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## The Wireless News

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For well over a century, radio has provided ships at sea and their well-off passengers with current news of the world (and at times, war news), market data and sports. From Marconi's wireless telegraph to satellite delivery, the wireless news has been indispensable to voyagers of many sorts, especially on transoceanic routes. Steamship lines saw money to be made in providing this amenity. The technologies of communications and of the printing of newspapers at sea paced each other. Many of these seagoing "newspapers" themselves tell nautical tales and social stories about their readers. But they also illumine their producers in Europe, North America, and Asia, including the shipping lines, the shoreside press, and the radiomen at sea. The radio technology evolved from long waves to satellites, and from spark sets to vacuum tube gear and then to modern solid-state circuits. A demand for current information at sea, far from its sources, created an important maritime revenue stream. The economics of news at sea and the higher socio-economic class of the passengers helped to further the development of the radio art.

### Introduction – Young Marconi Started It

News for passengers and crew at sea, sent through the ether by "wireless telegraphy," started with Marconi, as did so much else in radio (see Fig. 1). His daughter Degna Marconi wrote about her then-young father's return from the United States to England via the SS *St. Paul* in 1899:

"There is a sequel to that epochal [1899] transatlantic crossing. When the *St. Paul* was less than 50 miles from the Needles [near to the Isle of Wight in Southern England], for an hour and a half dispatches reached the vessel about the progress of the South African War. The ship's captain, J. C. Jamison, felt that these

should be preserved and a special edition of *The Transatlantic Times* was run off for the benefit of the Seamen's Fund at a dollar a copy. "Through the courtesy of Mr. G. Marconi," it said, 'the passengers on board the *St. Paul* are accorded a rare privilege, that of receiving news several hours before landing. . . . As we all know, this is the first time that such a venture as this has been undertaken. A Newspaper published at Sea with Wireless Telegraph messages received and printed on a ship going twenty knots. . . .' Marconi cheerfully autographed the copies. Before the *St. Paul* docked at Southampton, readers knew:

"3:30 [p.m.] 40 miles. Ladysmith, Kimberley, and Mafeking holding

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out well. No big battle. 15,000 men recently landed.

“3.40 [p.m.] At Ladysmith no more killed. Bombardment at Kim-

berley effected the destruction of *One Tin Pot*. It was auctioned for £200. It is felt that period of anxiety and strain is over, and that our turn has come.”<sup>1</sup>



Fig. 1. This image is an enhanced and cropped version of the cover of the company magazine *Wireless World* published by the Marconi Press Agency, Ltd. as Volume 1 for February 1914. The Morse code spells out Marconi, and the station is the reconstructed Poldhu, Cornwall ZZ. Worldwide coverage suggested by the cover, which was then aspirational, had to await the short wave “Beam System” developed a decade later. (Author’s collection)

These messages about the Boer War are some of the first recorded wireless telegraphy traffic. A graphic of the *Transatlantic Times* as printed on the SS *St. Paul* is reproduced as Fig. 2.

Ship newspapers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, until the coming of the wireless news, primarily allayed boredom on the long voyages from one continent to another:

“While to date there is little information as to how common the production of ship newspapers on board long-distance passenger steamers in the late nineteenth century was, we do know that it was certainly not a rare thing. The passages between

Great Britain and its Australasian colonies could last weeks or months at a time and were notorious for their dullness . . . [T]he passengers on many journeys got organised and elected a committee ‘for promoting the entertainment of the passengers during the voyage.’ Besides organising social activities like sports or musical events, such a committee often pushed for the compilation of a ship newspaper, i.e. a newspaper produced by passengers for passengers only with the means available on board—and thus concentrated exclusively on topics that were of interest to the travellers.”<sup>2</sup>

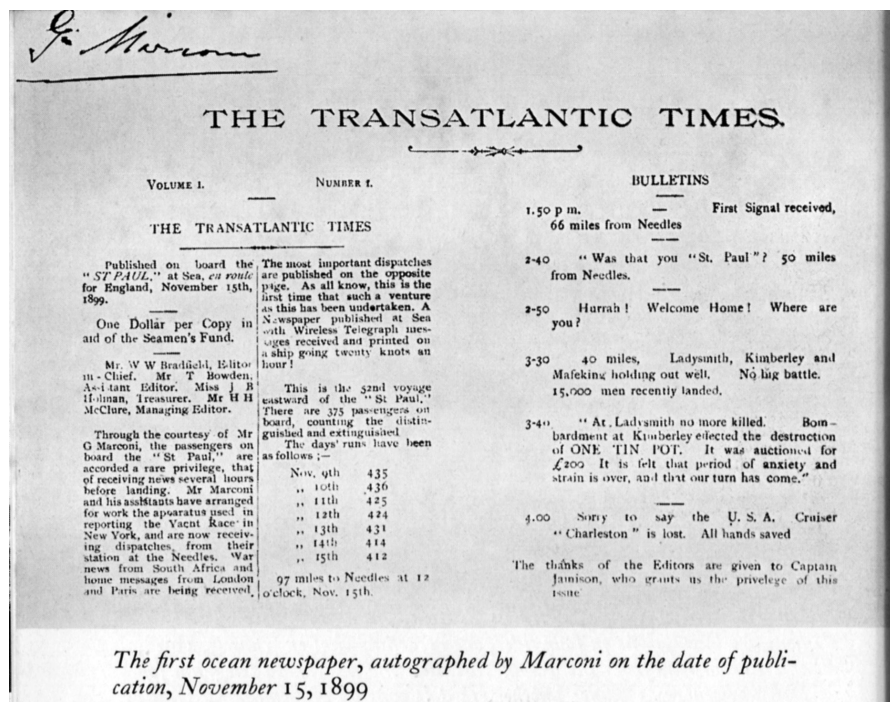


Fig. 2. Marconi's first newspaper at sea, the *Transatlantic Times*; his new technology put to a new use immediately. (Courtesy of David Barlow, Lizard Museum)




## Early Evolution of Wireless News at Sea — Sparks at Work

### *Wireless Signals for Distraction If Not Distress*

Wireless signals were early used for distress and later for distraction in the form of wireless news. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the maritime industry quickly adopted "the wireless" for signals of distress. (This was at first CQD then by 1910 SOS. CQD is said to have meant Come Quick Danger.) Management equally and quickly saw the advantages of wireless to control

vessels—and even senior captains. Passenger convenience (and related revenues) entered the picture as well, and thereby hangs the present tale.

British maritime wireless operations enjoyed staffing from the Marconi Company, which also leased the equipment to the vessel owners. The company trained the operators and largely invented the equipment, especially the low frequency, long wave transmitters. Generally, vessels used the shorter 600-meter wavelength at sea because ships' masts would not support any longer antennas for longer wavelengths.



CUNARD DAILY BULLETIN.

MARCONIGRAMS

DIRECT TO THE SHIP.

**EDITORIAL OFFICE:**  
R.M.S. "CAMPANIA."

Wednesday, June 8th, 1904, 1:00 p.m.

Received from the Marconi Station  
Cape Breton, (Canada).  
Distance from New York 1,300 miles.

**CANADIAN NEWS.**  
Introduction of Budget.  
Telegrams to hand announce that Mr. Fiddling, the Canadian Minister of Finance, has introduced into Parliament his Budget, recommending that the duties be increased on the following articles—Cloth, Cigarette and China; and reduced on Glass and Molasses. It is observed that no protection on steel has been announced.

**STEEL STRIKE.**  
We are informed that the situation in connection with the Sydney (Canada) Steel Works remains unchanged, and that Government intervention has been refused.

**ENGLISH NEWS.**  
The King has announced that he will open the Anglo-American University Athletic Meet at the Queen's Club.

**STOP-PRESS.**

Wednesday, June 8th, 1904, midnight.  
Received from Marconi Station, Cape Cod (U.S.A.).  
Distance, 1,000 miles.  
Travel, who won Golf Tournament last week made poor showing in open tournament. Nine players entered on first round at Toppingham.


**WAR NEWS.**  
A fleet of junks from Dahly arrived at Cholon and report several days' contention fighting between Dahly and Port Arthur. A rumour has reached London that Port Arthur has fallen.

Wednesday June 8th, 1904, 9:20 p.m.  
Received (through Renter's) from the Marconi Station, Pacific England.  
Distance from Liverpool 2,000 miles.

**AMERICAN SUBMARINE.**  
According to a report circulated yesterday, an American submarine during tests remained submerged 17 hours with 3 men on board.

