

A QSL Darryl, WZ7O received, after what was a great experience:
"After the CG signed off there were nearly +1 hour of (dit dit) with
everyone trying to make the last dit of the last Morse Code message."

1st heard Mar 1995

SOS in Morse code sinks into history

The Baltimore Sun

BALTIMORE — As the Titanic gulped sea water on that awful night in April 1912, radio operator Jack Phillips was at his station, pounding out an SOS on the ship's radiotelegraph key in Morse code.

Eighty-three years later, some oceangoing ships still rely on Samuel Morse's language of dots and dashes to maintain their links with shore and potential rescuers.

But Friday night, the U.S. Coast Guard stopped listening.

"The chilling SOS signal will never again be received," the Coast Guard said in a farewell message at 7 p.m., when communications centers from Chesapeake, Va., to Kodiak, Alaska, shut down all Morse code operations in favor of modern technologies.

Morse invented the code to carry messages on his telegraph machine, which he patented in 1840. The first intercity message was transmitted from Washington to Baltimore on May 24, 1844. The message was: "What hath God

wrought."

Friday night, the Coast Guard closed its 15-minute farewell to mariners, "We bid you 73 (best regards). What hath God wrought."

The last 45-minute regular broadcast in Morse code actually went out at 6 p.m., with Atlantic weather information.

Since 1901, when the wireless radio-telegraph was invented, Morse service had provided mariners with weather and safety information and a 24-hour ear for their distress calls. At the end, 30 operators across the country monitored Morse frequencies and continued to broadcast with hand-operated keys.

Now, the job of communicating with the few hundred ships that still use Morse has been transferred to a network of private shore stations.

In 1999, when international treaties require all shipping to convert to modern technologies under the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System, even the private listening posts will cease the Morse service.

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