

Dxers Unlimited Sunday April 17, 2016



By Arnie Coro

Hola amigos radioafionados all around the world... From sunny La Habana Cuba, now enjoying perfect spring weather I am Arnaldo, Arnie, Coro bringing to you the weekend edition of Dxers Unlimited, our twice weekly radio hobby program, covering the more than 91 ways that you and I enjoy this wonderful hobby...RADIO !!!

Here is item one: A recent publication provided very interesting information about an early days of radio British enthusiast, by the name of Artie Moore... He was born in 1887, and was among the first radio amateurs of the United Kingdom. Artie was among the very few persons who were able to pick up the distress calls by the Titanic...

The RMS Titanic was the largest ship afloat when it entered service. Graceful, palatial and vast, she carried 2,224 passengers and crew. The White Star Line ship was on her maiden voyage, and having left her final port of call, Queenstown in Southern Ireland, steamed out into the Atlantic bound for New York.

The Titanic's radio equipment was manned 24-hours a day sending and receiving passenger telegrams, handling navigation messages including weather reports and icebergs warnings.

A sound-proofed radio room on the boat deck was manned by two operators and had an aerial strung

from its roof along the length of the ship. This strand of wire would send its faint signals which Artie Moore was able to pick up thousands of miles away.

Just after midnight on April 15 1912, while steaming in the North Atlantic the Titanic collided with an iceberg 375 miles south of the coast of Newfoundland. As millions of tons of water poured through a massive gash in the ship's hull, the two radio men frantically sent out their signals.

Meanwhile, in the early morning at his receiving station, Artie was at his desk, listening. He heard a faint signal in Morse code: "CQD Titanic 41.44N 50.24W." The cryptic 'CQD' meant simply 'Come Quickly Distress'. The numbers gave the ship's geographical coordinates.

It was quickly followed by a further call. Radio was in its infancy and terms familiar to us were new then. The operators, more desperate now used the new SOS signal: "CQD CQD SOS de MGY Position 41.44N 50.24W. Require immediate assistance. Come at once. We have struck an iceberg. Sinking." 'MGY' was the radio call-sign for the Titanic.

Moore frantically wrote down the messages, but still they carried on.

"We are putting the passengers off in small boats" said another message and added "Women and children in boats, cannot last much longer - Come as quickly as possible; our engine-room is filling up to the boilers."

Then, finally: "SOS SOS CQD CQD Titanic. We are sinking fast. Passengers are being put into boats. Titanic."

Picking up a distress radio call is really a very rare thing to happen nowadays, as automatic systems are in charge of sending emergency signals... But at times small boats may use their radios to request emergency assistance and they can be heard on both HF and VHF bands...

In case you pick up a distress call, the standard procedure is to write down the information provided during the call and immediately notify the authorities. Here in Cuba there is a special telephone number for receiving information about marine and air distress calls...

Have you ever picked up a distress emergency call on the radio? If it has happened, send me an e-mail to inforhc at enet dot cu and I will be sharing your story with other Dxers Unlimited's listeners around the world...

Now here is item two at the weekend edition of the program 2 meters band repeaters are used by radio amateurs all around the world in order to extend the range of hand held transceivers and base stations using simple antenna systems.

Here in Cuba the Federation of Radio Amateurs owns and operates a national network of repeaters that are in charge of the radio clubs. Some of the repeaters use professional communications equipment, while others are assembled by linking a receiver and a transmitter with a home built interface...

At some locations the repeaters use sophisticated duplexers that allow using a single antenna for both receiving and transmitting, while at other locations they use separate antennas spaced far enough as to allow operation of the repeater station with the standard 2 meters band frequency separation of six hundred kiloHertz.

Repeaters see a lot of use during emergencies, and that is why many of them are installed at sites that provide full energy back up to keep the repeaters on the air...

Cuban radio amateurs participate in many community activities like sports events, and 2 meter band repeaters provide the possibility of increasing the range of hand held FM transceivers, the popular walkie talkies that are located, for example, along the route of a marathon race.

Keeping the repeaters in optimum conditions is done by volunteers belonging to the radio clubs located near to the repeater sites, something that has proved to be effective in keeping those valuable stations on the air...

Standby for a few seconds now amigos, a short break for a station ID coming up

This is Radio Havana Cuba, and in a few days we will be celebrating our 55th anniversary... The first day of May of 1961, we went on the air with our present name Radio Havana Cuba... changing from the previous name of Cuban Experimental Shortwave Station, Onda Corta Experimental Cubana....and from those early days here is one anecdote...

When the station went on the air for the first time on the 24th of February of 1961, the Onda Corta Experimental Cubana studios were provided by the Cuban AM and FM station Radio Progreso... and we had no studio to transmitter site link ...

So we had to record the one hour long program on a reel to reel tape machine, and then transport the tape by car to the Bauta transmitter site...

At the provisional building where we had installed an American made one kiloWatts short wave transmitter and a 10 kilowatts Swiss Brown Boveri brand new transmitter a Phillips professional reel to reel tape recorder was used to play back the tape several times during the evening...when we were on the air using a dipole antenna supported by two electricity utility poles....

The arrangement came to a halt when the telephone company installed two broadcast quality long distance lines

Now here is the anecdote... one rainy day, when transporting the program recorded on the big tape reel to the Bauta site, the driver crashed into a horse... so that evening the station was off the air....

The decision to send the recorded program to put the station on the air even before the long distance phone lines were installed, and no radio links from downtown Havana to Bauta were available, proves how the Cuban leadership conceded a tremendous importance to be on the air at the times when the invasion of Cuba by the mercenary brigade organized, trained and transported by the United States of America was about to happen....

Precisely this weekend, 55 years ago, on the 15th of April of 1961, the cities of La Habana and Santiago de Cuba airports were bombed by B-26 aircraft that also attacked the San Antonio de los Baños air base...

Two days later on the 17th of April more than fifteen hundred mercenaries landed at the Bay of Pigs and were defeated in 66 hours of fierce combats...

The news about the defeat of the invaders and the victory achieved by the Cuban armed forces were reported by the then Onda Corta Experimental Cubana, that by that time had on the air three transmitters, the one kilowatt Gates, a 10 kilowatts Swiss Brown Boveri and the then recently installed 100 kiloWatts Swiss Brown Boveri with several new antennas that made possible to tell the world what exactly was happening in Cuba, direct and from the source....

And now just before the end of the show a short update about short wave propagation conditions ... solar flux still past the 100 mark, the sunspot number has increased to almost 70 now and we are still well into the spring equinoctial Dx season in the northern hemisphere and the autumn equinoctial Dx season in the southern hemisphere... send your signal reports and comments to inforhc at enet dot cu,, or VIA Airmail to Arnie Coro, Radio Havana Cuba, Havana, Cuba

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/ciencias/90912-dxers-unlimited-sunday-april-17-2016>



Radio Habana Cuba