Wednesday, June 8th, 1904, 10:30 p.m.  
Received from the Marconi Station  
Cape Breton (Canada).  
Distance from New York, 1,100 miles.

The Chairman of the Cunard Steamship Company has forwarded to Mr. Marconi on the "Campania" the following Atlantic telegrams:—  
"I trust that this message will reach you promptly and with your continued success with your Wireless Telegraphy."  
—Inverclyde—



CUNARD DAILY BULLETIN.

**FOREIGN NEWS.**

The residence of an Englishman at Tangiers was entered on Tuesday by party of armed Moors, who demanded and took away rifles and money. In consequence of this, the British Consul has demanded the immediate arrest of the mob-factors. It is reported that the British Consulate to take action as the chief instigator is an influential Moor.

**CRIPPLE CREEK RIOTS.**

Conditions at Cripple Creek still remain very disturbed. A vigilance committee composed of mine owners and business men are in control of the mining districts. They have arrested two hundred Union sympathizers.

**MEETING OF KING EDWARD AND EMPEROR WILLIAM.**

A cable dispatch from Paris states, that the approaching visit of King Edward with the Emperor William at Kiel, calls for no anxiety; it is even thought that the meeting may improve German-French relations.

**END.** An American correspondent of the London "Daily Telegraph," has been shot by Chinese near Nanchang (See our previous Marconigrams).

Heavy firing near Port Arthur points to the commencement of the final struggle.

It is reported that the Russian Fleet intends to emerge from the harbour at theoretical moment and fight for its life.

**FINANCIAL.**

Latest advices report Stock Market strong and prices better all round.

**DAILY RUNS.**

Route	Lat.	Long.
Sunday, June 5	300 to noon from Liverpool	
Monday,	6 51A 49-02 N. 23-05 W.	
Tuesday	7 51A 46-30 N. 21-48 W.	
Wednesday	8 52A 42-00 N. 42-25 W.	

**WIND AND WEATHER.**

Yesterday.  
Day opened with a fresh E.N.E. breeze and rough sea. In the afternoon the wind veered round to the W.S.W., and blew with the force of a moderate gale.

The sea decreased at noon but towards night it became rough again.

The temperature of the air at 2 a.m., was 55° Fahrenheit; at 2 p.m., the Mercury had jumped to 64°; that of the sea was 58° at 2 a.m., and at 6 p.m., it had risen to 62°.

**SHIPPING INTELLIGENCE.**

At 8:45 p.m., yesterday in Lat., 51-19 North, and Long., 46-45 West, we passed two miles to the Northward of an American Line steamer bound West.

— — — — —

R.M.S., "Campania," June 8th, 1904.  
Mr. E. H. JOHNSTONE,  
Manager & Director,  
"Daily Express,"  
London.

Writes:—  
"Today's 'Bulletin' is a model of what an ocean newspaper should be. We have all the news that counts from all parts of the world—all the news that is worth citing and nothing more—and we have it presented to us in a form which reflects the greatest credit upon the members of your editorial and mechanical staffs. Were all the resources of London or New York at your disposal it could not be better printed."

Fig. 3. The Marconi Company's Cuthbert Hall in 1903 foresaw a profitable line of business in the wireless news and contracted with Cunard to make it so. Hence, the wireless news on the Cunard line's RMS *Campania* in 1904. (Courtesy of David Barlow, Lizard Museum)



A passenger diary of 1902 refers to this sort of vessel communication by noting:

"Yesterday we met *Compania*. Messages were sent back and forth by means of wireless telegraphy until they were about ninety miles apart. *Compania* is a much faster boat requiring almost two days less than this boat to cross the ocean. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

The Cunard Line (UK) contracted with the Marconi company in 1903 to broadcast news daily so its vessels could provide it to passengers. One such shipboard publication, also involving the *Campania*, is shown in Fig. 3. These transmissions enabled the first regular "Wireless News" at sea, according to David Barlow, G3PLE, curator of the Lizard Marconi Wireless Station "LD" in Cornwall (UK).<sup>4</sup>

London newspapers and press associations aggregated news stories, and much of that got across the Atlantic by

cable. From either shore of the Atlantic, wireless (and then radio), got the stories of the day to vessels plying the pond. See, for example, Fig. 4 with a map of the North Atlantic bracketed by Marconi towers on the first page of a 1908 Cunard Daily Bulletin.

**WORLD-FAMED ARTISTIC FABRICS** **FOR DAY & EVENING DRESSED**  
**LIBERTY SHAWLS & SCARVES**  
 LIBERTY & CO. LONDON LIBERTY & CO. PARIS

**Cunard Daily Bulletin.**

**"Lusitania."**

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 1908.

**HOTELS IN SCOTLAND**

**GLASGOW:** St. Enoch Station Hotel—Best centre for Business Gentlemen and Tourists to Western Highlands, Trossachs and Firth of Clyde.  
**AYR:** Station Hotel—For Burns' Cottage (Birthplace), Monument, Brig-o'-Doon, &c. Convenient for several Golf Courses.  
**DUMFRIES:** Station Hotel—For Burns' Mausoleum, Caerlaverock Castle, Sweetheart Abbey, and the lovely Firth of Solway, &c.  
**TURNBURY:** Station Hotel—For Rest and Holiday. Golf.  
 For Descriptive Tariffs apply J. H. THOMAS, Manager, Chief Office, Glasgow, G. & S. W. Railway Coy.'s Hotels.

CUNARD LINE CHEQUES ACCEPTED. TELEGRAMS: "SOUTHERN."

**LONDON.**  
**ST. ERMINS HOTEL, ST. JAMES' PARK, S.W.**  
 A MOST FASHIONABLE HOTEL of 400 Rooms, between Westminster Abbey and Buckingham Palace, near the shopping centres and Theatres.  
**BEDROOMS, With Private Bath. LARGE & SMALL SUITES.**  
 TELEGRAMS: "ERMINES, LONDON."

**IT IS ON BOARD** French Natural Sparkling Table Water  
**Perrier**  
 "The Champagne of Table Waters"

THIS WATER HAS RAPIDLY RISEN TO FIRST PLACE AMONGST TABLE WATERS IN EUROPE

Bottled at the spring in the South of France. Contains only natural gas.

**CAN BE OBTAINED AT ALL STORES IN AMERICA**

Fig. 4. The Cunard line's RMS *Lusitania* made for travel at its best before World War One—for rich people anyway. Stupidity doomed the passenger liner *Lusitania* during the war when the Germans torpedoed her because she carried contraband munitions. At least 1,198 people thus died in May 1915, including many Americans. (Courtesy of David Barlow, Lizard Museum)

***Marconi Initiates Regular "Press" Broadcasts (circa 1904)***

The Marconi high power station ZZ at Poldhu, in Cornwall, had sent out the three clicks of the first transatlantic signal in 1901. Barlow notes its role in press operations, the first "*Ocean News*":

"I have heard it said that Poldhu was only an experimental and development station and was not involved in commercial activities. This was not the case as in 1903 the Marconi Company came to an agreement with Cunard to send the Cunard Daily Bulletin from Poldhu and Glace Bay [Canada] daily. The first idea for a ships newspaper came from Marconi himself while returning from New York on board the SS *St. Paul* in 1899. The ship received news of the progress of the Boer War . . .

"In October 1903 the first ship's daily newspaper was published on board the SS *Lucania*. This may well have been sent from Poldhu because an agreement had been reached with the Cunard Company that the Cunard Daily Bulletin would be sent from Poldhu and Glace Bay in an attempt to cover the Atlantic Ocean. . . .

"By 1910 it is known that from one AM for 45 minutes Poldhu was sending *Ocean News*, the nightly news bulletin. This is known because the Poldhu signal jammed the SOS between the Lizard station and the SS *Minnehaha*. The log of the Lizard station also indicates that Poldhu also

sent out a weather report or forecast for merchant ships. The call sign used was ZZ.

