

K9YA Telegraph

Season's Greetings



December 2007
Volume 4, Issue 12

Robert F. Heytow Memorial Radio Club

K9YA Telegraph

Robert F. Heytow Memorial Radio Club

Volume 4, Issue 12, December 2007



Beyond the Blue Horizon

Amateur Radio Aboard Kon-Tiki

Philip Cala-Lazar, K9PL

2007 marks the 60th anniversary of Thor Heyerdahl's epic 1947 voyage to Polynesia. This adventure is described in his book: *KON-TIKI: Across the Pacific by Raft*, translated by F.H. Lyon, Rand McNally & Company,

Third Printing, September 1950.

Norwegian anthropologist Heyerdahl wondered: Had American seafarers significantly impacted Polynesian culture? Certainly, prevailing trade winds; linguistic similarities between the two groups; the longtime presence of non-indigenous (to Polynesia) plants including sweet potato, pineapple and long-linted cotton; and a host of other factors pointed to such contact.

In 1936, Heyerdahl's yearlong residence and research on Fatu-Hiva and other islands in the Marquesas group lent weight to his premise and planted the seed that ten years later became Kon-Tiki. (Thor Heyerdahl, *Fatu-Hiva: Back to Nature*, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, N.Y., 1974.)

South Americans (and later, groups from what is now the American Northwest) could have settled Polynesia in Pre-Columbian times. If so, how did they get there? His aim in mounting the Kon-Tiki expedition was to show, by using only the materials and technologies available to them at the time, that it was, indeed, possible.

Heyerdahl's craft was named to honor the Inca sun god, "Con-Tici-Viracocha." Based on an ancient Peruvian design recorded by Spanish conquistadores and comprised of nine balsa logs—the longest at 45 feet and the

shortest, 30 feet—it was lashed together with no metal fasteners of any sort, relying completely on rope. The logs used were personally selected by Heyerdahl at a rain forest timber plantation (as Heyerdahl describes it, that trek was quite an adventure itself). Atop the raft was perched a simple bamboo cabin housing the sleeping quarters and radio shack. The vessel was propelled by a square sail and steered by a long tiller.

The "Ark" Departs

April 28, 1947: Kon-Tiki departs Callao, Peru with Heyerdahl, five intrepid Norwegian crewmen, a parrot mascot and a large, uninvited, crab. The crustacean took up residence in a niche near the craft's tiller and, soon befriended, it accepted, and soon expected, tidbits from the crew.

Heyerdahl, wanting to keep the project "pure" as possible, at first rejected the idea of radio gear aboard Kon-Tiki: "Radio! I said, horrified. 'What the hell do we want

with that? It's all out of place on a prehistoric raft.'" However, as a safety precaution and in order to transmit weather observations he was soon convinced otherwise.

Two crewmembers were recruited as radio operators *par excellence*: Knut Haugland (now LA3KY) came

*"Radio! I said,
horrified."*

CONTINUED - KON-TIKI ON PAGE 9

Inside This Issue...

<i>Beyond the Blue Horizon</i>	Page 1
<i>Underwood</i>	Page 2
<i>When Martin Met Al</i>	Page 4
<i>Ham Lingo</i>	Page 8
<i>K9YA Field Day Results</i>	Page 8

Philip Cala-Lazar, K9PL
Editor

Mike Dinelli, N9BOR
Layout

Dick Sylvan, W9CBT
Staff Cartoonist



Robert F. Heytow
Memorial Radio Club

www.k9ya.org
telegraph@k9ya.org

Underwood

Vern Weiss, WPE9GHF/W9STB



Hello, friend! My name is Underwood. I really appreciate being a member of your family. My, this is some fancy accommodation you provide for your equipment! I see boxes of metal with windows—glowing windows. Should I blush? Are those pasties like ladies of burlesque wore in the salty days of my youth? I don't really recognize anything else in this room except the bug setting over there. The sounder must be inside one of those metal

boxes—right?

I don't understand how I ended up in your employ. There is so much time for which I cannot account. I was born in 1913 to the Underwood family. I was a "middle child" so they named me "No. 5."

There were other "Number Fives" in the family, but I was always a little different. I never had any use for upper and lower case frivolity. I was always singular in purpose and, as a result of my upper case all-capitals discipline; I was perfect for service as a telegrapher's mill typewriter.

