

# CQ de WA2LQO

Seventy Two Years: 1944 -2016

*The official independent voice of the Grumman Amateur Radio Club.*

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## **How Ham Radio Prepared Me to Become an Engineer**

**by Bob Wexelbaum, W2ILP**

*(Continued from March 2016)*

The recollections of my experiences at Camp Gordon, GA were not all negative, in spite of the fact that I was disappointed because my radio background led me to successfully complete the six month Field Radio Repair course in only one month, and as a result I did not get the usual promotion to Specialist. I did receive my official 1648 MOS certification, but was not invited to attend the graduation ceremony, and remained a Private E-2. So let me recount some positive events that I enjoyed while at Camp Gordon. It initially seemed to me that during WW2 Hams who enlisted or were drafted into military service were appreciated more than those who entered during the Korean 'police action.' During WW2 there was a documentary film, shown at local movie theaters that promoted Ham Radio operators and praised their value to the war effort. Boy Scout troops took it seriously and merit badges were issued to those "who were prepared...to do their duty for God and their country" as radiomen. There was an urgent need for those who could copy CW and for those who built their own gear and could troubleshoot military radios without lengthy training. Anyway, my limited experience at "tessy tech" with students and instructors had not prepared me for observing the many hams doing radio work overseas, because there were many Hams in the Army, Navy and Air Force who were appreciated as experts, as well as non-hams who graduated military schools with completion certificates and specialist ratings, but never became Signal Corpsmen. There were also many non-hams who had specialist experience as radio TV repairmen, or had worked in related entertainment, music, film, recording and broadcasting industries.

One hot morning everyone who wanted to go swimming was ordered to stop doing whatever they were doing at school or in the barracks and to pile onto some deuce-and-a-half trucks. (That is everyone who was a white Caucasian.) The trucks first stopped at the base PX so that those who didn't have bathing trunks could buy them. The (white) GIs were invited to go swimming in the Olympic-size pool at the world-famous Golf Course and Country Club of Augusta, GA. US Presidents and Congressmen, movie actors, and of course professional golfers played there (and more recently, Tiger Woods). We used lockers to change into our bathing suits, and enjoyed the pool and beach chairs. Each of us was given a very nice box lunch, which was much better than box lunches that were usually provided by the Army, so I think that they were probably contributed by the Augusta Country Club Association. It was not only the cool recreation that made me feel proud to be a soldier; it was the fact that a private patriotic organization wanted to thank us for our service. I was somewhat ashamed to be thanked in this way, because I had not yet accomplished anything I would consider to be of any real service to my country.

I had wanted to operate the ham stations at the Camp Gordon Radio Club, but I never found the time to do so, because I had very limited time off. I had to do my own laundry at a laundromat and polish my boots and shoes and that took time. In addition there was the dreaded Friday evening "GI

party time”, which meant flooding and mopping the barracks floor and cleaning and polishing every faucet, pipe and commode in the latrine, followed by a white-glove inspection. If the troops failed the inspection they would all be restricted to the barracks for the weekend and could not leave the base. I didn't use my free weekends to go home to The Bronx; the bus trip from Augusta, GA was too expensive and time consuming

The flying onion episode had not been as great a negative as I had first feared. The company commander, who was initially shocked when the onions hit him, knew that it was an accident and I had not attacked him on purpose. When he later told the other officers and the first sergeant about the greasy event, they all enjoyed a big laugh. Thus I learned from the chain of command that I was to receive no punishment for flinging onions, and that my failure to upgrade to specialist after completing the Field Radio Repair course had only been due to the cadre at the signal school.