"Poldhu was used for sending ships' newspapers because of its high power and significantly greater range than the coast stations such as the Lizard. It should also be noted that this traffic was sent at night to take advantage of night effect."<sup>5</sup>

As early as 1904,<sup>6</sup> the Marconi Company supplied each ship that offered its *Oceanic News* with an on-board printer and pressman, in the employ of the company, to produce it by letterpress. According to the 1904 report, financial houses, railroads, steamship companies, and any "good house" could buy an advertisement for a minimum \$100 "card." The first issue of the *Oceanic News* was expected to cost \$14,000 to produce. (Both amounts were relatively princely sums in those days.) The expenditures would permit the advertisers and producers of the news to reach the well-off "salon" travelers on the Atlantic run, some 125,000 in 1903. Among other items for them, daily market quotations for 43 "universal stocks" would appear. Relays from ship to ship updated the data and news. The Marconi Company founded this 1904 project on the successful tests of wireless for news at sea undertaken by the company and the Reuters press agency. The Lizard wireless station sent the press out to an incoming ship, to the delight of all concerned.<sup>7</sup>

***Station KPH in California Sends "Press" for the Pacific (circa 1912)***

In California, the possibility of transmitting news to ships at sea at the turn of the last century made for a business opportunity for the Pacific routes as well. In 1905, the projected Mt. Tamalpais wireless station (as it happens, sabotage kept it off the air) saw a maritime news service as a revenue source:

"Wireless Station On Tamalpais [—] Communication To Be Had With Ships 2000 Miles Out At Sea[:] The Pacific Wireless Telegraph Company has the project in hand. It expects to have this wireless plant and a similar one on a high mountain peak near Honolulu, in complete working order inside of a few months. The officers of the company feel confident of their ability to make the wireless plant a complete success in every way. It is believed that it will be possible to communicate with all the wireless equipped vessels with a radius of 2000 or more miles. It is expected that every one of the Oriental and Australian Mail Steamships will be equipped with wireless telegraph apparatus, and that on these ships a daily newspaper of a few pages containing the condensed doings of the world furnished from the Tamalpais station will be published."<sup>8</sup>

Marconi's Poldhu station in 1901 had bridged the approximately 2,000 miles to Newfoundland. The high-power "Mt Tam" station replicated its

structure with a vertical fan antenna. Thus, it was well within the realm of technical and commercial possibility to reach Hawaii *circa* 1905 (it did happen in 1910).

An extant audio recording of a press spark transmission *circa* 1910, likely intended to be heard at sea, has been unearthed by David Ring, N1EA, a principal of the Radio Officers Group. This Morse code transmission was probably recorded shoreside in San Francisco on an Edison cylinder machine, and perhaps at the sending station, callsign "TG." A Nevada boxing match is its subject (Nevada permitted betting, then and now). It reads:

"Joe Jeffries owes Jack Johnson a good deal of money. That is he has made a fortune through his relations with the colored champion. In fact the Californian has cleaned up \$62218.28 since Nov 17 all because the negro fighter insisted that the retired champion agree to meet him in a fistic contest . . ."<sup>9</sup>

Earle Ennis, a western wireless pioneer, owned and operated San Francisco's Western Wireless Equipment Company and its wireless station TG (see Fig. 5).<sup>10</sup> It broadcast from the Adam Grant building on Market Street in San Francisco. The entire 15-round prizefight in Reno got on the air via station TG, especially for nearby ships at sea. (That's where most professional wireless receivers were floating around at the time.) Ellery W.



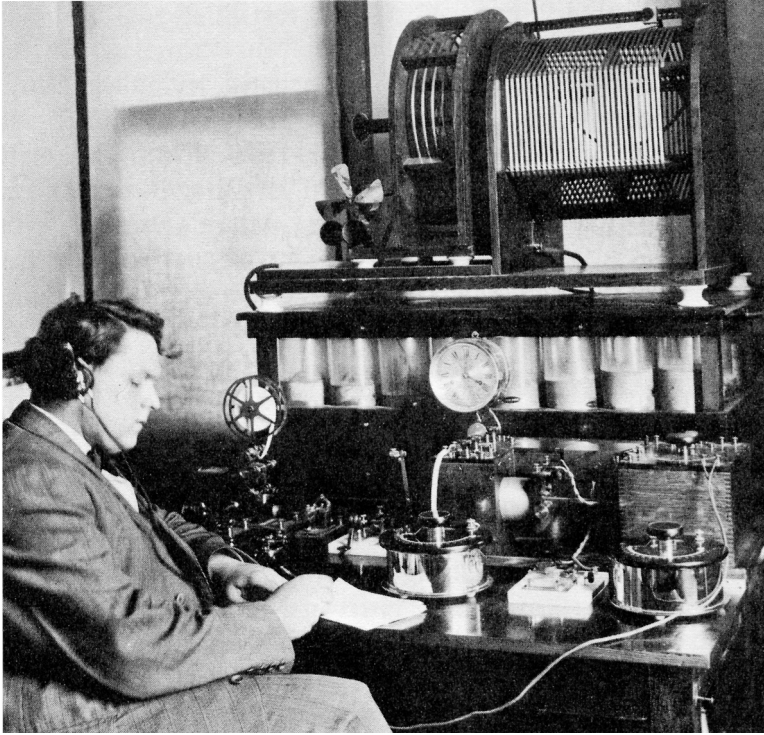


Fig. 5. Earle Ennis pioneered radio with his San Francisco station TG in 1910. He also first communicated by wireless with an aircraft that same year. (Jane Morgan, *Electronics in the West*, 1967, p. 35)

Stone, later the assistant radio inspector for the U.S. Department of Commerce at San Francisco recognized the importance of the story of the radio art and reported this to *Modern Electrics*:

“The returns were also received by several ships out at sea, among them being the Oceanic Steamship Company’s liner ‘*Sierra*’ on her way to San Francisco from Honolulu, whose operator gave out the fight bulletins to the passengers as soon as they were received. . . . later Hillcrest [PH] the U.W. [United Wireless] Co.’s big 15

K.W. station at San Francisco, sent out the news of Johnson’s victory.”<sup>11</sup>

The *San Francisco Chronicle* employed wireless to hear *from* ships about to come into port. This was known to all as “the shipping news” when the newspapers published this information. The vessels then, it is a fair inference, wanted to hear from their ports of call and homeports if feasible about the news of the day, financial ups and downs, and sporting events. The *Chronicle* used a spark station *circa* 1910 with the call letters “CH.” Also

in San Francisco, the United Wireless Company used station callsign PH for its initial location at the Palace Hotel in 1905, which it vacated as a result of the San Francisco earthquake in 1906. PH became KPH and migrated to what is now Daly City, on a hill south of San Francisco, around 1912. KPH soon became the main West Coast maritime station. American Marconi assumed ownership of this station in 1912 after United Wireless went bankrupt. While United Wireless first exploited this business opportunity up to 1912, American Marconi extended it thereafter. KPH migrated north *circa* 1920 to the then RCA, high power, transpacific locations at Bolinas and Pt. Reyes, California in Marin County.

*Circa* 1912, Station KPH sent out “press” daily at midnight on 600 meters from a hilltop south of San Francisco in what is now Daly City. The press had been aggregated earlier from the San Francisco newspapers. Shipboard operators in the Pacific would then turn this traffic into the *Ocean Wireless News*. If a ship’s radioman did not get all the detail from the 00:30 Morse code broadcast, other shipboard operators nearby would supply fill-ins. Richard Johnstone, who went to work as a young wireless operator in 1912 (and who much later served as a principal of the Society of Wireless Pioneers, after retiring from RCA and then the Navy) so reported many years later:

“The daily press aboard ship was just as important and exciting as the arrival of the daily train in a small

town. Press was sent by station KPH at 12:30 every morning. All ships copied the press. If you missed a portion, it was always possible to get a fill-in from some other ship, sooner or later. On passenger ships the news was mimeographed on an insert sheet, placed in a magazine section called the “OCEAN WIRELESS NEWS” and sold for ten cents a copy. The wireless company supplied the mimeograph, ink, stencils, magazine section, and the inserts. A different magazine section was used each day. This section contained advertisements from merchants on the Pacific Coast, Hawaiian Islands, Australia, and the Orient. It was a good profitable source of income for the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Co. Besides, they received half of the proceeds of the ten cents per copy obtained by selling the paper aboard ship. Multiply this by thousands of passengers and hundreds of ships and it was good business.