No, I had no use for the monotony of typing "Dear Sir" on office stationery all day, nor did I have any desire to live my life as a family typewriter or work for the railroad. I wanted to go to where the action was and translate the dots and dashes of a telegrapher to important press bulletins or telegrams! Maybe I would have a career on the high seas at the command of an expert telegrapher named "Sparks!" Oh the possibilities!

Shortly after I was born, I received my first big break; purchased by the Western Union Company! I had made it! I was sent to a telegram office in the state of Wyoming. Oh, how my polished chrome shined in those days, and my black-crinkle paint finish added a sense of dignified no-nonsense to the telegraph office!

Though I have sat through my share of coffee spills and been poked with fingers coated with mustard and baloney sandwich grease, I could not have been happier. The days and nights of the rapid clack of telegraphy punctuated with my staccato end-of-line bell was a symphony.

And was I important? WAS I IMPORTANT! It was up to me to produce tangible proof of only the most important messages. In those days it wasn't like today with your Internet where people send insipid messages all day long that are serially deleted by their recipients before ever being read. My messages were "meat and potatoes" messages, important to commerce and life. And my messages cost a lot of money; money paid by the word to send! So few words wasted. No... my messages never were insulted by addition to a "block sender" list. How insulting. In those days, folks only sent IMPORTANT MESSAGES and if you got one you had a darned good reason to want to know what it said, but oh the messages I typed!

In my career at Western Union I probably typed tens of thousands of those important messages. It is a pretty heady responsibility to be the one that conveys information like:

"Sparks!"

DEAR MR. AND MRS.
THOMPSON: WAR
DEPARTMENT REGRETS

TO INFORM THAT YOUR SON,
WILLIAM (PVT US AAC) WAS
KILLED TODAY IN SERVICE TO
HIS COUNTRY

LOUISA X WILL YOU MARRY ME X
LOVE JIM.

MOM PASSED AWAY THIS MORNING
X DAD.

Sure, I had my share of boring messages, but even though the words I dispatched were boring to me, they were shaping so much of all that was to follow.

In those days out west mine was a wonderful family in which to grow. To many telegraphers I became

No. 5



Robert F. Heytow
Memorial Radio Club

www.k9ya.org
telegraph@k9ya.org

K9YA Telegraph

as comfortable as their shoes. Every one of them brought his own bug to work at the beginning of the shift, and all my adjustments would be reset to each telegrapher's liking. Each of them had as distinctive a style operating me as he did sending Morse. Some guys used two fingers, some all ten; some slammed my carriage return lever like a fighter's uppercut while others had the tenderness of a masseuse.

You know, my friend, I was busy transcribing Morse code to telegrams when your own father was born in 1917! I was mercilessly pounding my steel keys into my rubber platen throughout all of World War I and when the young girls were swooning to Rudy Vallee and when Lindy touched down in Paris, I was on duty. Yes, I was on duty then and saw it all through the theater of the mind created from text sent in Morse code.

But the winds of change began to blow in 1931 when the Bell System began putting teleprinters in Western Union offices. 1931 was a particularly poignant year because it also was when they stopped manufacturing Underwood No. 5 typewriters. Naturally, the big city offices got the new teleprinters first, so I remained in service throughout most of the 1930s. Had I not been so hungry for the excitement of life-or-death telegrams and had I been content with repetitive, mundane work as in service to railroad telegraphers I could have retired as late as the early 1960s. But my service was no longer needed by Western Union and I one day found myself in a pile of other "Number Fives" headed to a warehouse. There I sat, neglected and wondering what my future would hold. Would I find myself buried alive in garbage like so many of my brethren? Even though I had a unique birthright being a telegrapher's mill, I was still an Underwood No. 5 and since Underwood manufactured more of me than any other model, I was a commoner and not valuable.

For nearly 10 years I sat silent, my end-of-line bell mute, the percussion of my keys hitting the roller without staccato. My once black-crinkle finish dulled with the oily dust of a used office equipment warehouse, spotted by spider droppings and egg sacs. Then, one day, the door to the warehouse opened and two men entered. One walked to the shelf where I sat with other No. 5s. There was some mumbling about students and Army Air Corps contracts and I heard one say, "I'll take them all." Soon I was on another truck headed for Kansas and my new home, Midland Radio School.

