



**BARS MEETING THURSDAY
THE 15TH OF SEPTEMBER 2011**

The next BARS meeting will be Thursday September 15th at the Brandon Assembly of God at 710 South Kings (next to the golf driving range). The BARS meeting will be in the annex next to the sanctuary building. Things get underway when Doris bangs the gavel at 7:30 p.m. If you think of someone who has not been to a meeting for a while, give ‘em a call!

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Don't forget Saturday morning breakfast at the Golden Corral in Brandon. Come on out at 7:30 on Saturday mornings for some ham radio socializing and fun!

Len Goodman from Dancing With The Stars Learns About Morse Code

The Ulster Star reports in an article from August 27th that Len Goodman, one of the judges on the hit

BBC show “Dancing With The Stars” is doing research for an upcoming documentary on the sinking of the Titanic (100 years ago next April). As part of his research Len wanted to learn all he could about Morse Code and how the radio operators on the Titanic made use of it.

Jim Henry from the Lagan Valley Amateur Radio Society, which is based just outside Lisburn, Ireland was on hand to show Len what he needed to know.

It was also explained that the Morse telegraphy equipment on board Titanic had been set up primarily to enable passengers to send messages back home and had not specifically been considered for emergency communication purposes.

It was only after the Titanic disaster that world radio conference proceedings made it mandatory for ships to have radio telegraphy equipment and a qualified radio operator on board before they could set sail.

‘Titanic and Me’ is expected to debut in April next year for the 100th anniversary of the Titanic sinking.

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More Radio History

Aircraft Radiotelegraph Officers

I am fascinated with the stories of those who did the day-to-day duty as radio operators in the past days of radio when CW was King. It was hard work (or as we say today "labor intensive") to get the message through under trying conditions. A good operator on the key could mean the difference between being rescued or cashing in your chips at sea. David Ring N1EA passed along this story from David Jeans (from Australia) on the Radio Officers website. A careful reading will prove instructive in the communications and aircraft operations.

Readers may recall an incident that occurred in 1951. A Tasman Empire Airways Ltd (TEAL became Air New Zealand later) Solent flying boat was taking off from Rose bay in Sydney Harbour, at night, in the direction of the Wintergarden cinema. Just as the aircraft lifted off the water, one engine failed. The captain climbed the aircraft sharply to avoid a collision with the cinema, then made a quick turn left, just clearing the hills and straightened up for a down-wind landing on the flare path. During the turn, a second engine failed and a third engine failed on touchdown. The fourth engine provided sufficient power to allow the aircraft to approach and secure to the mooring buoy. When the engineer climbed out through the astrodome onto the wing, he found the wing covered with foam. An official investigation found that detergent had been used to top up all engine oil tanks, and a 44 gallon drum containing detergent had been incorrectly labeled as aircraft oil.

The above drama had a curious effect on the events that I am about to unfold. On the evening of the 9th of September 1952 I was the radio operator in a crew manning a Qantas Lockheed Constellation aircraft, VH-EAF, bound for Darwin, a flight of about seven hours. Thirty minutes after departure we had

reached cruising altitude of about 17,000ft, and the aircraft was leveled out and some of the crew then retired to the crew rest area, viz. the captain and senior flight engineer. My job was to send hourly position reports and half-hourly "Ops Normal" reports. I probably also asked Charleville aeradio to provide any amendment to the terminal forecast for Darwin. Qantas made a habit of departing Sydney in the evening to allow a landing in Darwin around dawn when the weather was normally quite benign. This meant most of us had been up all day and were all feeling drowsy.

I admit that over the years I had nodded off on occasions but had never missed an incoming call. This particular evening, after we had been airborne for about an hour I was wrenched into total awareness by the scream of a runaway propeller (No. 1 engine). Several things happened about then. The senior flight engineer rushed up into the cockpit and settled in his chair, pushing his first flight junior engineer aside. The first officer and the engineer then went through the tidy-up drill for a runaway prop, and people started to relax. The captain had come up forward quickly, but just stood between the two pilots (F/O and S/O) and supervised the whole affair in a quiet manner.