“However, the ship’s operators had requested consideration of a more equitable division of the profits, and they were right. This request was under consideration, but it was also under a slow bell. Some of the boys improvised a method of duplicating inserts to bolster their share of the profit, without the approval of the Marconi Company, and the requested increase was never granted. If the ship was to sell 300 papers, the amount to turn in to the wireless company was fifteen dollars. The other fifteen dollars was divided between the two operators making their total salary

for the month \$47.50. Apparently everything was in favor of the Marconi Co.”<sup>12</sup>

### **New York Herald Station WHB Provides Press in the Near Atlantic (as Early as 1909)**

A 1915 Morse code spark signal press broadcast to ships resides on a recording in the AWA archives. The *New York Herald* station WHB transmitted this press traffic in 1915 to ships at sea. The late Jim Maxwell, W6CF, analyzed it in a note for the California Historical Radio Society about copying WHB, as recorded by Charles Apgar, 2MN, in 1915:

“Here’s the text of the WHB transmission: ‘Mny k bt investigation shows missing bank clerk Henry Bradley merchants natl bank short hundred fifty thousand played races plunged stox.’”<sup>13</sup>

Maxwell noted that this Morse was hand sent and that the recording starts in the middle of a transmission:

“It isn’t clear what was going on prior to the BT (break or pause). MNY is a common abbreviation for ‘many’ and K is an invitation to transmit. It is possible that this represents a fragment of a conversation between the operators prior to going on with the news. The entire transmission seems somewhat informal—note the use of the abbreviation NATL for National, and STOX probably for STOCKS. In the word MERCHANTS the two

letters CH were sent using the Morse sequence ‘----’ (four dashes). This is not commonly used these days except among Spanish speaking operators. The word PLUNGED is actually somewhat ambiguous. The manual sending was good throughout, with a slight swing, but easy to copy. Only PLUNGED makes any sense here, referring to ‘Plunging’ (investing heavily) into the stock market or stocks plunging in value.”

Maxwell concluded: “Overall, it seems as if a report was being given of a missing bank clerk who had been playing the races and the stock market. Too bad we don’t have more information on it.” Of course, such a story coming out of the wireless cabin would also alert the captain and the purser of a potential fugitive aboard, irrespective of any on-board newspaper. All such officers surely remembered Dr. Crip-pin’s capture by wireless in 1910.

The *New York Herald* wireless station has been an interest of Professor Noah Arceneaux in the School of Journalism and Media Studies at San Diego State University:

“Station WHB[:] . . . the [*New York Herald*] established a permanent station in 1909 . . . . The station, known first as OHX, broadcast news twice a day, with each transmission lasting approximately fifteen to twenty minutes, and claimed that its signal extended 1,500 miles. Following the Radio Act of 1912, the government began to assign call letters to stations,



and WHB became the new moniker. (The H did not stand for the *Herald*, however, as other New York stations were also assigned call letters that began with the WH prefix.)”<sup>14</sup>

Professor Noah Arceneaux adds: “A book on wireless telegraphy published in 1912 contains two photos of the *Herald* station.”<sup>15</sup> One shows an unnamed operator inside the control room; another shows the exterior of the station, located at the Battery, the southern tip of Manhattan. Two massive horizontal antennas dominate the skyline. The book provides no additional information on the *Herald*, although one paragraph citing Alfred P. Morgan addresses the general phenomenon of wireless stations operated by the press:

“Several enterprising newspapers have recognized the value of wireless telegraphy in collecting shipping news and have installed outfits for the assistance of their reporting bureau. This innovation in modern journalism has quickly developed into a useful feature of those publications who have seen fit to adopt it. When the baseball season is under way every steamship within calling distance wants the latest baseball scores or sporting results.”<sup>16</sup>

In the years before World War One, the *Ocean Wireless News*,<sup>17</sup> published by Marconi Publishing, New York, had laid in a folded sheet with “News Received Direct by Marconi Wireless,” including a weather forecast and press

news (and a passenger list). One such sheet is dated March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1914. The front cover for the booklet carrying the sheet displays a color picture of an ocean liner at sea with a tugboat alongside, signed by the artist “O’Malley” at the bottom of picture. The *News* carried many advertisements, mostly for hotels, suggesting that at least some passengers did not make hotel reservations until well underway. It was likely cheaper to do so by ship’s wireless than trans-oceanic cable.

Around 1914, the regular at-sea newspaper with wireless traffic content evolved. The noted radio authority, Dr. Adrian Peterson of Adventist World Radio (AWR), writes on this development:

“In the very early years, there was a ship newspaper with the title ‘Aerogram.’ In 1915, due to commercial buy-outs in the United States, the name was changed to ‘Ocean Wireless News’ and this was made available to many ships plying the coastal passenger trade along the eastern seaboard of North America.”<sup>18</sup>

The Conrad Archive notes about its 1915 copy of the *Ocean Wireless News*:

“A colour monthly containing travel articles, marine items, and light humour, supplemented by daily news inserted by wireless operators, *The Ocean Wireless News: A Journal for Travellers* was published by the Wireless Press Company of New York between 1899 and 1925, when

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it merged with *Popular Radio*. The magazine, which advertised itself as ‘The First Wireless Newspaper,’ was available on American steamship lines as well as by subscription.”<sup>19</sup> As

of 1915, it sold for ten cents a copy. (As of 1931, with the advent of the depression, it went out of business.)

An elegant lady passenger of the day appeared on a cover of the *Ocean*



Fig. 6. A uniformed Marconi messenger boy appears, winged like Mercury, the messenger of the gods. A lady of elegance and means glances at him from the corner of her eye as he salutes her and says: “Marconigram for you, Miss.” Her valise looks full. Is she about to embark? Is she on board? Is the message from her husband? Perhaps her *fiancee*? (Courtesy of Joe Knight)

*Wireless News* in this pre-war era (see Fig. 6). This undated cover exemplifies the era of first class travel and service before World War One, in the decade of the *Lusitania* and the *Titanic*. The cover is itself a droll advertisement for the pleasing convenience of receiving (and sending) Marconigrams at sea, facilitated by a winged boy-Mercury messenger. The Marconi Company was ever alive to the prospects of revenue from its new technology, which enhanced both performance and its bottom line.

### **Short Wave Radio, Powered by Vacuum Tubes, Became the Etheric Medium for Wireless News at Sea**

#### ***The Transition From Spark to Continuous Waves ("CW")***

The exigencies of the Great War had accelerated vacuum tube technology. After the war, amateurs explored wavelengths "two hundred meters and down," *i.e.*, the short waves above 1,500 KHz. Marconi also turned to short wave radio. The radio art, especially in its maritime aspects, took advantage of these developments. Transoceanic and even worldwide range became routine as a result of ionospheric propagation. Morse code communication to ships at sea became much more reliable. Shore stations automated traffic such as press and weather. Short wave radio, powered by vacuum tubes, became the etheric medium for wireless news at sea in the decades after World War One. Vacuum tube transmitters became the state of

the art in the mid-1920s for maritime stations and most others. These evacuated "bottles" powered the antennas that then sent the "press" winging through the ether. Smaller vacuum tubes had already made possible the regenerative receivers that could copy traffic from very far away, especially on the shorter wavelengths. Then the later stable superheterodyne circuit radios predominated after the mid-1930s, for voice as well as Morse code. Until the 1920s, spark was king; after that it was only a technological ghost.

Various styles of wireless news continued to inform passengers of the "press" on almost every shipping line. For a while after World War One, the news traveled through the ether on spark signals, as did almost all the other wireless traffic. (The U.S. Navy used Federal Telegraph Company arcs of up to a million watts of peak power after the first working arc was used at Federal's San Francisco station FS in 1912.)<sup>20</sup> Federal also saw the revenue opportunities in providing the wireless news to passengers on Federal-equipped vessels (see Fig. 7). Beginning in the 1920s, short wave CW transmitters and receivers using vacuum tubes provided the wireless news for passenger liners. Wireless news, particularly about the markets and sporting events of interest to the well-off, was a perquisite and told of luxury travel in the Roaring Twenties. Mundane news of the day also circulated in the same way. These magazines or newspaper-like sheets of inserts also generated revenue from advertisements and in many cases from sales.



# Federal Radio News

A DAILY NEWS JOURNAL FOR OCEAN TRAVELERS 3-24-1921



A Canal of Ceylon.

Courtesy Pacific Mail Magazine.