*"Handsome as...
movie stars..."*

It was 1942 and I waited my turn to one day have a teenager clean me up and refresh my oil. Soon I was placed in a room with 49 other Underwood No. 5s. Next to each of us was a pair of headphones. Where was I? Was this some sort of big secretarial pool that piped in soothing music to the headphones while the women worked? We sat wondering for several weeks in this huge room, all 50 of us Underwoods.

One day a man arrived to adjust the equipment. He visited each pair of headphones and listened before moving to the next. A bit later the door opened and two young men entered the room, then another, then three or four more at a time, until the whole room was filled with teenage men. Handsome as the movie stars Jimmy Stewart and Robert Mitchum, they milled about the room.

They spoke of something that happened out in the Pacific Ocean in Hawaii. It must have been about the movies because some said they wanted to go to "The Pacific Theater," while others hoped to go to "The European Theater." I don't know why you'd care about going all the way to Europe to see a movie when we've got the Midtown Odeum right down the street here in Kansas City!

Pretty soon the man who earlier made the equipment adjustments re-entered and invited the boys to come forward with last name starting with, "A," then "B" and so on to take a seat until all were filled. He identified himself as Aub and told them he was an instructor at Midland Radio School. He went on to explain that, with events unfolding in the Pacific and over in Europe, the Army Air Corps was unable to train Morse operators fast enough, so Midland had been contracted to pick up the slack. I thought to myself if there was some sort of uncertainty in the Pacific and in Europe, they'd better tell those boys who want to go there to see a movie to reconsider the Midtown.

Pretty soon the room went silent with all headphones in place. Aub said to insert a sheet of paper in us typewriters and type what they were hearing. After



Robert F. Heytow
Memorial Radio Club

www.k9ya.org
telegraph@k9ya.org

CONTINUED - UNDERWOOD ON PAGE 5

When Martin Met Al

One Story K2TAJ Didn't Tell Me

Rod Newkirk, VA3ZBB/W9BRD



The silver anniversary of our 30-meter band is at hand. Time sure flies when you're logging a flock of great CW ragchews. Thirty's arrival a quarter-century ago caught factories and dealers with little to offer; so hams had to hit their workbenches and junk boxes to hit the band. I luckily found my old Collins 32V-3 gave output all the way down to 3.3 MHz. In short order I threw together a push-pull 6L6s tripler to provide enough watts for W9BRD's

first adventures on a grand new band.

There I found a bunch of new and old friends among amateur radio's latest pioneers. Short-range propagation was solid. The 5NN DX crowd cluttered higher bands. Thirty was just right for leisurely Morse articulation. My first QSOs with K2TAJ, the demon baker of Staten Island, were a special delight. Crusty old Martin's homespun 40-watt and crisp 25-wpm bug regularly made my day. A pair of curmudgeons, we exchanged acerbic commentary on a changing world. We agreed that the advent of 10.1 MHz for amateurs was one change for the better.

K2TAJ had been around the block, as they say. Possibly twice or thrice. He knew my Midwestern haunts better than I did. When his old army outfit had greater need for cooks than radiomen, he transferred to baking school. Ovens became as much of a passion for him as wireless. As a retired New York harbor communicator, Martin now baked goodies for friends, neighbors and charity. Our frequent QSOs often paused while he took time out to punch down rising bread dough.

He mailed me a treasured memento from days before VHF radio became the norm for New York's port authority. It's a strip of tape bearing recorded Morse code, blinker traffic of a *Queen Mary* arrival. Martin

was manning the harbormaster light. What intriguing yarns that witty OM could spin! The years passed for both of us and the changing world caught up with K2TAJ. Blight fell on his once lovely island community. Rocks and bottles defaced his garden. His beloved oven blinked out and grew cold. My final chats with Martin were downers. His perky fist became hesitant and shaky. Soon there he was, enshrined in *QST*'s Silent Keys.

Not long afterward I swapped some CW with another old on-the-air friend, Al Unruh, WØAPB. We lamented the passing of K2TAJ. I had often heard Al chatting with Martin and I remarked that the two of them seemed particularly close. Al sent a HI HI and said that yes, indeed, he and Martin went back a long, long way. Then WØAPB related their very special saga, going all the way back to the darkest days of the Great Depression when Al, then W9APB, was a young deputy sheriff and an avid radio amateur.

“...reindeer
can really fly.”

