorary Membership in the Camp Gordon Radio Club dated 23 March 1954. As is their custom, the Radio Club officers grant Honorable Membership to all ham members who leave Tessa Tech. The certificate was signed by Club President W4BVE, Council Member W6JDO and Recorder W4CAW. All of them are now silent keys. Apparently they knew that I would be leaving before my School Completion Certificate was signed! I also received an order to proceed to my next military assignment by reporting at Fort Lewis, WA, by a specific date, for a tour of duty in the "Far East." I was given cash to pay for traveling, including leave time in NY, depending on how I opted to get to Fort Lewis. I decided to fly so as to maximize my leave time at home. The order said "Far East." I didn't know what that meant.. I was told that it could mean Japan, Korea or even French Indo-China. They didn't call Indo-China *Vietnam* in 1954 but I was told that some troops were already being sent there as "consultants." Frankly I was scared. I sent a letter by postal mail to the US Army Chief Signal Officer, Major General George I. Back. He had signed my MARS Station Certificate which had assigned my Ham Station W2ILP to use the call sign A2ILP. I hoped that I could get stationed in Japan rather than Korea. So I asked the General if he could help me get assigned to a large signal depot or a Mars station where I could serve the Signal Corp best by efficiently utilizing my technical experience. I'll tell you next month how the General responded.

PRESIDENT'S NOTE by ED GELLENDER, WB2EAV

The end of June features the high point of the yearly ham radio calendar – Field Day. This year it falls on June 25th and 26th when we participate, just like we have in the past few years, at Haypath Park in Old Bethpage. We start, as usual, Saturday 10AM. Take NY 135 to exit 9 and head east. The road immediately turns north, becomes Plainview Road, and goes 0.4 miles to Haypath Road. Turn right onto Haypath and proceed 0.8 miles to the park on the right (just before Old Bethpage Road).

Recently a number of small planes have crashed in this area, which is quite an upsetting turn of events. I mentioned in this column about a year or so ago when a plane crashed on the LIRR tracks in Bethpage while trying to make an emergency landing on a non-existent runway from the old Grumman Airport. Much more recently a plane broke up in the air over Syosset. The newest one upset me too, but in a different way. A 1944-vintage P-47 based at the American Airport Museum at Republic Airport in Farmingdale was on a publicity photo shoot over the Hudson River when it had a major problem and ditched in the river. Despite a wartime history of pilots ditching, bailing out, etc. this time something went terribly wrong and the pilot died.

Again, another tragic loss of life. But this one has an additional dimension that upsets me even further ... There are only a couple of P-47s left flying, and I really enjoy going to the airport to watch the old planes. It is like losing an old friend; this one is personal.

Ed WB2EAV

GRUMMAN AMATEUR RADIO CLUB MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING / EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 5/18 /2016

The meeting was called to order by Ed at 5:30 PM.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Ed, WB2EAV

Finances are in good shape.

REPEATER REPORT – Gordon, KB2UB

(unavailable at press time)

VE REPORT – Ed, WB2EAV

5 Applicants applied: 2 for Technician Exam, 2 For General Exam and 1 for Extra Exam. All Passed.

VEs present were: Ed, WB2EAV, Ken, KC2YRJ, George, WB2IKT, Karen, W2ABK

GARC NETS: 40 Meters: 7.289 MHz at 7:30 AM EST Sundays

Net Controller: Karen, W2ABK

2 Meters (repeaters) Thursdays: 146.745 MHz (-600 kHz) at 8:15 PM

145.330 MHz (-600 kHz) at 8:30 PM. Tone for both repeaters: 136.5 Hz.

GARC Net Controller Karen, W2ABK **ARES/RACES NETS: Mondays.**

MEETINGS

Board Meetings of the GARC are held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, starting at 5:30 PM they are combined with General Meetings that start at 6:15 PM, at the Ellsworth Allen Park in Farmingdale.

NEW BUSINESS

Ed is renewing the liability insurance for Field Day.

WEBSITE

The GARC web site can be found at <http://www.qsl.net/wa2lqo>. Webmaster is Pat Masterson, KE2LJ. Pictures of GARC activities, archives of newsletters, roster of members, and other information about the GARC may be found there. The membership roster has not been updated to delete Silent Keys and to enter new e-mail addresses for remaining members and friends.

RECENT CLOSINGS

BRIARCLIFFE COLLEGE of Bethpage and Patchogue is scheduled to close. This is of interest to us because for years we conducted our VE Sessions there in a building that was formerly Grumman property. In recent years, Ham Radio University has been held there every January, and various other groups, including IEEE, also have been meeting at BRYIARCLIFFE building.

A company that brews beer has shown interest in buying or leasing the Bethpage building. I don't know if they plan to bring in their own water, with the ongoing drinking water pollution scares with plumes endangering the aquifer. Bethpage Community Park is also being dug up to retrieve tanks that may contain tri-clor-ethaline.

DOWLING COLLEGE of Oakdale is closing, although there is some hope that it may still be taken over by a British college system. I received my MS in Education there. In order to meet the graduation requirements, I worked free as a student teacher of physics at the nearby LA SALLE MILITARY ACADEMY of Oakdale which has also closed. LA SALLE was a Private Catholic military high school for boys which had begun in Clauson's Point, Bronx, NY, where it ran a well-known ham station before moving to Oakdale. In order to increase enrollment it became co-ed and added K-12. LASALLE was unable to meet the NY State requirements for partial subsidies. One reason was that the older male students were carrying military ceremonial sabers which have not been permitted in any schools since 9/11. DOWLING and LA SALLE had foreign students from Central and South America, Japan and Korea which attended both. The two schools once had planned to merge but there were too many limitations that caused conflicts in government grants, etc. because of differing secular, military and religious requirements. DOWLING also ran a flying school at Shirley, LI (near Patchogue), which is also closing. I had originally hoped to teach avionics and give Commercial FCC exams there, but was unable to get hired, even after earning the Master's degree.