Fig. 7. The Federal Telegraph Company contracted with shipping lines in the Pacific to provide wireless telegraph service to ships at sea using its Poulson arc system. Federal appears to have sent wireless news on a daily basis for shipboard publication in its *Federal Radio News* publication for passengers. Dating from 1921, this cover shows a Ceylonese canal, perhaps to encourage travel on that route. (Courtesy of History San Jose and Joe Knight who found it in the Archives there)

### ***Colorful Newspapers Please Passengers and Generate Revenues***

Dr. Peterson describes the format of post-war wireless news publications, which is consistent with wireless news publications discussed in the following paragraphs:

“In those days, a cover was printed on land, often in color and with lots of advertising, and this was made available in bulk to ships equipped with a wireless receiver and some form of printing press. The inside section of the ship newspaper was compiled from up to date reports received on the wireless equipment, it was inserted into the color cover, and the newspaper was sold to passengers.”<sup>21</sup>

The Australian vessel RMS *Makura* published one such edition of the *Wireless News*. The cover of this land-printed 1927 *Wireless News* was graced with a 1926 nautical painting by C. B. Norton (see Fig. 8). Amalgamated Wireless Australasia, Ltd. provided this 36-page booklet aboard the *Makura*. The following words ran as a footer on the cover advertising Amalgamated Wireless: “An Ocean Newspaper Published On Board By Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) Ltd, Sydney.” The crew inserted the news reports aboard. An internal advertisement for the news with the words, “The Morning News of Sea Travel,” is reproduced in Fig. 9. The internal logo for the *Wireless News* appears as Fig. 10.

The wireless operators sourced the news from the Australian Press

Association and from the *Sydney Evening Post*. This vessel and its sister ships plied the sea-routes to San Francisco via Tahiti from Sydney. The radio-room stayed tuned to Australia even on the Tahiti to San Francisco leg of the voyage. The relevant time zones are shown on the back cover of the *Wireless News* in Fig. 11; this would be particularly useful, perhaps, in sending a wireless message for a hotel reservation. It is likely that the passengers hailed mostly from Australia. The news of the day shows up on the last pages of the magazine (see Fig. 12).

For these booklets, wireless operators on the vessels took down “the press” from one or more shore stations,



Fig. 8. Colorful covers, here a painting from nautical artist C. B. Norton, and pre-printed advertisements enveloped the few pages of this 1927 edition of the *Wireless News*; the news insert was prepared from received radio transmission of “press.” (Author’s collection)

paragraph by paragraph. This booklet also lists all of the passengers (early “networking” perhaps), and it advertises goods and services. It notices shipboard events and gives port information. Only radio could reach the ships at sea and garner the revenue derived from the demand for current news, especially financial reports, although cables might still supplement radio internationally. Shore stations competed with each other by providing “press” to ships at

sea. With “press” reliably anticipated, the passenger lines could sell advertisements in their booklets from businesses in ports of call.

Another edition of the *Wireless News* resides in the collections of the Australian Victoria Museum (see Fig. 13). This is a “Souvenir Edition” of the *Wireless News* published for the Australian Commonwealth Line of Steamers, specifically the TSS *Jervis Bay*, according to the museum. As this



Fig. 9. The 1927 *Wireless News* as printed carried this internal advertisement. These vessels steam along under their 600-meter wavelength antennas. Note inset map of worldwide routes. (Author's collection)



Fig. 10. This logo within the 1927 *Wireless News* perhaps illustrates the company's passenger liners coming and going. In those days only a boat could get in or out of Australia. The mineral and other wealth of the island continent sustained luxury travel. (Author's collection)





Fig. 11. The back cover on this 1927 *Wireless News* shows time zones around the world. This not only made for a colorful back cover, it also facilitated timing for passenger radio communications to ports. It may be that this was a standard annular back cover illustration with particular routes appearing in the center—why else Bombay, London and Rio clocks? (Author's collection)

THE WIRELESS NEWS



PAPEETE TO SAN FRANCISCO.

R.M.S. "MAKURA".

MAY 11th 27.

LONDON 11th.

BISHOP OF LONDON RETURNS.

The Bishop of London returned from Australia and New Zealand to meet a violent attack from Sir William Joyson Hicks. The Home Secretary accused the Bishop of having filled the Diocese, London, with men of disloyal doctrines. (Aust Press Assn)

LONDON 11th.

PROBLEM FOR SCOTLAND YARD

Scotland Yard's best brains are concentrating on the mystery of a trunk, which was deposited at Charing Cross station three weeks ago. When opened it was found to contain the decomposed body of a woman (Aust. Press Assn)

NEW YORK 11th.

SEARCH FOR NUNGESSER.

The bleak stretches of the stormy Atlantic are being combed today for the missing aviators Captains' Nungesser and Gali, now a full day overdue at New York, on their flight from Paris. Not one authentic word of the planes whereabouts has come from any source.

CANBERRA 11th.

IMPRESSIVE BURIAL CEREMONY.

The funeral of flying officer Ewen who was killed at Canberra during Prince of Wales's visit took place today. Three aeroplanes flew over the cortege and circled above the cemetery during the burial service (Syd. Evening News)

NOGALES 11th

FIGHTING IN MEXICO.

Fighting between Mexican Federals and Yaqui Indians was reported as occurring this afternoon, 68 miles south of the International boundary, with heavy casualties suffered by both sides. Four automobiles brought the wounded into Nogales Sonora at 4.30 o'clock.

Two machines were dispatched to the scene to bring in additional wounded.

MELBOURNE 11th. Falls of rain up to three quarters of an inch were recorded in the Mallee and Northern districts where they were badly needed (Syd. Evening News)

SYDNEY'S LEADING HOTEL,  
**THE WENTWORTH**

CHURCH HILL, SYDNEY

Accommodation may be Reserved by Radio.

Tariff Inclusive.

Mention THE WIRELESS NEWS to Advertisers.

Fig. 12. Part of the news of the day from the May 11, 1927, *Wireless News*. Passengers learned among other important news that the Mexican *Federales* fought it out with the Yaqui Indians 60 miles south of the Arizona border; this may have had special import to Australians with mining interests. London, New York, and Australian cities provided other datelines. (Author's collection)



Fig. 13. This 1928 edition of the *Wireless News* also boasts a painting by nautical artist C. B. Norton, and a likely notional clipper ship. Its news issued as the ship transited the Strait of Gibraltar. (Museums Victoria, <http://museumvictoria.com.au/collections/items/1125171/magazine-the-wireless-news-the-wireless-press-1928>)



vessel passed Gibraltar (April 7, 1928), it printed this particular issue's inserts. A color image of the steamer appears on the blue front cover. One "A. G. Maclaurin," likely a passenger, wrote his name on the cover. Ship interiors, points of interest in ports, results of activities, a passenger list, and a page of signatures from other passengers appear in this issue of the *Wireless News*.<sup>22</sup>

Illustrating the transition to tubes from spark, the Victoria Museum notes: "In September 1926 *Jervis Bay* became the first ship on the UK to Australia route to be equipped with a short-wave radio transmitter—a self-oscillator type using two Marconi T250 valves enabling the ship to be in constant radio-to-shore contact."<sup>23</sup>

C. B. Norton also painted the TSS *Jervis Bay* nautical scene on this cover. A three-masted clipper ship sails off the port side, which must have been quite a sight as late as 1928. The left-side post bindings are probably original, because the RMS *Makura* souvenir booklet is bound similarly.

Dr. Peterson also notes an earlier RMS *Makura* publication of the *Wireless News*:

"Another example of a ship newspaper was a daily edition of 'The Wireless News' on board the ship '*Makura*,' sailing across the Pacific. This ship was built in Glasgow, Scotland and it was operated by the Union Steamship Company of New Zealand. The outer cover of this paper, in an issue dated in 1923, shows a photo of another vessel plying the Pacific, the '*Niagara*.'"<sup>24</sup>

The RMS *Niagara* mentioned by Dr. Peterson also sailed for the Union Steamship Company on the Vancouver run, so this detail is company advertisement, sort of a "two-fer" in the commissioning of a nautical painting by the steamship line. Dr. Peterson also notes:

"A 1925 version of the 'Ocean Wireless News' features a color cover, drawn by an artist and showing passengers and crew making ready to depart at the beginning of a voyage. This particular edition was distributed on board the SS *Manchuria* which was built in Camden, New Jersey in 1904 and at the time, it was in passenger service with the Panama Pacific Company in the Americas."<sup>25</sup>

Dr. Peterson's article continues:

"The Canadian Pacific Company operated a large fleet of passenger and cargo vessels across both the Atlantic and the Pacific. The same name, the 'Wireless Press,' was used for all of their shipboard newspapers regardless of the ship and its service area. For example, the SS *Montcalm* was in the Atlantic passenger service and the '*Duchess of Richmond*' was a cruise ship that voyaged to many destinations; and the name of their shipboard newspapers in both cases, was 'Wireless Press.'"<sup>26</sup>

Examples are known of the Canadian Pacific Line's "Wireless Press" issued aboard the RMS *Montrose* and



the RMS *Empress of France* in 1930, probably because a passenger preserved them.<sup>27</sup> The RMS *Montrose* edition identifies its source as “Canadian Pacific News-Radio.”