Twas the night before Christmas and a blizzard swept the Kansas prairies. W9APB's assignment was to check out the hungry unemployed men hanging around the local train stations and bus depots, then find them some food. Some of those luckless jobseekers would never return home again, unable to face families they could no longer feed and clothe. Miserable Martin was among

them. When Al inspected his credentials he found an FCC amateur radio operator's license. Al winked at Martin, showed him his own ham ticket, and jailed him on suspicion of loitering. Next day, inside the warm pokey, they enjoyed a full Christmas feast together. Martin's incarceration lasted through New Year's Day when Al supplied him with a list of possible openings and sent him on his way. One vagrant's luck had changed.

I can think of two reasons why Martin never got around to telling me that story. One, those dismal days were too personally painful for idle banter. Secondly, he probably figured I would never believe that, when the stars in heaven are just right, reindeer can really fly. ■



Robert F. Heytow
Memorial Radio Club

www.k9ya.org
telegraph@k9ya.org

tens of thousands of interesting, life-changing telegrams like I had typed back in Wyoming, I could not understand why my typist was typing the same five letters, "E I S H 5 5 H S I E E 5 H S 5" and so on, over and over and over. I didn't get the point of the message at all. Pretty soon the letters changed but the message was equally boring, "T M O 0 0 O M T..." then "E I S T 0 0 5 O O S." Eventually I was able to move all my keys on the keyboard, but it was so darned boring! Day-in, day-out. With time I noticed the typing speed increased from monotonously slow 3- or 4-wpm to 15-wpm. I noticed by the time we were clipping along at 10- or 12-wpm the class was only half as big. I remember an occasion when one of the students stood up with his headphones still on his ears, picked up his Underwood No. 5 and threw it into the classroom window. I don't know if he was supposed to do that. Other men came in and led him out and we never saw him again. It happened many times after that in other classes. After a year or so, Aub no longer taught class in his plaid shirts, but wore some sort of uniform. Boy, oh boy, could he ever send code, but he was always patient. If he ever had a kid I'll bet Aub would teach him the code before he could talk.

One day I noticed the classroom remained empty and silent even after the usual starting time. I figured it must be a holiday. The next day was the same. None of us Underwoods could figure it out. We sat there for several weeks, maybe a month, when suddenly, the door opened. Ah, students! Two young men entered. They were wearing uniforms like the one Aub used to wear. They rolled in a wheeled cart and went table-to-table picking up us Underwoods and tossing us in the cart's wooden bin. HEY, WATCH THAT! They were pretty rough with us. Some of us didn't survive landing on our carriages and the clank of metal pieces could be heard separating from my friends as they were tossed on top of each other. Were they mad at us? Did we do something wrong? Did we not work well enough for those thousands of people who used us during the past four years? Why are they treating us like this?

We were rolled outside of the Midland Radio School building although for some reason the sign *MIDLAND RADIO SCHOOL* was no longer there, perhaps it blew down. The same two young men started pulling us out of the wooden bin. There were two pickup trucks and I was placed in the one that said



"Cletus Hubbard, Auctioneer." Some were thrown into a truck that had "Midland Scrap & Salvage" on its door.

I never saw the Underwoods that left in the other truck again. Those of us who rode in the Hubbard truck went all the way to Wichita where we were transferred to another truck and eventually taken to a big airport in Kentucky. We were placed in some sort of hangar. Now I was really confused because the sign on the door read, "DEPOT - MARS AAC."

MARS? Am I now being sent to Mars? All us Underwood No. 5s sat in this musty, dark hangar for the next couple years. Then, one day, two men pulled up in a 1957 Ford. It looked like it had porcupine quills all over it. The two men got out. One, wearing Bermuda shorts, was named Smitty, and the other was in some sort of uniform. I overheard them talking about Mars, so apparently they had just returned. Maybe they drive Fords that look like porcupines on Mars? After Smitty looked us No. 5s over, he returned, picked me up and set me in his trunk. He then wanted to go out to "the pile" and choose an R-390 receiver for use, I guess, back on Mars. The man in uniform reminded him he needed to take what he wanted because the whole 200 x 50 x 50 foot stack of R-390s would be crushed and scrapped on Wednesday. I hope the R-390 is not a mill typewriter because I don't ever want to be in such a pile.

Seven or eight hours later the trunk lid opened to let the last of daylight's warmth enter the trunk. I was in a residential neighborhood of wood-frame houses. Smitty carried me into one house in the middle of a cobweb of wires strung in every direction.