Three students of the South Eastern Signal School who were hams invited me to join them on a trip to Silver Springs in Ocala, Florida. One of them was Roy, the engineer from CA who had helped me learn about RTTY; another was a very wealthy ham, who drove us there and back, using his own car, which he had managed to bring on base. I was later able to communicate with him by mail when I was in Korea and he was stationed in Texas. But when I later wrote him as a civilian, he denied being the person who I had known at Camp Gordon. He was 24 years old when I was 20 years old and he had become wealthy by working in his father's business. His home QTH was western PA, near the MD border. I have been able to track his family but unable to find out if he is now dead or alive. In addition to the new Buick that he drove, he owned a Piper Cub aircraft and a glider. He had 6 and 2 Meter transceivers and HF conversion receiving Gonset equipment in his car and custom built HF 300 Watt transmitters for 20 and 10 Meter Phone. He had whip antennas for each of those bands which were changed by screwing them into a mobile shock mount. We operated while in motion during most of the trip. I got the job of keeping a written log, which was a requirement at that time. I don't remember much about the remaining ham except that he was from Indiana. When we drove through the swamp land of GA there was a long stretch of highway that was one of the most famous speed traps of the USA. We were stopped near the town of Waycross and at first were going to be ordered to see a justice of the peace for speeding, but when we told the sheriff that we were soldiers on leave from Camp Gordon we were allowed to continue on our way with only a warning to watch out for pigs that might cross the road - there was no law at that time that would make farmers fence in their pigs. When we entered Florida we were given glasses of free fresh orange juice and brochures from hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions. We entered a land where majestic tall palms replaced the scrubby moss-covered Georgia trees, and my initial impression was thus very positive. During my lifetime I have spent time in widely separated parts of Florida; a large state. Working for Loral, I was assigned to work at NAS Key West on an ASW program for the Sikorsky SH-3 helicopter, and at Fort Walden Beach on an ECM program for the original Air Force F-111. Then, while working for Grumman I worked on J-Stars at Melbourne. Florida was a nice place to visit, but unlike many retirees, I never considered living there permanently. Now back to my first visit to Silver Springs. The glass bottomed boats were outstanding attractions. I learned that Thomas Edison had been the first celebrity to have marveled at the wonders of the Silver Springs Lake. I believe the glass bottomed boats still exist. They are propelled over a crystal clear lake where tourists can clearly see thriving fish and plants. My three ham friends and I stayed at a large motel in a room with two queen sized beds. Roy had an additional king size bed brought in because of his height but was unsatisfied with it and decided to sleep on the floor. I wondered how he had managed to sleep on the barracks bunks. He said he got used to sleeping

on the floor at Camp Gordon whenever he could, although he was ordered to sleep on a regulation bunk with his feet sticking out of it.

Army life at Camp Gordon was stressful because of the rigid need to pass inspections in order to get liberty on the weekends. The GIs would pressure each other to do their part at the GI parties. Anyone who didn't work at full capability was ostracized by the others. Technically I could have avoided the Friday night parties by claiming that I wanted to attend Jewish religious services. Jews and Seventh Day Adventists could be excused from working on Friday nights, but this would only make them eligible for Sunday work details, spoiling any plans for weekend trips. Because I was a skinny, lightweight soldier I was always assigned to sleep in an upper bunk. After our busy days everyone was extremely tired and eager to sleep.

One night after lights out, I continued to talk about my experiences as a NYC Subway compressed passenger. I never learned how to keep my big mouth shut. This bothered another soldier so much that he threw me out of my bunk in a fit of anger. I landed on the floor on my left hip, which became black and blue; causing me lots of pain when I had to march to school on the following days. I did not dare to seek medical aid because I knew that it would only cause trouble for both the guy who threw me out of bed and myself if I did. Later in the week he apologized for throwing me out of bed and he surprised me by telling me that he was Jewish! I did not know that there were any other Jews in my barracks. To make up with me, the guy then offered to have me join a group of his Jewish buddies who were going to Richmond, VA the following weekend. I was interested in meeting other tussy tech Jewish students and agreed to go. The bus trip to Richmond was much less expensive and time consuming than the trip to NYC. Next month I will tell about my trip to VA, and also tell you how and why I received official orders to report to Fort Lewis, WA for an assignment in the Far East. (stay tuned).

### **PRESIDENT'S NOTE by ED GELLENDER, WB2EAV**

While the Grumman ARC repeaters have not had much use lately, some other repeaters on Long Island have been quite busy. One problem the busiest repeaters have had lately is demented people jamming the repeaters and otherwise being anonymously obnoxious. It has gotten pretty bad lately and that is why I am thrilled that the FCC has finally been prodded into action and they are cracking down on the worst offenders. LIMARC reports that their worst jammer has been caught by the FCC and is being prosecuted. What may have made the difference is that the fellow was also entertaining himself by jamming police channels. When amateur frequencies are maliciously jammed it is incredibly frustrating, but interfering with first responders brings it to an entirely different level. In any event I am thrilled that this scourge is finally being addressed.

One thing about our club volunteer examiner (VE) licensing has always struck me as interesting and weird. Sometimes we do not have any applicants registering in advance, so our policy is to cancel such test sessions, and not bother the VE team. Once we know that one or more applicants signed up, we happily accept walk-ins.

What we have noticed is that everyone sees "no walk-ins" and assumes that we are very restrictive in our admission policy; I am often practically begged to let someone come. There has to be a better way to make the point and avoid the confusion. Anybody have a better idea?

Ed. WB2EAV

**GRUMMAN AMATEUR RADIO CLUB**  
**MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING / EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 4/20 /2016**

The meeting was called to order by Ray at 5:30 PM / Jack at 6:00 PM

**TREASURER'S REPORT – Ed, WB2EAV**

Finances are in good shape.

**REPEATER REPORT – Gordon, KB2UB**

Repeaters are working.

**VE REPORT – Ed, WB2EAV**

4 Applicants applied: 3 for Technician Exam, 1 For General 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.

**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.

**PUZZLE**

*Last month'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 D.