The sorts of news that appeared in the various at-sea publications implies that the passengers were internationalists and cosmopolitans, which could also be inferred just from the price of passage. According to Dr. Peterson:

“The issue of ‘Wireless Press’ for Tuesday April 6, 1937 shows that the ‘*Duchess of Richmond*’ was on a Christian World Cruise. The single sheet newspaper, derived again from radio reports, gives an inside view to world events at the time. Among these 1937 news events are the following:

- The weather in London is foggy, and the temperature was just 41 degrees.
- The Earl of Clarendon arrived in London at the end of a six year term as governor of South Africa.
- The Crown Prince of Hedjaz, Emir Sand, has just concluded a state visit to Baghdad.
- Two minutes of silence was observed in Dublin for members of the Irish Brigade killed in Spain.
- New Delhi reports heavy rains in the North West Frontier and the border regions of Afghanistan.
- Federal Securities are sold on the open market in the United States at 3% below par.
- An airplane is taking off for a record flight from Tokyo to London.”<sup>28</sup>

### ***Japanese Vessels Provide Passengers with Radio Press***

Dr. Peterson also mentions the Japanese N.Y.K. line (Nippon Yusen Kabushiki Kaisha), printing “the information received by radio from Japan.” He concludes: “The list of ship newspapers produced from news transmitted in Morse code by wireless and in voice by radio is almost endless.”<sup>29</sup>

Before World War Two, Japanese passenger vessels also traversed the Pacific and called at Asian ports. The *Asama Maru*, for example, sailed in the trans-Pacific Orient and California fortnightly service to San Francisco. The N.Y.K. line built her and sister ships in Japan for this route. (N.Y.K. still sails the Pacific.) “The Queen of the Sea” sobriquet applied to the *Asama Maru*; nonetheless, in the war Allied forces sank her (1944) and almost all of the Japanese liners that had served pre-war.<sup>30</sup>

The Japanese *Wireless Jiji Press* from the N.Y.K. line in 1935 provided news and articles. (*Jiji* means “Times.”) For example, Figs. 14–15 are mastheads appearing in an issue dated June 24, 1935. The column under the masthead in Japanese is about war. This four-page *Wireless Jiji Press* issued on 11" by 17" newsprint paper in the fourth year of Emperor Hirohito's reign and is so dated in Japanese.<sup>31</sup> Reading from the left, the first two pages are in English. Reading from the right, *those* first two pages are in Japanese. The English content appears to be fill, as does much of the Japanese. In English it says on the first page: “A Newspaper Issued Daily



Fig. 14. For the Japanese N.Y.K. line, the *Wireless Jiji Press* came out on newsprint, mostly prepared with fill, but issued daily. (*Wireless Jiji Press*, June 24, 1935; author's collection)



Fig. 15. The Japanese language predominated in the content of the 1935 *Wireless Jiji Press*, although English provided the “fill,” perhaps as a way for Japanese passengers to sharpen their language skills. (*Wireless Jiji Press*, June 24, 1935; author's collection)

On Board N.Y.K. Liners.” A daily sheet of radio news would seem to be missing.

An advertisement in the *Jiji Press* shows maritime traffic to China played a role in N.Y.K.'s revenues (see Fig. 16). Every four days one of the steamers sailed to China. As little as one day on the China Sea (24 hours) put a Japanese businessman in Shanghai. (In those days Japanese imperial ambitions ran high.) The war claimed both of the advertised liners. A mine sank the *Nagasaki Maru* in 1942, and a collision sank the *Shanghai Maru* in 1943. The Japanese navy converted another liner, the *Kashiwara Maru*, into an aircraft carrier (see Fig. 17). The artist has enhanced his image by emphasizing the

radio antennas that ordinarily cannot be seen in panoramic photographs of ships.<sup>32</sup> It too did not survive the war.

### *Radio Press and Shipboard Newspapers in World War Two and After*

The “press,” in the form of wireless news, went to ships at sea during World War Two. Passengers and crew kept abreast of war developments. The British Wireless Marine Service in World War Two informed British shipping (and anyone within radio range) of war progress. As indicated in the masthead of a message from the Marine Service reproduced in Fig. 18, the Marconi International Marine Communications Company, the Radio Communication



Fig. 16. This sort of advertisement for Chinese travel in the 1935 *Wireless Jiji Press* sheds light on Japanese imperial ambitions for China in the 1930s. (*Wireless Jiji Press*, June 24, 1935; author's collection)



Fig. 17. The *Kashiwara Maru* never sailed as the 1930s ocean liner of this artist's conception, but this dramatic scene does illustrate the radio antennas of the liners of the day. The vessel ended up as an aircraft carrier and did not make it through the war. (Painting by David "Alan" Urban, Jr. as "carsdude," courtesy DeviantArt.com)

Company, and a third Marconi company had been amalgamated. This fragment of 1939 wireless press reports the

defeat of the *Graf Spee* pocket battleship in South America early in the war. Merchant marine radiomen reported the





Fig. 18. “To-Day’s News” appears on the 1939 masthead of “press” for newspapers at sea provided by the Marconi British Wireless Marine Service during World War Two. (Courtesy of David Barlow, Lizard museum)

location of *Graf Spee*, at serious risk to themselves and their vessels, enabling the British Navy to find and engage her.

The radiomen on U.S. Navy vessels took a great deal of press and similar traffic, turning it into typed and mimeographed multipage newspapers at sea. One example is *The Pelio ‘Sea Horse’*—the “Radio Press” of the USS *Pelias* (see Fig. 19). This submarine tender fought at Pearl Harbor on the first day of the war, “splashing” at least one attacking Japanese aircraft. On Monday, June 29, 1942, she was about to cross the equator on her way to Australia. She supplied her crew with more than six pages of war and national news, including sports, the baseball scores, and commentary. At least 30 paragraphs of war news bear attributions to cities such as Washington, London, Moscow, Bombay, and Cairo. An insert conveyed general orders for the upcoming transit of the

equator, known at sea as “Crossing the Line,” which was celebrated by “shellbacks,” who had done it in various ways before, and usually unpleasant for “polliwogs,” who had not. The orders anticipated opposition in the Royal Domain of King Neptune Rex and set a special watch. The survival of this particular at-sea newspaper may owe itself to a then newly christened shellback.

In the 1950s, a sailors’ union, the American Radio Association, CIO sent out press for its members at sea in the marine bands, 8 MHz and 17 MHz: “This Press may be copied, free, for posting aboard ship or in Union Halls; may be reproduced if credit is given to: ‘Press Broadcast of ARA, CIO,’ or just ARA Press.”<sup>33</sup> The heading reads: “Note change of West Coast Skeds [,] Switch from 16 MC to 17 MC band[,] Inform all Ships of these Skeds.”<sup>34</sup> San Francisco’s station KTK covered the



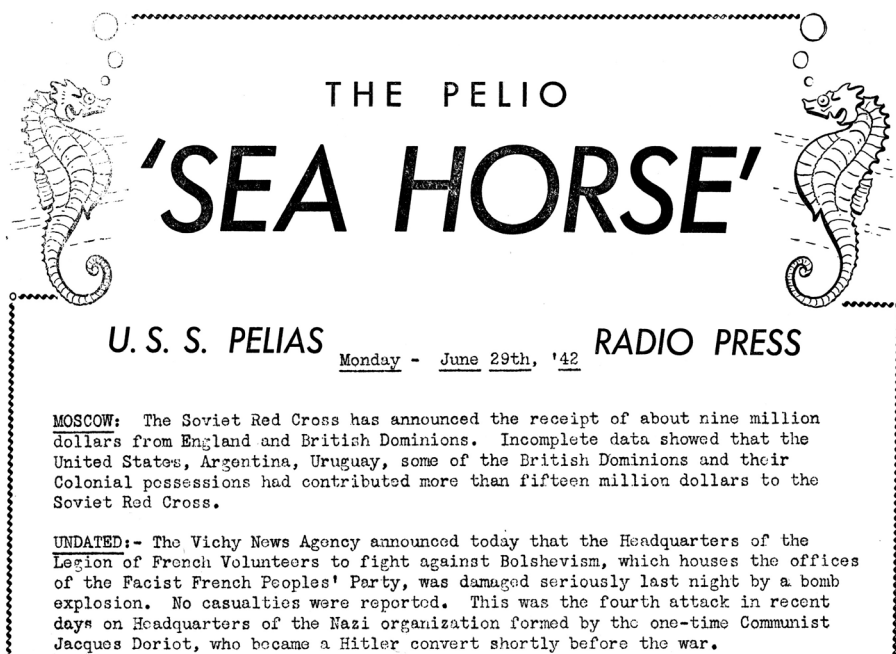


Fig. 19. The "Radio Press" for this Navy subtender in 1942 in its shipboard publication, the *Sea Horse*, provided considerable international information to the officers and crew in the early days of U.S. involvement in the war when the outcome remained in doubt. (Author's collection)



Fig. 20. Unions could hardly count on corporate newspapers to carry union news, or even to treat unions fairly. The merchant marine radio operators' union, the American Radio Association (ARA) in the 1950s, took up the slack with its own ocean-going press broadcast from the East and West Coasts on the marine long-distance bands. (American Radio Association, *ARA Log*, Jan. and Feb. 1953, p. 5)

Pacific, and WCO on Long Island, NY, covered the Atlantic. The logo "ARA On the Air" appearing on the notice is reproduced in Fig. 20.