My new home was in the basement and I sat next to a telegraph key like I remembered back in Wyoming. Every time Smitty entered the room, he'd switch on the golden glow of lights in the metallic boxes' windows; yes, his metallic boxes wore pasties too. Soon I was typing on sheets of paper not unlike those of my Western Union days, only these said *Radio-*



Robert F. Heytow
Memorial Radio Club

www.k9ya.org
telegraph@k9ya.org

gram across the top. I don't remember writing very important messages like I did in Wyoming. Most of the messages were of the "Happy holidays," "Happy birthday" or "Furlough starts May 11, arriving NY May 12" variety. I do remember in August of '69 a woman named "Camille" caused a lot of folks to

send messages everywhere. Whoever Camille was, she must have been pretty ornery because a lot of messages told others they, "Survived Camille. All safe."

One day I realized I had not seen Smitty for a long time. He worked the swing shift at the steel mill, so you never knew when he and I would make our music together. Maybe he was on a vacation. The room was dark and cold. After weeks, maybe months, I heard voices approaching

my room. It was the kindly lady who used to bring coffee and muffins down to the room while Smitty and I were cranking out Radiograms for the traffic nets, but Smitty was not with her. Instead there were two strange men I'd never seen before. I couldn't make out what was being said, but I could tell from their inflection that it was a very sad time. The sad lady left with a handkerchief wadded up in her hand and the two men began dismantling the metal boxes and separating them from their wires. Why, it was as if I were back at Midland in Kansas City all over again! After all the metal boxes were carried out I was left alone in the room with the man's wooden desk, his chair and the burnishing tool that had rolled underneath me. Smitty was always using it on the contacts of his Vibroplex Original. What is happening? I've served well. I've done whatever I was asked to serve unselfishly and with dignity. But now I am abandoned, apparently unwanted and unneeded.

A very long time went by. How I had changed. My keys now wore a coat of white mold while verdigris caused arthritis in the gears and levers of my mechanism. The dark and damp coldness of my room that was once warm and filled with wonderful symphonies of Morse telegraphy in a medley with summertime

static crashes was now silent. I no longer heard the familiar clomp of footsteps upstairs. Was I to be hopelessly left behind like so many were in mining disasters back in Wyoming? I remember typing those painful telegrams to the families:

**REGRET TO INFORM X MINER
CARL DAVIDSON BELIEVED PER-
ISHED IN COLLAPSED MINE
SHAFT X RESCUE EFFORTS
ABANDONED X SHAFT SEALED
MARCH 11.**

Was it as dark in this room as the final tomb of poor Carl? Did Carl also wonder if this was "it?"

Suddenly the door opened and the light snapped on. A man and woman entered and removed everything to an outside yard. Oh, how good the sun felt on my corroded and time-atrophied parts! I waited as they loaded the wooden desk and chair onto a pickup truck that read, "Orrison Antiques 'n Such." I was so excited... I was going to my new home and Mr. Orrison would clean me up and bring life to me again and I would be a vital component of message deliveries and I would never care again if the messages were unimportant or routine... I WAS WANTED AGAIN!

*"I WAS
WANTED
AGAIN!"*

But the man picked me up by the carriage and the weight of my cast iron body nearly ripped it off of its track. What was happening? Why is he so rough with me? Doesn't he know my design depends on a balance of levers, rods and pulleys all working smoothly together? He carried me in this most

indelicat manner out to the alley and dropped me next to a roll of dirty carpeting and a rotted automobile tire.

The man and his wife got in their truck and left and I lay in the alley as darkness and sadness overcame me.

That night it rained. I didn't care anymore if I rusted. My internal organs became diseased with many forms of malignancy. Now the rain would finish off the tiny pivot points and my keys would never again know the beat of a smart and proud cadence. I was done. It was over.

