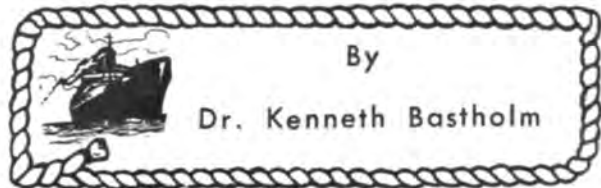


Cape Hatteras, N.C. "RDF" Station -NDW



This is a short history of Cape Hatteras Radio Direction Finder station, NDW.

Part of this was told to me by an old time Navy CW operator at NDW.

I was a member of the Coast Guard crew that took over operation of the station from the Navy in 1941.

Cape Hatteras Radio was located about two miles north of the famous Cape Hatteras Lighthouse.

In the early days of radio the Navy selected Cape Hatteras as the location for a traffic station.

As years passed, radio equipment for ship to shore communications was improved. Cape Hatteras Radio was discontinued by the Navy as a traffic station.

Radio direction finders were developed and became an important aid to navigation. The Navy then installed the direction finder equipment.

Cape Hatteras D/F (NDW) was control station for the group which included Virginia Beach D/f (NCZ) to the north and Cape Lookout D/F (NAN) to the south.

There was no commercial electric power on the Outer Banks.

Cape Hatteras Radio had two, horizontal, Fairbanks/Morse diesel engines, each engine was single cylinder with two flywheels. The flywheels were five feet in diameter.

Each engine had a belt drive to its DC generator.

There were two banks of batteries, one bank being discharged while the second bank was in use.

When the weather was bad and visibility limited around the Cape, the transmitter was on continuously, and the diesel would run 24 hours per day for several days.

All the radio equipment, lighting, refrigeration on the station were powered from the batteries.

A motor/generator supplied power to the transmitter.

The transmitter was an MOPA, 200 watt, shipboard model (Western Electric?).

The D/F receiver was a large desk model, which tuned from about 100 kc thru the broadcast band. It was a sensitive and smooth operating receiver.

There was also a rack mounted National HRO receiver with speaker to keep continuous watch on 500 kc.

DC voltage to the receiver plates was supplied by the 120 VDC station voltage.

The radioman in charge had a small apartment on the second floor of the barracks building.

Each of the four watch standers had his own room on the first floor.

The cook also had his own room.

(Continued on Page 5)

**RADIO DIRECTION FINDER STATION
CAPE HATTERAS - NDW
BUXTON - NORTH CAROLINA**



LOOKING NORTH Generators Barracks Radio Shack

Cape Hatteras Lighthouse



Light Identification - 1 Flash every 10 Seconds.

North Carolina's famed Outer Banks are a land of legend, exploration, dreams and the conquest of new frontiers. They are a chain of narrow islands extending 175 miles from the Virginia line to Cape Lookout near Morehead City, N.C.

Firsts are nothing for the Banks. Here the English colonists made their first settlement in 1585. It was here the Wright Brothers started man on his journey to the heavens. It was here the nation's first National Seashore - Cape Hatteras - was set aside so that future men might see a beach in its natural state.

The remote beaches have been called "magnificent desolation" by many. To some people, the idea of a nearly uninhabited beach is not enticing. But for those who like their beaches with a dash of solitude and serenity, the Outer Banks will be to their liking.

Largest of the Outer Banks resort towns is Nags Head, with its beach stretching some 20 miles from Kill Devil Hills to the northern entrance to the Cape Hatteras National Seashore. According to legend, Nags Head acquired its name from the unscrupulous practice of residents who tied lanterns on the necks of ponies and marched them along the high dunes. The lights swinging from the ponies' necks gave the impression of boats pitching in the water, thus deceiving the captains into running aground on the shoals where the cargo of their ships could be plundered.

Cape Hatteras, long famous as the "Graveyard of the Atlantic" because of its dread Diamond Shoals claimed thousands of ships in the days before radio and radar, wears a new image as focal point of the National seashore.

The Cape Hatteras Lighthouse - tallest on the American Coast, is open to visitors, and the energetic may climb its 268 steps for a panoramic view.

It was at Hatteras Village that General Billy Mitchell and members of the U.S. Army Air Corps proved the validity of aerial bombing by sinking two Navy battleships anchored nearby.

Water for drinking and cooking was rain water collected in two cisterns. The cook used a "pitcher pump" in the galley to bring water up from the cisterns.

The water tank on the tower supplied water for sanitation and most important, for fire protection. We were our own fire department and had frequent fire drills.

A one cylinder, make and break, gas engine had a belt drive to the pump to get the well water up into the tank.

Before WW II and radio silence we enjoyed working the ships in the coastwise shipping lanes as they approached the Cape, sailed by Diamond Shoals and continued on their voyages. Many were repeat "customers".

After the German submarines started to attack Allied shipping along the coast we were deluged with distress traffic.