By this time my heart had slowed down from thumping to just a fast rate. My mouth was dry. No announcement had been made to the sleeping passengers. The navigator had a chat with the chief steward who then retired back to his seat in the galley. Well I thought, this will be something to tell the grandchildren. Then No.3 propeller ran away with a deafening scream. What's going on! The senior engineer had the engine closed down quick-smart this time. The crew rest seats were dead in-line with the props in the Connie. By this time we were losing height rapidly even though No.2 and No.4 engines were revved up. The captain turned to me and said, "Send an urgency

signal". I replied, "Don't you mean a distress signal?" He said, "No, make it urgency for the time being".

My heart was racing. So on with the old Collins ART-13 transmitter, out went our urgency signal:-

" XXX XXX XXX de VHEAF VHEAF VHEAF"

Charleville aeradio station was back in a flash with a reply. The captain then called to the navigator to supply our position. The engineer then shouted, "We have low oil pressure and high oil temp on No.2 engine - looks like she's going too".

Shades of Rose Bay all over again. We were now down to 9,000ft and still descending. It was pitch black outside. The captain called, "If we lose No.2, start No. 1 ". He turned to me and said, "Send an SOS signal".

Charleville had been calling me, wanting more info -1 just kept sending "Wait" I was heaving with fear and excitement. I managed a readable-

"SOS SOS SOS de VHEAF VHEAF VHEAF"

Charleville answered with an "RRR SOS"

Then the navigator passed up our position. I then sent the distress message-

"SOS de VHEAF two engines stopped, third engine oil warning lights, position 150 miles south of Charleville 7,000ft descending"

Charleville acknowledged and other aeradio stations gave their callsigns.

Well, I live to tell the tale. No.2 engine kept going on low power. We managed a straight-in approach to Charleville and landed down wind.

The captain was magnificent. He just stood between his two co-pilots and directed events calmly. Only one passenger, an RAAF chap, was aware that anything untoward had happened. A bus took us all into the Charleville hotel and we hit the bar. I was still shaking.

VHEAF spent four days in Charleville. A Qantas DCS flew up two spare engines. There was no detergent in the oil. The problem was due to a new range of spark plugs that melted and burned holes in the cylinder heads, allowing the oil to pump out through the breather. As engine oil pressure controls the propeller pitch,

lack of oil had sent the prop into fully-fine and into runaway mode. No.2 engine had a history of oil warning and temp lights, as the technical log advised. It just didn't like high power for long periods.

Three days after our salvation, the following Connie service landed at Charleville and its crew disembarked so that we could continue towards UK in their aircraft. VHEAF was patched up and we had her again into Beirut, where we had to do a boost-off landing due to total loss of hydraulics. That was scary too!

Editor's note: For those that may not know it, aircraft call signs were 5 letters, large ships were four letters, and coastal stations were three letters.

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We are out of space for this month. More fun radio stuff in the newsletter next month – stay tuned!

Check out the BARS Website:
brandonhamradio.org

The Antenna

Newsletter of the
Brandon Amateur Radio Society
P.O. Box 2307
Brandon, FL 33509-2307

Keep in Mind Our Weekly Nets and Bulletins

**Monday 8 p.m. The Two Meter Net 147.765 - 147.165 MHz Hosted by Doris Haskell
WB9VDT**

**Tuesday 7 p.m. 6-meter Roundtable 50.200 MHz USB followed at 8 p.m. with the 10
Meter Roundtable 28.365 MHz USB**

**Thursday 8 p.m. (except for club meetings) YL Net hosted by Doris Haskell
WB9VDT on W7RRS Repeater 146.745**

**Remember Saturday morning breakfast at The Golden Corral at Providence and
Lumsden. Most start showing up at 7:30 a.m. when the restaurant opens.**