The next morning the sun rose and felt warm, but my world remained dark. As the sun moved across



Underwood Typewriter
Factory, Hartford, CT



Robert F. Heytow
Memorial Radio Club

www.k9ya.org
telegraph@k9ya.org

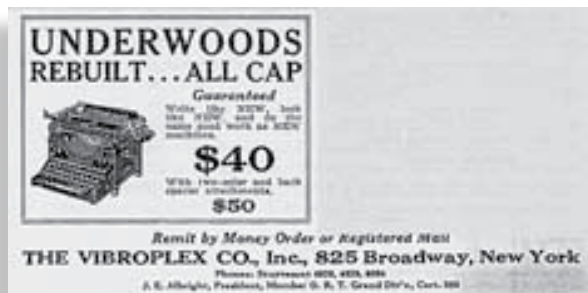
K9YA Telegraph

the southern skies I could see up and down the alley people depositing bags and boxes into piles on both sides of this alleyway. Were any of those piles home to another forgotten and unwanted Underwood like me? As time passed I watched kids running up and down the alley playing. How could they be laughing when the world has become so funereal? Suddenly a chubby little boy appeared at the end of the alley. He was pulling a wagon behind his bike. What was he doing? He'd poke around one of the piles that had been set out earlier and move to the next. Occasionally he'd pull something out and set it in his wagon like old cigar boxes or electrical wire. When he got to where I lay he walked over and lifted me up. He retrieved damp copies of *TRUE*, *COSMOPOLITAN* and *ARGOSY* and tossed them in his wagon. He moved along and out of sight.

Why was I just a typewriter? Why didn't I have an image of a beautiful redhead printed on my front? Or contain electrical wire he could harvest for whatever reason?

A few minutes later I heard the shrill voice of a woman hollering for someone to come home for lunch. From the opposite direction I heard a kid holler back musically, "Coming!" That same little boy with the wagon behind his bike came into view and he was peddling fast. The wagon was fishtailing so badly I thought he was going to end up in a pile just like me. Though unstable, he flew past quickly. Half a block away I saw him stop, park his bike and run back to where I lay. His face was beet-red, he was breathing painfully deep, but in a rapid swooping motion he reached down, picked me up and ran back to set me in his wagon and we were off. We were off together! As he piloted his bike with the wagon and me in tow I didn't care how shaky his steering became. At one point he was forced to take evasive action to avoid colliding with the garbage truck.

We arrived at the boy's backyard as he sprang off of his bicycle and ran into the house for lunch. I didn't know what was in store for me or how it related to electrical wire, cigar boxes and the magazines that shared my berth. The house was a modest wood-frame house and the only thing distinctive about it was the shiny wire that ran from a tree to the TV-antenna mast.



A while later the screen door slammed sharply and my new friend re-appeared. Now the horizontal stripes of his tee shirt were spotted with grape jelly. He pulled the magazines out of the wagon, rolled them up to tuck under his shirt and went into the house. When he returned he took the wire and cigar boxes into a basement entrance. Finally he lifted me out and took me into the garage and placed me on a shelf.

Seasons came and seasons went and I remained on that garage shelf. I shared the garage with a 1966 Buick Wildcat for a while. Then came a 1971 Ford Torino. Next a 1976 Mercury Monarch. I never saw the little boy anymore but I saw his mom and dad coming and going. When the 1990 LeSabre moved in I was taken to some sort of tool shed and piled on top of tomato cages and old bird feeders. I began to have the same feelings of abandonment I had before.

After serving as home to many generations of mice, one day a man entered the tool shed. A beautiful blue-eyed woman accompanied him. She looked like the girl on the calendar that hung on the wall back in the Morse code classroom at Midland. The man was digging into the various collections piled everywhere when suddenly he said, "Honey! Do you want to

hear an amazing story? See this old typewriter? I dragged it home from a garbage can when I was a kid. It's a special typewriter that was used by telegraphers because it only types capital letters. Gee it's filthy and all jammed up. I think I'll

take it and see if I can clean it up. Isn't it incredible that technology from 100 years ago still works today?" His beautiful wife said supportively, "It sure is." God, her eyes were beautiful.

Over the next year he worked on me with steel brushes, steel wool, chemicals, rags and squirting what seemed like gallons of oil trying to free up my crippled mechanism. I feared I would never again play my special kind of music. For a while he sat me on a shelf in a little room full of more metal boxes with pasties on their fronts. But I was old, broken and worn out and would never again hear the sound of my end-of-line bell or thumping percussion of my space bar being depressed. I would never again tell anyone of a new grandchild or wish anyone a happy anniversary.