### *Linotype Machines Aboard Liners Brought Wireless News to Shoreside Standards*

Every significant passenger vessel provided its passengers wireless news every day from the 1920s and thereafter. Popular culture, even in fiction, quickly recognized the importance of the currency of the "wireless news," as did the maritime industries. Alfred Noyes, poet and author, wrote *The Last Voyage*, a sea-going novel in 1930 ringed with drama:

*"The Last Voyage* begins at night in mid-Atlantic, where an ocean liner, 'a great ship like a lighted city,' is battling through a raging storm. A little girl is mortally ill. The ship's surgeon prepares to operate, but with little hope of success, for the case is complicated and he is no specialist. Luckily, the captain knows from the wireless news that a top specialist from Johns Hopkins is on another liner 400 miles away—within wireless range. The ship's surgeon will be able to consult him, and stay in touch with him throughout the operation. Suddenly, the little girl's chances of survival are much improved."<sup>35</sup>

For the benefit of passengers wanting to keep up with the wireless news, as well as for facilitation of their own hospitality operations, many ships were equipped with printing machines of various types to print wireless newspapers, menus and the like. They also carried press-men and printers (including Marconimen in the early days). But it was the UK *Daily Mail* with its Atlantic edition of 1923 that pioneered the shoreside technology of the linotype machine at sea.

"The installation of linotype machines on the ships was the technical innovation that made the Atlantic edition possible. Whereas typesetters traditionally set the text by hand—letter-by-letter—a linotype machine allowed the operator to use a keyboard that mechanically selected the

letters. After each line of text was assembled, a metal cast of the line, known as a "slug", would be taken and was then used to compose the columns and pages in readiness for printing. Linotype machines had never been used on board a liner before, so that ingenious tests with machines on rollers had to be conducted on land to replicate conditions at sea and ensure the technology would function adequately."<sup>36</sup>

Today, cruise ships (and the few remaining liners) still provide daily newspapers via satellite, complete with full-page images from all over the world. Passenger lines continued to take press traffic from the coast radio stations of Europe, North America, and Asia well into the 1960s.

The coming of satellites made for the replacement of long antennas with squat parabolic dishes, as the frequencies moved up from 500 KHz (600 meters) to the gigahertz ranges at centimeter wavelengths. (Vacuum tubes, too, are long gone.) With the coming of so much bandwidth, the wireless news at sea evolved to near photographic copies of the world's newspapers, local advertisements and all. See Fig. 21 for a current shipboard advertisement for shipboard newspapers. Although the transport of well-off passengers became the business of the airlines, the tourist cruises picked up much of the slack. It still made sense to advertise to them and to cater to the need they felt to stay fully informed, even on luxury vacations.<sup>37</sup>



**SATELLITE NEWSPAPER SERVICE**

We are pleased to offer you access to newspapers from around the globe. State of the art technology and satellite communications enable digitally imaged, full-format newspapers to be printed and delivered to your stateroom or suite on the morning of publication.

Fig. 21. This is a copy of a current shipboard advertisement on a cruise ship for newspaper service at sea. Full issues of the major newspapers of the world are available by subscription for the length of the cruise. The data comes down from satellites (although not printed in color). Satellite communication is generally reliable except near the poles where the angle to the equatorial satellites is too low. Perhaps there's something to be said for legacy radio after all. (Author's collection)

## Conclusion

The very phrase “the wireless news” came to stand for new knowledge of the events of the day, the only immediate source for which was the radio—or in British parlance, the wireless. A more complete newspaper report of important events came only with the next dawn, at sea as well as ashore. Marconi knew his new wireless telegraphy’s

primary applications would be maritime, only later to be followed by competition with the transoceanic cables. Maritime interests would pay for immediate communications, and their passenger would pay for news at sea. The economists say supply creates demand but also that demand creates supply. The new technology supplied immediate news of events ashore, and

the willingness of passengers to pay for it drove both the radio art and the printing art.

Marconi's new technology gave birth to the wireless news at sea very shortly after wireless telegraphy first itself travelled over water. The then big business of passenger lines sustained its growth for both the Atlantic's and the Pacific's well-off passengers. The various, often colorful issues of the *Wireless News* record for us not only the events of the day, but also tell us of the social world of travel through the decades.

From Marconi's 1899 maritime adventures and the first 1899 wireless transmission in America (in San Francisco from the *Lightship 70* announcing the return of the troopship USS *Sherman* to San Francisco newspapers), radio communications and journalism have quickly informed the world of events worldwide. From its earliest day to the present, radio has also informed otherwise isolated seafarers and passengers of events at home and abroad. Radio and news are a natural marriage. That marriage, now poly-technological, thrives throughout the electromagnetic spectrum, spark long gone but now through satellites above.

### Endnotes

1. Degna Marconi, *My Father Marconi* (1962), page 83. The official history of the Marconi International Marine Communications Company, by H. E. Hancock, *Wireless at Sea* (1950) tells the same story and reports the same traffic at page 22 virtually word-for-word and notes the newspaper memorialized by a then-standing monument on the Isle of Wight.
2. Roland Wenzlhuemer and Michael Offermann, "Ship Newspapers and Passenger Life Aboard Transoceanic Steamships in the Late Nineteenth Century" (citations omitted) in the *Journal* [of] *Transcultural Studies*, Number 1, (2012), published by the [University of Heidelberg] Cluster of Excellence 'Asia and Europe in a Global Context: The Dynamics of Transculturality' [!] of the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg. <http://heiup.uni-heidelberg.de/journals/index.php/transcultural/index>.
3. This quote comes from the 1902 diary of Otelia Langum on a voyage on the Cunard Line's *Saxsonia*, back to America by way of Liverpool, UK. The ships exchanged messages on the third day of her nine-day crossing. Larry Nutting, K7KSW, CHRS, supplied a copy of the relevant part of the diary. His wife, the granddaughter of Ms. Langum, had transcribed the diary.
4. Originally almost all Marconi stations used call signs to show their locations. The Lizard was LD, although nearby Poldhu was ZZ. Marconi stations soon added an "M" prefix. Thus, the Lizard station became MLD. Later post office ownership changed the call sign to GLD. Today the Amateur Radio Club at Lizard uses GB2LD for special events. See Bobby Lyman, "The Lizard Radio Station ~ The Oldest Surviving Wireless Station in the World," *Antique Wireless Classified*, (Feb. 2009), [http://www.antiqueradio.com/Feb09\\_Lyman\\_Lizard.html](http://www.antiqueradio.com/Feb09_Lyman_Lizard.html).
5. David Barlow, "Poldhu – ZZ GB100ZZ," *Poldhu Amateur Radio Club, G B 2 G M, Newsletter*, #80, (June 2, 2014), pages 11 ff. See also <http://www.lizardwireless.org/>. Curator Barlow not only kindly provided a number of the British images appearing in this note but also earlier provided a thorough tour of the reconstructed Lizard Marconi station, for both of which I am grateful.
6. "The First Mid-Ocean Daily," *San Francisco Chronicle*, (May 1, 1904), at page 2. This appears to have been a widely distributed story, with graphics, for later publication in local newspapers, in part because the internal graphic of *The Marconigram* is dated May 21—perhaps the *Chronicle* jumped the journalistic gun.
7. "Wireless News at Sea: Successful Experiment," *Daily Telegraph* [London], (Feb. 11, 1903); reproduced in *Papers Past* [,] *Wireless News*