The nearby torpedo attacks could be heard and the windows of the buildings on the station would rattle.

It was a sad sight to see the black smoke out on the horizon from a drifting, burning vessel which had been torpedoed.

Cape Hatteras became known as "Torpedo Junction".

After WW II and the development of loran the D/F stations were considered obsolete and were discontinued.

After removal of radio equipment the Cape Hatteras Radio Station was sold to a civilian physician.

He maintained a medical there for a short time.

On a trip to Cape Hatteras in 1966 I looked for the station.

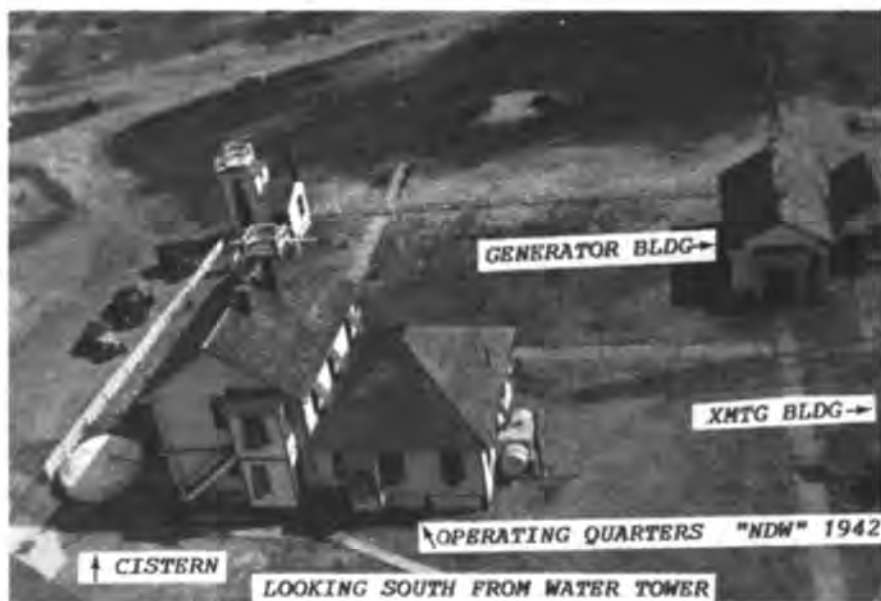
All the buildings had been destroyed.

The sand had drifted and covered all concrete foundations.

All evidence of the old radio station had disappeared.

An important era for coastwise shipping communications and aids to navigation has come to an end.

I was stationed at NDW, 1941-42-43.



ON THE BEACH - CAPE HATTERAS - 1942



SOME OF THE DISTRESS MESSAGES INTERCEPTED DURING JANUARY 1942

SOS de SVOF
48.12 North 47.45 West Lost rudder.

SSS de SS Hindustan
28.52 north 73.17 west sub sighted

SOS de HPXU
46.00 N 45.00 W Sinking fast lifeboats smashed

SSS de GPZK
41.51 N 63.48 W torpedoed

SOS de YTTE
52.30 N 46.00 W without steering lifeboats gone

QQQ de KIZG
43.22 N 67.09 W suspicious vessel

SOS de WHYH
SS Santa Elisa 39.14 N 74.14 W collided
COAST GUARD 25 miles east Wimble Shoals, flard
on horizon could be vessel aflame (no doubt
referring to Allen Jackson afire)

XXX de GNFP
Flash and subsequent red glow last forty five
minutes approx posn Cape Hatteras 249 degrees
Cape Henry 312 degrees

SOS de WHEA
25.50 N 88.00 W sinking collision

The following on January 19, 1942

SSS de KDSI
Shelled by submarine

SSS de KDSI
SS Malay shelled again

SSS de LDDI
We can see submarine we are following

SOS de KDSI
Sinking rapidly

SOS de KDSI
Sinking rapidly three miles inside Wimble Shoals

NCU de WLFO
SS Socony Vacuum picked up crew of SS Ciltvaira

WSC de KDSI
Settling fast two men dead two critically injured
two missing

NMN de WLFO
SS Ciltvaira still afloat torpedoed amidships

SSS de KGRG
36.53 N 75.42 W SS Tidewater torpedo attack

NMN de KGRD
Sub periscope definitely sighted

CQ de PUQY
Ship Ciltvaria abandoned 35.52 N 75.16 w



EDITOR'S NOTE:

DR. KENNETH BASTHOLM who now lives in South Miami Beach Fla. took these pictures while assigned "NDW" back in 1942. He was assigned this Hatteras facility for about 3 years. This was during the most active period of U-BOAT sinkings at or near "TORPEDO JUNCTION" as Cape Hatteras was called. Pictured is wreckage washed up on the Hatteras Beaches. This was result of submarine warfare before the United States formed convoys to be protected by escort vessels.