

George E. Hall N2CG Biography

My career in Radio Telecommunications began in the late 1950's at age 11 when I became an SWL mostly monitoring the amateur radio bands using a 1930's era Philco AM Broadcast Band with a Shortwave Band receiver. A year or so later I upgraded to a more modern short wave receiver that had a BFO so I was able to detect CW and SSB mode signals.

I wanted to get my amateur radio license, however the mandatory requirement of learning and being proficient with Morse Code became a major stumbling block for me. To make matters worse, I knew of no local hams who would be willing to help guide me or give me encouragement; so I remained a SWL for the next five years.

Then in early 1965 at age 17 I came up with a new method to teach myself the Morse Code and to my delight and astonishment within two weeks I went from 0 to 7 WPM solid copy! My father helped me locate a ham who he worked with over 20 years earlier during WWII who was happy to be my Novice code test and written test examiner.

I passed the code test without any difficulty (by this time my code speed had increased to over 10 WPM) and a few weeks later I took the Novice written exam. My volunteer examiner could not grade the test, so I had to wait six long weeks when my Novice license finally arrived in the mail!

By this time I was a Junior in High School and I made the decision that I wanted to enlist in the U. S. Coast Guard which I did upon graduation from high school and served as a Radioman for over 24 years (4 years active duty/20+ years reserve duty assigned to Commander USCG Atlantic Area/Commander USCG District 3 Communications Center/NMY-1 on Governors Island, New York) and retiring as Radioman Senior Chief in 1991.

One of my most memorable USCG assignments was being stationed for two years at USCG Radio Station Argentia, Newfoundland Canada/NJN (call sign NIK during IIP) and participating in the 1968 and 1969 International Ice Patrols. Back then, the ice season began around mid March and lasted into July of each year. During those months IIP was activated we sent out two daily CW broadcasts simultaneously on MF and HF frequencies. Additionally, once a day we transmitted a radio facsimile FAX broadcast at 60 RPM drum speed on a MF frequency which took about 15 minutes to complete the transmission. This radio FAX transmission when received showed the island of Newfoundland marked with the location of iceberg signings. These daily broadcasts warned ships at sea traversing the sea routes off the Newfoundland coastline were hazardous ice

conditions and icebergs of various sizes were reported so there would never be another Titanic Disaster.

I was a 500 kHz/MF (427 kHz was our working frequency) CW operator handling CW message traffic like OBS (weather related) and AMVER (vessel position) messages with many great ships of the late 1960's like RMS Queen Mary/GBTT, RMS Queen Elizabeth GBSS, SS France/FNRR, SS United States /KJEH, NS Savannah/KSAV (first nuclear powered merchant ship) to name a few.

Another activity I like doing when I had the mid-watch (mid night to 7 AM) was to hear how well I could receive DX stations on 500 kHz. Silent Periods were twice each hour at minutes 15 to 18 and minutes 45 to 48 when all ships at sea and all shore marine radio stations worldwide were to monitor 500 kHz for possible Auto Alarm, SOS, SOS relay or any emergency traffic. Once Silent Period passed, this was an ideal time (usually everyone was still listening to 500 kHz) for shore marine radio stations to call CQ and announce they had message traffic for ships and soon after would be broadcasting a list of ships call signs they had traffic for on their MF and HF working frequencies. This was also the ideal time to monitor how well MF radio wave propagation was on 500 kHz. Since I was located in Newfoundland, hearing European shore marine radio stations was not too difficult, but you never knew how well 500 kHz and MF radio wave propagation was going to be. On an average night I could easily hear GLD Lands End England, DAN Norden Germany as well as shore marine radio stations on the US and Canadian east coast, the Gulf and Caribbean Sea area. On a good night I could hear SVG Athens Greece and 6VA Dakar Senegal as well as shore marine radio stations on the US west coast like KPH and NMC San Francisco California and NMO Honolulu Hawaii.

In September 1970 I transferred from active duty to reserve duty in the USCG and I started attending college at night on the GI Bill. A few years later I had changed jobs and I was able to attend full-time classes and also work on campus in the Veterans office. I graduated in 1977 from Montclair State College with a dual major in Business Administration and Marketing.

After graduation from college I worked in the Electronics Industry for several years initially as a Field Technician and then Supervisory positions in Unit Test/Incoming Inspection and Production Supervisor for electronic manufacturing firms.

Since my early teens; in addition to radio and electronics I've also had a fondness for cars and anything automotive. While attending Montclair State College, I took all the automotive vocational courses available for my free elective courses. Little did I know then that ten years later this would turn out to be a very favorable move when in 1987 I received full credit for those automotive courses. I only needed to attend one year of evening classes to achieve my AAS degree in Automotive Technology from Bergen Community College.

At age 37 I made a career change and for the next 25 years I worked in the OEM Automotive Industry; first for Peugeot Motors of America, then Jaguar Cars of America and finally BMW of North America.

The highlight of my automotive career was working at BMW of North America Product Development Engineering Department as a Technical Specialist. I worked on projects from design, construction of prototypes, proof of concept, work with other departments (especially legal and compliance departments who dealt with NHTSA, EPA, DOT and SAE to name a few) and with vendors to final fruition of the project. I also wrote installation instructions for all projects I was responsible for.

I retired from BMW of North America in 2007 but a few years later I returned to the job market as an Electronics Technician for a small local electronics manufacturing company for a couple of years followed by becoming a Quality Control Inspector. I also formed my own company where I do technical writing contract work.

I've been a member of the Mt. Airy VHF Radio Club (Pack Rats) since 1979. Since 1991 I've been a member of the North Jersey DX Association (the ARRL W2 Incoming QSL Bureau) and held the "Q" Letter Manager post for 13 years and since then have been a Primary QSL Card Sorter. I'm also a member of the Bergen Amateur Radio Association (BARA) since 2001. More recently I joined the Frankford Radio Club (FRC) in July 2019.

Finally, I keep my brain exercised daily by training for high speed CW receiving at speeds over 45+ WPM and copying on a computer keyboard. Looking back over 60 years ago I thought back then I would never be able to learn the Morse Code.