- At Sea, from the New Zealand newspaper *Auckland Star*, (April 4, 1904). <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/all>.
8. "Wireless Station On Tamalpais," *Sausalito [California] News*, (Sept. 2, 1905), Internet sourced by Barry McMullan, CHRS. <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc?a=d&d=SN19050902.2.19>.
  9. See Ellery W. Stone, "Returns From Fight Sent By Wireless," *Modern Electrics*, Volume 3, Number 5, (August 1910), page 257. The text is from the cylinder recording that may be heard at <http://www.tinfoil.com/cm-0406.htm>; 'Ed' Trump, AL7N, of Fairbanks, Alaska transcribed the then American Morse code. The cylinder recording is in the Frank V. de Bellis collection at San Francisco State University. David Ring, N1EA found this remarkable record. Dr. Adrian M. Peterson of Adventist World Radio found Stone's article. "U.W. Co." refers to United Wireless, operating in the marine service from what is now Daly City. It is possible that the transcribed text emanated from PH, not TG, although Stone seems to be saying PH sent out only the news of the victory at the end of the match. Nonetheless the text appears to be a prepared broadcast and not a wireless operator extemporizing. A series of numbers appears at the end of the message but its intent is unknown now.
  10. Jane Morgan, *Electronics in the West*, (1967) page 35.
  11. Stone, op cit.
  12. Richard Johnstone, Commander, U.S.N.R. (Retired), *My San Francisco Story of the "Waterfront and the Wireless,"* (1965), privately printed and now in the Library of the California Historical Radio Society, page 50.
  13. James A. Maxwell, [W6CF], "Copying WHB as Recorded by Charles Apgar, 2MN, in 1915," *Journal of the California Historical Radio Society*, Volume 13, Number 1 (1994). The correct call signs WHB and W6CF are emended. The audio recording comes from the archives of the Antique Wireless Association in New York, part of an NBC 1934 interview with Charles Apgar during which two of his Edison cylinder recording were played on the air. Apgar also recorded the then-German Sayville, L.I., NY station on Edison cylinders in 1915 for U.S. authorities.
  14. Noah Arceneaux, "News on the Air: The New York Herald, Newspapers, and Wireless Telegraphy, 1899–1917," *American Journalism*, Volume 30, Number 2, (2013), page 174.
  15. The book that Professor Arceneaux quotes is: Alfred P. Morgan, *Wireless Telegraphy and Telephony Simply Explained*, (Norman Henley Publishing Co., New York, 1913).
  16. *Ibid.*, pages 95–96.
  17. *Ocean Wireless News*, Volume IX, Number 2, (March, 1914) from a current book-seller's advertisement: <https://www.abebooks.com/Ocean-Wireless-News-Volume-Number-Marconi/745749169/bd>.
  18. Dr. Adrian Peterson, "Radio Newspapers Aboard Ship" from the Adventist World Radio *AWR Wavescan*, posted at <http://mt-shortwave.blogspot.com/2010/07/radio-newspapers-aboard-ship.html>.
  19. Conrad First, The Joseph Conrad Periodical Archive, about the Conrad story "The Brute: A Tale of a Ship That Wouldn't Behave" published in *Ocean Wireless News* for January 1912. The Conrad Archive is a program of the University of Uppsala, Sweden. <http://www.conradfirst.net/view/periodical?id=12536>.
  20. Federal arc transmitters, usually 2 kW, served many ships on the Pacific routes into the 1920s and 300 vessels of the United States Shipping Board. Federal sited its main transmitter in Palo Alto, California. A publication, *Federal Radio News, A Daily News Journal for Ocean Travelers* survives from 1921 in the collection of Joe Knight, CHRS, AWA, with a scene from Ceylon on its cover. A photograph of a federal arc in a ship's radio room is available at: <http://www.telegraph-office.com/pages/images/Kdid.jpg>. By inference, a ship equipped with Federal equipment took its press from Federal stations primarily. The arc technology did not, however, long survive the development of power vacuum tubes.
  21. Peterson, "Radio Newspapers Aboard Ship," op cit.
  22. <http://museumvictoria.com.au/collections/items/1125171/magazine-the-wireless-news-the-wireless-press-1928>.
  23. <http://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/3665>. The museum adds: "On 5 November 1940, *HMS Jervis Bay* was sunk in the Atlantic by the German pocket battleship *Admiral Scheer* after the convoy *Jervis Bay* was escorting came under attack. *Jervis Bay* turned toward the *Admiral Scheer* and

- diverted her fire while the 38-ship convoy HX84 which included the cargo liner *Rangitiki* escaped. Her captain, E.F.S Fegan (a former commanding officer at the RAN College at Jervis Bay) was killed and the ship sank with the loss of 198 men. Fegan received a posthumous Victoria Cross for his actions during this engagement. . . .”
24. Peterson, “Radio Newspapers Aboard Ship,” op cit.
  25. Ibid.
  26. Ibid.
  27. These two issues of the Canadian Pacific line’s *Wireless Press* recently appeared for sale on eBay. eBay often provides images and information not otherwise easily available.
  28. Peterson, “Radio Newspapers Aboard Ship,” op cit.
  29. Ibid.
  30. According to Wikipedia, which supplies considerable detail about the line and the vessels.
  31. I am indebted to my friend Michi Osada for the translations from the Japanese.
  32. *Kashiwara-Marui* at sea by “carsdude” (David “Alan” Urban, Jr.) on DeviantArt.com captioned “The Japanese liner as she was intended before being transformed into aircraft carrier *Junyo*” (enhanced here to show antennas), <http://carsdude.deviantart.com/art/kashiwara-maru-506523859>.
  33. Notice in the ARA (American Radio Association, CIO) *ARA Log* for January and February 1953. The logo says: “ARA on the Air” showing a radio tower and a long antenna.
  34. Ibid.
  35. From the article about Alfred Noyes in Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred\\_Noyes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_Noyes).
  36. Seth Cayley, “Publishing at sea,” in *Research Information* [which declares itself to be] The essential link between publishers, librarians and researchers (August 7, 2013). <https://www.researchinformation.info/feature/publishing-sea>. This article notes that each vessel carried an *Atlantic Times* editor to turn the wireless traffic into newspaper stories. That traffic came from Massachusetts (RCA’s Chatam, MA station WCC) and Marconi in England but also directly from U.K. Foreign Office transmissions.
  37. For an interesting discussion of technology, even at-sea newspapers, illuminating class differences, see Teresa Breathnach, “If All

the World was Paper and All the Sea was Ink: Ships’ Printers and Printing 1890–1960 (Draft)” (no date) at <https://www.academia.edu/7882257/> . . . The disproportionate survival of the First Class passengers of the RMS *Titanic* tells the same story in starker terms. The *Great Eastern*, laying the Atlantic cable in 1866 took news through the cable it laid down, and provided it as daily summaries of shoreside events. The information thus conveyed by lithograph related primarily to finance in London. <http://atlantic-cable.com/Article/GreatEasternDocuments/> (Shipboard Publishing and Printing on Great Eastern).

### About the Author

**Bart Lee**, K6VK, xKV6LEE, WPE2DLT, is a longtime member of AWA and a Fellow of the California Historical Radio Society (CHRS), for which he serves as General Counsel Emeritus and Archivist and an historian. He holds both FCC commercial (GROL with radar endorsement) and amateur extra class licenses. He has enjoyed radio and radio-related activities in many parts of the world. He has in recent years spent a fair amount of time on the high seas and is thus indebted to today’s Wireless News. Radio technology and history have fascinated him since he made his first crystal set with a razor blade and pencil lead 60 years ago. He is especially fond of those sets of which it is said: Real Radios Glow in the Dark. Bart is a published author on legal and other subjects and extensively on the history of radio. The AWA presented its Houck Award for documentation to him in 2003, and CHRS presented its 1991 “Doc” Herrold Award to him in connection with his work for the Perham Foundation Electronics Museum. In 2001, during

disaster recovery operations in New York after the “9/11” terrorist enormity, he served as the Red Cross deputy communications lead from September 12 to September 21, (the “night shift trick chief”). Bart worked as a litigator by trade, prosecuting and defending civil cases in federal and state courts for 40 years. He is a graduate of St. John’s College (the “Great Books School”) and the University of Chicago Law School. Bart invites correspondence at KV6LEE@gmail.com.

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