K9YA Telegraph



Robert F. Heytow
Memorial Radio Club

www.k9ya.org
telegraph@k9ya.org



Robert F. Heytow
Memorial Radio Club

www.k9ya.org
telegraph@k9ya.org

K9YA Telegraph

One morning, without notice, I was picked up and placed in a box with stuffing jammed all around me. Next, daylight was cut off as the box was closed and sealed. This surely must be a casket and I am soon to enter the ground for eternity. I don't know how it happened, but I was rolled upside down, dropped, slid, and skid along conveyers and somehow ended up in San Francisco, California. When the box was opened a very old man gently lifted me out and set me on a workbench. He picked up the phone and called someone and said, "Hello... this is Michael from the Museum of Typewriters, just want to leave a message to let you know your Underwood arrived safely and I'll start work on it right away. I'll phone you after I assess it."

Museum of Typewriters? Museum of Typewriters! Am I now going to live in a museum? Over the course of the next 12 months, my new friend, Michael, took me completely apart, cleaned me and slowly and methodically put me back together. Was I going on display now?

He made another call.

"Hello... this is Michael from the Museum of Typewriters... just calling to let you know your Underwood is all done and probably works better than new. The total comes to \$221.55 and I will ship it tomorrow."

Now what is happening?

Back into the box I go and daylight is again cut off. In the blackness I feel more shoving, dropping, rolling, pitching and conveyer movement.

A knife blade sliced the cardboard above me. The box flaps splayed open. Why, it was that same man and his pretty blue-eyed wife I left a year or more ago! He gently lifted me and placed me in the center of the living room floor. He sat and stared, "Isn't it beautiful?" His pretty wife would say, "It sure is." Then he said, "Golly, isn't it gorgeous?" She responded, "It sure is." "I can't get over what a nice job Mike did." She'd say, "He sure did." "Isn't it beautiful?" "It sure is." This went on most the night.

Soon I was setting in the man's little room with his metal boxes. He'd plug in headphones like we used in Kansas City and slide his chair in front of me. Sometimes I'd type on the back of little postcards. Sometimes I would type notes to friends and occasionally, when I would hear the broken high-pitched sounds moving very, very fast from his headphones,

he would use me to type something that sounded like a conversation, but in some ways didn't sound like a conversation. I don't know what to make of those.

The only thing I know is, is before the man turns off the lights that glow inside his metal boxes and leaves his little room, he always takes a very soft piece of cloth and polishes me.

The other night his pretty blue-eyed wife came in as he was wrapping things up and getting ready to call it a night. After he wiped me off he paused for a moment and said to her, "Isn't it beautiful?"

His wife responded, "It sure is."

He said, "Goodnight, Underwood," turned off the lights and they went upstairs.

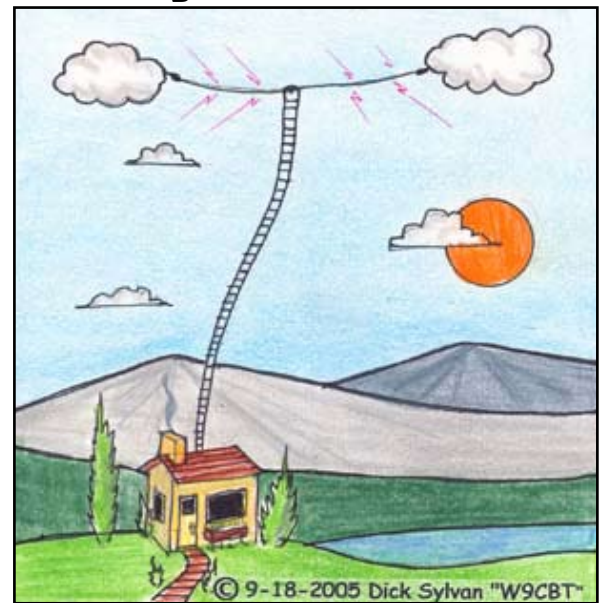
Life is its own reward. ■

K9YA Field Day Results

Team K9YA earned top spot for 1A Central Division (IL, IN & WI) FD in 2007. Crack operators K9PL, N9BOR, N9WAT and WB9JKZ made 1,234 QSOs and earned 5,886 points. They placed 7th overall out of 167 entries. "We're particularly pleased considering we used a 20-year-old rig and a spool of wire from Home Depot for an antenna!" said Mike, N9BOR.