--w2ilp--

PUZZLE

This Month's question is:

Who was the first to accurately measure the diameter of the Earth?

- A. Plato
- B. Eratosthenes
- C. Aristarchos
- D. Copernicus

April's question was:--

What is a *bistable multivibrator* circuit?

- A. An AND gate
- B. An OR gate
- C. A flip-flop
- D. A clock

Answer: The correct answer is C. The wrong answer was erroneously printed in March 2016.

Lasts month's question was: -

What is a frequency counter?

- A. A frequency measuring device
- B. A frequency marker generator
- C. A device that determines whether or not a given frequency is in use
- D. A broadband white noise generator

Answer: The correct answer is; A

GARC Officers

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Newsletter

CQ de WA2LQO is published monthly by the Grumman Amateur Radio Club for its members and friends. Editor: Bob Wexelbaum, Retiree 631-499-2214 rwexelbaum@verizon.net. Contributing writers: All GARC members (we hope). To submit articles or ham equipment advertisements contact the editor. Articles will only be edited when permission is granted by the author.

GARC Webmaster

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GARC VE Exams

We normally proctor exams for all classes of ham licenses on the second Tuesday of each month, starting at 5:30 PM. The exams may be given at various locations. Ham Exams are – Technician: Element 2, General: Element 3, and Amateur Extra Class: Element 4. Time and location may be changed, and sessions may be cancelled if no applicants make appointments. The fee for 2016 is \$14. All applicants must pre-register with Ed Gellender wb2eav@yahoo.com. All new applicants should be aware that they must write their Social Security number on the application form if they have not gotten an FRN number. Applicant for an upgrade must bring both their present license and a photo copy of it. All applicants should bring picture ID such as a driver's license. Study material may be obtained from ARRL-VEC at <http://www.arrl.org>, W5YI-VEC at <http://www.W5YI.org> or other VECs. All VECs use and update the same Q&A pools.

Editorial

In the non-fiction auto-biography of my life in the U.S. Army Signal Corps I am now beginning to tell about subjects that I had previously tried to avoid. That is because I had made an oath to not discuss such matters either publically or privately. Now I will be writing about events that happened in 1954...That was 62 years ago. The details are no longer Military Secrets. The "cold war" with the USSR, as it had been is over. The old war planes are now obsolete. It is now far too late to be a whistle blower or another Snowden.

I can remember a time, as a kid during WW2, when I would sit on a stoop and discuss airplanes with other boys, who had bought little ten cent books, that showed pictures and details about the war planes and often bet on which ones were the fastest and most maneuverable. I can still remember the Curtis P-40, the Lockheed P-38, the Grumman Wildcat...and yes... the Republic P-47...as opposed to the Japanese wooden zero. The P-47 was the first all metal plane and the only plane with a four bladed propeller. I lost a contested bet about its top speed. It could make as much as 600 mph, but only when diving. Aircraft that fly that fast have never ditched safely. The Glen L Martin Company gave up on trying to land jet aircraft on the sea after losing the lives of several test pilots. It is impossible to ditch any aircraft, even in a calm sea-state, if it can't maintain stable flight while gliding at less than 350 mph.

--73 Bob W2ILP (Impossibly Landed Photoshoot?) -- I will stand corrected if anyone can tell me if a P-47 with a dead engine has ever landed or ditched without a fatality anywhere, unless the pilot had bailed out while at a reasonable altitude. I don't believe any jet fighter pilot has survived a crash without being ejected. I could be wrong.

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

Do Not Delay

A BOOK REPORT

I highly recommend that you all read a new book titled “Our Mathematical Universe – My Quest for the Ultimate Nature of Reality” by Max Tegmark. The author holds a PhD from the University of California, Berkley, and is a physics professor at MIT. Don’t let the title scare you. Professor Tegmark starts with a 4 year old toddler asking, “How big is the universe?” Perhaps you too have wondered but were afraid to ask. Most people are afraid the answer might be too difficult for them to understand, or might conflict with their faith in mythologies. Tegmark does not bother to explain conflicts with anything that is not real. He functions as a historian, and a teacher of fundamental physics, from the multi-universe of quantum theory to cosmology. He begins by telling when, who, and how the first accurate measurements were made of the size of the Earth, the distance to the Moon, the Sun, Planets, the Stars and the Galaxies. In my own opinion the Tegmark book is better than the books and TV documentaries that I have read and seen covering this same subject matter so that all may understand it, including those by Carl Sagan, Steven Hawking and Neil deGrasse Tyson, Tegmark gives little recognition to Isaac Asimov, except to mention him for writing about suggested laws that would prevent AI robots from becoming thinkers, with vicious minds of their own, as had been depicted in more than a few silly science fiction stories. Like Ed Whitman, Tegmark has been a great admirer of the late John Wheeler. He met Wheeler in 2004 at a conference in Copenhagen that he helped to organize. Until reading the Tegmark book, I did not know that Wheeler had worked with Niels Bohr and that it was Wheeler who coined the term *black hole* and had Feynman and Everett as grad students.

I am still reading this book and will have more to say about the subject of universal ultimate reality. Space does not permit complete coverage of this topic here. –W2ILP (Inspired Laws of Physics?)—Ultimate reality?