*This month's question is: -*

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

**GARC Officers**

|   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| President: Ed Gellender, WB2EAV 516-507-8969              | wb2eav@yahoo.com        |
| Vice President: Gordon Sammis, KB2UB Retiree 631-666-7463 | sammigo@verizon.net     |
| Secretary: Karen Cefalo, W2ABK 631-754-0974               | w2abk@aol.com           |
| Treasurer: Ed Gellender, WB2EAV (see above)               |                         |
| WA2LQO Trustee: Ray Schubnel, W2DKM Retiree               | schubnel@optonline.net  |
| Board Member: Jack Cottrell, WA2PYK Retiree 516-249-0979  | jjcottrell2@verizon.net |
| Board Member: Dave Ledo, AB2EF                            | ab2efdl@gmail.com       |
| Board Member: Jack Hayne, WB2BED                          | wb2bed@arrl.net         |
| Board Member: George Sullivan, WB2IKT                     |                         |

**Newsletter**

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**GARC Webmaster**

Pat Masterson, KE2LJ Retiree 813-938-4614 [Pat-Masterson@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:Pat-Masterson@tampabay.rr.com)

**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](mailto:w2eav@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**

Ed Gellender asked if we had any suggestions about managing the VE sessions and advertising them. I believe that I had been a Contact VE for a longer period of time than any other and I experienced all of the problems with advertising, rounding up the required number of VEs and registered applicants to make VE sessions worth being held. In addition to the dilemma that Ed mentioned, there have been times when registered applicants failed to show up, as well as times when VEs who had promised to be at a session got called away at the last moment, so applicants had to be sent home without being tested. There were times when I could not get enough VEs for a session. The GARC sessions - like all other GARC functions - have become more and more limited as the membership drops and fewer VE volunteers. No longer are there any Northrop-Grumman people who want to get licensed or upgraded. This led me to be open to seek both applicants and VEs who were never GARC members and to advertise in more than one place for Commercial FCC Exams. Supermarkets survive when they sell lots of products and I believed that VE sessions could survive better if they offered a full line of FCC radio operator exams. This made it possible to invite VEs and applicants who were interested in both ham and commercial exams. We had applicants come from as far as PA and NJ to take exams and even a VE/CE who came from NJ to help us. We could not depend on the ARRL's website advertising alone. We had to be listed on the National Radio Commercial website in a limited list of commercial examiners. I had also advertised in World/Radio for some time and I believe that you can now do so and get listed in the World/Radio digital edition. Because you must prepare the required printed exams you must know who will be taking which exams in advance. That is another logical reason for advanced registration. --73 de w2ilp (I Licensed People) with the help of VEs, a VEC and the FCC.

Grumman Amateur Radio Club  
215 Birchwood Park Drive  
Jericho, NY 11753

FIRST CLASS MAIL

*Do Not Delay*

**OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY?**

If you have been reading articles that I have written in this newsletter you might remember what I wrote about a classmate and friend of mine who turned out to be a world famous sociologist. He was the late Dr. Stanley Milgram, who is said to have shocked the world by using a fake electric chair and victim to fool a number of subjects and see if they would shock the victim at increasing voltages as suggested by an authority figure, or use their own ethical judgment to stop when he cried in simulated pain. Milgram had first believed that Germans were more prone to follow orders than people of other nationalities, but he found that the emotions of all humans did not depend on their race, religion, tribal heritage, wealth, profession, sex, or even nationality. Fear, hatred and pity play a part of in molding the motivations of all people as our emotions evolved from survival necessities. They are naturally motivated to include our sex drive to reproduce, and the drives for territory, material goods and status in that order. It is not difficult to find people who will enjoy torturing innocent prisoners, as well as people who will sympathize with captured terrorists. Emotional levels in people vary, sometimes as much as weather conditions or the polar effects of neurological disorders. As a member of the American Legion I have met war veterans who are strongly on either side of this dilemma, both defenders and aggressors. Dr. Milgram's findings are thus obvious. The dilemma today is more challenging than ever. I can't express my opinion about who should be our best next president; I am now myself a mugwump on this subject who sees both sides of the issues. Should the US fight fear with fear and terrorism with terrorism? Should soldiers be obedient to authorities that order them to be as inhumane as their enemies have been? Should we threaten or be aggressors, rather than negotiators and compromisers? Do we need to rule the world? Do we need to be stronger than the other great world powers? Should we support allies who have denied others their human rights? What are human rights? Are human rights intrinsically God given or must they be supported politically to be reality? Do they include the right to carry or collect attack weapons and knives that are designed for killing rather than hunting and cooking? Frankly I'm not sure.

-w2ilp (I Like Peace).—Must war always be on the table or under a God or flag?

Page 6