Ham Lingo

DICK SYLVAN, W9CBT



NOW THIS IS WHAT I CALL A REAL
SKYHOOK ANTENNA!

to this endeavor with a heroic and illustrious history. During WWII he was one of nine resistance fighters participating in a successful raid on a Norwegian hydro plant producing heavy water for the German nuclear program. Torstein Raaby's history was no less heroic and illustrious. During WWII he clandestinely reported on German warships and technology including the battleship *Tirpitz*. His reports led to a successful British raid on the *Tirpitz*. For Kon-Tiki's voyage they were assigned the callsign LI2B.

Arrangements were made with the "Radio Amateur League of America;" most likely the ARRL, to monitor LI2B. Transmitters prepared by Haugland and Raaby were "specially constructed for our purpose and partly with the secret sabotage sets used during the war." These six-watt sets were probably based upon British Special Operations Executive clandestine gear. Their receiver was a National NC-173, covering "545 KC to 31 mc plus the 48-56 mc range." "Amateur Net [with speaker] \$189.50" in 1947. All their radio gear was battery powered aside from a small hand-cranked generator set for emergency back-up.

The radio ops were kept busy maintaining "wet dry [sic] batteries, soldering irons, and circuits." It was all they could do to keep the gear working exposed as it was to salt spray "a foot above the surface of the water." "Every night they took turns sending our reports and weather observations out into the ether, where they were picked up by chance radio amateurs who passed the reports on to the Meteorological Institute in Washington and other destinations." The vessel's "mysterious aerials" were lofted by balloon and kite.

Parrot Fever

The parrot was obsessed with repeatedly severing the antenna lead. This *antenna-cidal* behavior ended only when he suffered a bad case of copper induced indigestion. His gastric problems were diagnosed by his lack of appetite and shiny bits of metal in his "leavings." Nursed back to health by Haugland and Raaby he became their constant companion in the shack.

The kite used to fly the antenna fell into the ocean and was replaced with a balloon, which was soon holed by the tropical sun. Sailing into the "dead zone of the Andes," radio contacts were tough to make. The Humboldt Current eventually carried Kon-Tiki to a more propitious location where again signals were heard and contacts made. At that point QSOs were made with "Hal" (Harold Kempel) and his pal, Frank Cuevas, both located in Los Angeles. (A National Company, Inc. ad in *QST* reproduces a letter from Kempel to the

Norwegian embassy in Washington, D.C. The ad states Kon-Tiki's operators issued "...500 messages (CW only) comprising 30,000 words...")

Land Ho!

July 3, sighting frigate birds, the crew knew they were nearing landfall. Two weeks later, sighting a solitary cloud on the horizon, they steered on it as it indicated land. July 29, from a lookout on the masthead, their first glimpse of land—the island Puka Puka. Hostage to wind and current, Puka Puka now fell astern. Four days later, two islands (Fangahina and Angatau) were sighted; they lashed the tiller on a course for Angatau. Four more days (the 97th day since departing Peru) and with the assistance of some Angatauan natives they attempt to land. August 7, 1947: Grounding Kon-Tiki on a reef in the Tuamotu Island group after 101 days and 4,300 miles proved Polynesia was within reach of this early and simple type of vessel.

The day before their grounding a "capable radio 'ham' who had a set on Rarotonga in the Cook Islands" had been contacted, and a sked arranged for the next morning.

9:50 am: "Torstein sat hammering like mad on the key. He had got Rarotonga now." "He asked Rarotonga to listen in on the same wavelength every hour. If we were silent for more than thirty-six hours, Rarotonga must let the Norwegian Embassy in Washington know. Torstein's last words were: 'O.K. Fifty yards left. Here we go. Good-by.'"

More natives arrive from a nearby island. The crew was asked to treat a young islander, Haumata, suffering from a head abscess. Using the penicillin included in the medical supplies carried aboard the raft, Raaby and Haugland, using the hand-cranked generator and back-up radio set, daily received medical advice via Hal and Frank from a Los Angeles-based physician. Their treatment of the young islander was successful.

A documentary film of the voyage won an Oscar in 1951 and the book *Kon-Tiki*; a best seller, was translated into 66 languages.

The original Kon-Tiki is on display at the Kon-Tiki Museum in Oslo, Norway.

(Tom Benham, W3DD [SK], was one of a group of U.S. hams regularly monitoring the expedition, he contacted the expedition the morning they "first sighted land." Reported in the Old Old Timers Club, *Spark-Gap Times*, October 2007.) ■



Robert F. Heytow
Memorial Radio Club

www.k9ya.org
telegraph@k9ya.org