

**Cdr. E. J. Quinby, USN (Ret.)**

ENGINEERING, RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT  
ORGANIZATION, IMPROVEMENT, OPERATION

**30 BLACKBURN ROAD**

**SUMMIT, N. J. 07901**

May 5, 1979

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Dear Tom (Raddall):

Thanks for your interesting letter of April 28 and for your autographed copy of *IN MY TIME*, which I am re-reading with renewed and relaxed pleasure. It seems even better the second time around, - which is indeed a good test of its entertainment value.

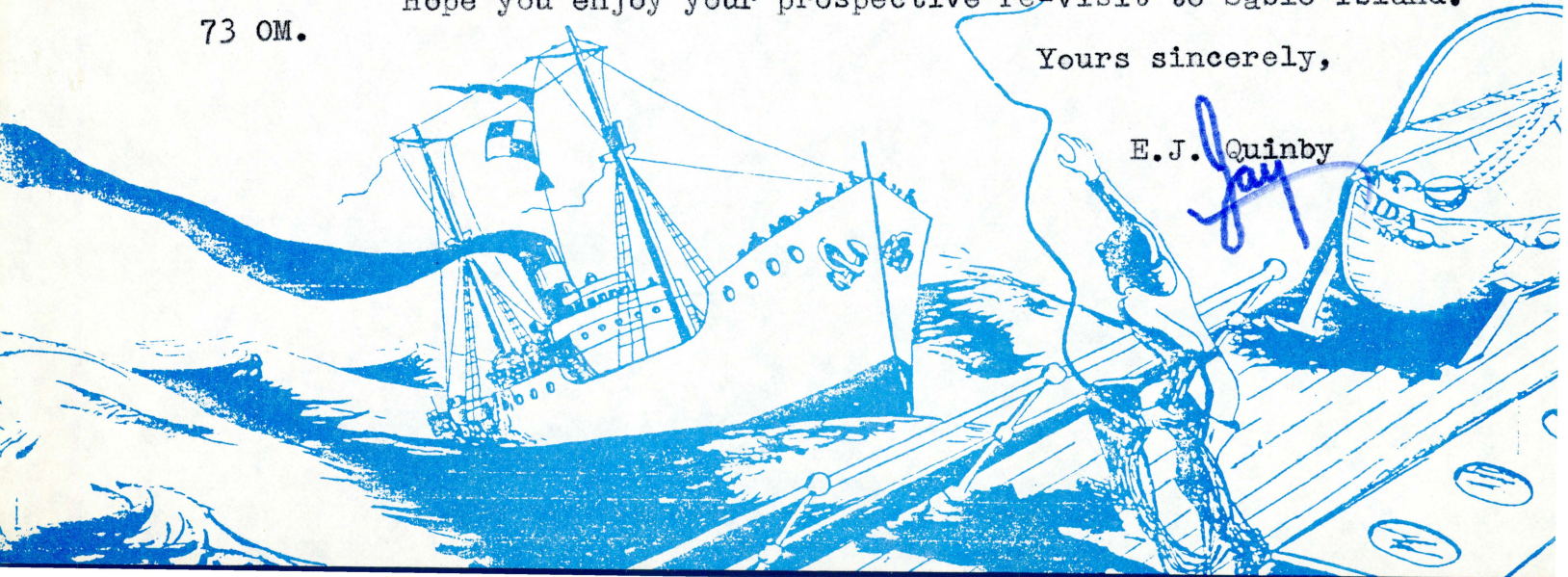
Your experiences as Radio Operator at sea and ashore were indeed fascinating, especially to an old veteran such as myself. It is indeed noteworthy that you assisted Marconi in his epic kite-flying and reception of the historic trans-atlantic "S". But let me assure you that "telegraphy, old style" is definitely NOT a forgotten skill. I am happy to report that I thoroughly enjoy membership in the active MORSE TELEGRAPH CLUB, whose members maintain a number of real telegraph lines in various parts of North America. These isolated lines reach numerous old-timers who daily continue to exercise their "fists" and their personal metallic-morse "accents". And once a year, on the anniversary of the birthday of Samuel F.B. Morse, these otherwise isolated lines are interconnected by courtesy of Western Union into a comprehensive trans-continental network. On that day, while meetings are held by the various chapters, we all await patiently to gain access to this vast "partyline". This year, on Saturday April 28, the Vail Chapter had its annual meeting-luncheon at the QUINBY BAR in the big Suburban Hotel, just a block from my address. Meanwhile the interconnected Morse Telegraph network spanned an additional 44,000 miles when Western Union cut in its satellite circuit to link the East Coast cities with the West Coast communities, so that our metallic dots and dashes went far afield and bounced off the satellite en route. After the luncheon meeting we adjourned to the National Telegraph Office (Museum) in Union, N.J. operated by our CHOP (Chief Operator) "Doc" E. Stuart Davis using every conceivable type of antique and modern telegraph and cable apparatus. You will no doubt hear from "Doc", world's champion telegraph speed artist, who is presently reading your *IN MY TIME* and *THE GOVERNOR'S LADY*.

Hope you enjoy your prospective re-visit to Sable Island.

73 OM.

Yours sincerely,

E. J. Quinby





April 28, 1979

Dear Jay Quinby:

Thank you for your letter of March 28th and for the inscribed copy of IDA WAS A TRAMP, which I have read from cover to cover with the greatest enjoyment.

You were pounding brass long before I was, and long after I left the sea, but many of our experiences were similar, and your letter and book brought back memories.

I feel very ancient when I recall that I worked with one or two men who helped Marconi to fly his kite at St. John's Newfoundland in December 1901, when he heard (or thought he heard) the letter S being transmitted from Poldhu, Cornwall. I used to hear the old-timers argue about it. It was snowing lightly at the time, and as you know snow can make static electricity in dots, and funny little combinations of dots, that sound like an oldfashioned plain aerial spark.

The brasspounders of your time and mine were a breed apart, and now that telegraphy, old style, is a forgotten skill, they seem to have passed like a rare species of bird whose song isn't heard any more.

A good hand could write words in space that had a beauty of rhythm to the ear as truly as fine penmanship has beauty to the eye. Through the 'phones on your head you read it with all the pleasure of hearing music, and with the same appreciation of the musician.

And there was that sixth sense <sup>h</sup> which came to every seasoned operator, giving him somehow a vision of the other man, a kind of telepathy that only the brasspounder knew.

Sable Island is about 175 miles seaward from Halifax air field, and small fixed-wing planes can land and take off from the beach at low tide and in clear weather. I have a chance to fly there next month for a re-visitation after 57 years, fulfilling the doggerel I wrote on my last graveyard watch there, and which I quoted in my book.

73's  
~~83's~~ OM

"RAD"

J.H.R.

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