

**Newsletter of the Australian / New Zealand chapter of the International Morse Preservation Society
June 2018**

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Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1765058520392148/>

Recommended FISTS calling frequencies (MHz):

1.808	3.528	7.028	10.118	14.058	18.085
21.058	24.908	28.058			

LETTER CHASE words for June are: **VIBROPLEX, BEGALI, HIMOUND, BENCHER** (Rules and Info on our webpage).

Results from the May Letter Chase and contest appear later in this newsletter

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From the Editor: Bill VK1MCW #15215



I finally upgraded to the Standard licence during May and my new callsign is VK1MCW. I guess like many when there is a change of callsign one falls into the trap of accidentally using your old callsign... Ooops – three times now!! I usually realise halfway through when I reach the “F”... It is then another test to avoid sending E E E E E E E AR (“Disregard this transmission – OUT! ”) which is the way I it was done in the military... (More on that in my article appearing in this below. NOW on that note, unless you want more from me, please send in your articles – It can be about your favourite key, or radio, antenna set up. Preferably with a CW theme – but it can cover any aspect of this great hobby. Stay warm – Winter is upon us!!

Subscriptions: List of members whose subscriptions become due in June and July 2018

June: ZL1DAK, ZL1WI, ZL3HAM, VK4OC, VK2SJE, VK4BOW, VK2CCW, VK2DLF,
VK3MI/ZL1AZE, VK7CW, VK7TW

July: VK4MIK, VK2IAU, JE1CLH, VK2EBN, VK2IOW, VK4HBP, VK4WM

We ask that you keep an eye out for your callsign in the subs section and treat that as your reminder for you to pay your subs.

Our website http://www.fdu.org.au/join_renew.php has all the details for making payments. Don't forget that if you are paying your subs to include your callsign. Please do not send cash in the post as this causes problems for us in banking.

FISTS would like to thank the following members for the generous donation included with their subscription; Tony #9015 and Clinton #14189

Welcome New Members

We are delighted to introduce two new members,
Ian Philbey VK5IP #15225, and **Adam Collins** VK2FNHT #15226.

Welcome guys – and please drop me a line with a short Bio and photo. Always good to put a face to a FIST....(ok the jokes get worse during the colder months – how is that possible?...)

Straight Key Contest



There were 7 operators who sent in logs and all were FISTS members. **Tony VK3TP #15204** had the highest score, 18 points. Congratulations Tony! Our thanks to others who participated; **Alan VK4AAN #15210**, **Michael VK2CCW #14198**, **Joe VK2KJJ #9689**, **Steve VK7CW #14164**, **Karen VK2AKB #15221** & **Arthur VK2ASB #9082**.

Results and scores can be view at: http://fdu.org.au/contests_open.php

May Letter Chase The Letter Chase (or what is now known as the Steve & Ian Chase) was completed again by **Steve VK7CW #14164 and Ian ZL2AIM #9683**
fdu.org.au/letter_chase_winners.php

Note that from here on in, we will NOT be announcing the winner until the next newsletter – or shortly before. I for one did not bother attempting the Letter Chase when a winner was announced just a day or two after it started!! - So, - everyone have a go – you just might get it!!

<<<<<<< NEW>>>>>>> CW Practice Sessions <<<<<<< NEW>>>>>>>

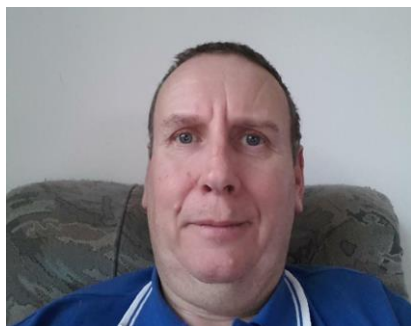
Michael's VK2CCW CW Practice Sessions are steadily building with 8 complete sessions all at 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 20, 23 & 26 WPM, so plenty there for everyone. http://fdu.org.au/cw_files.php

Thank you, Michael! And, Speak of the devil!!

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From our Members

Michael VK2CCW #14198



Hi all,
 I sit here pondering about how many stations out there that think CW is too hard.

I was looking around YouTube the other day and came across a video from Adelaide and Hills District ARC. They were giving a lecture on learning CW, this took about 30 minutes to watch and, it was very interesting listening to the commercial ops talking about how they were taught. Anyone that watches the video will understand what these guys are on about. I've always had the belief that most

instructors, were to me, using the wrong methods to train learning operator's in this mode of communication.

Over the many years I have been using CW from start to current day, I found that the way they explained how they learnt CW was different to mine.

Being self-taught I built speed slowly so that the brain could slowly take in and learn how to handle this mode. In this video the lecturers stated speed is not the issue but being able to follow what is taking place is.

Sure, speed is good to get a QSO flowing well, but some days the brain just can't cope well and it's this time that QRS comes into its own. Many operators seem to think that going like the clappers is the answer. I personally think that sometimes it's just refreshing to have a simple QSO at around 17 to 18wpm. It's very comfortable and very little effort is required to conduct a great QSO engaging is different subjects.

Anyway, these are my thoughts on this matter.

Here is the link to the video, and when you have time just listen to it. I agree with what they say, it makes perfect sense to me to also use the key to practice receiving CW without the pressure.

Here is the link.

<http://youtu.be/W6dGWGGVqb8>

Michael VK2CCW

Thank you, Michael, – and the Adelaide and Hills District ARC.

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Bill VK1MCW #15215 *(that would be me..)*

Getting Back On The Bike - An Enjoyable Journey

“CW – It’s just like riding a bike. You can always come back to it after many years away. Problem is – the road rules have changed! (then) VK1FWBK Bill Kirkwood #15215 March 2017”

Wind the clock back (just a few years!) to 2nd June 1975. A fresh-faced eighteen-and-a-half-year-old country kid heads off into the Wild Blue Yonder. Like most aircrew trainees, I had applied to join the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) as a pilot. I satisfied all the selection criteria apparently, (so the recruiting officer told me). However, in April 1975 I received a letter inviting me to join up as an Air Electronics Officer (AEO). *“What do they do?”* I wondered. During my officer interview board, I happened to mention that I was a member of the high school radio club and that I had once built a crystal set..... And so, it began.

My training, other than all the PT, Drill, Weapons Training, Service Writing. Service Knowledge, Meteorology and Oceanography, Discipline and Law, Administration, basic Aero-dynamics, Airmanship, ...was mostly all about Communications Procedures, Electronic Theory, Radio Theory, touch-typing and of course Morse Code! I was never very strong with maths and science at school - good enough to get through the HSC and recruiting, but that was it. Prior to joining the RAAF, I had never listened to morse code, I knew from all the war movies what SOS meant and sounded like in CW – but that was it.... I LOVED IT!!! It was as if I was born with it in my head but had not realised it. It came very easily to me. But there were rules and procedures that were not “recommended” but, instead, were what were referred to as “Is to – Are to”. No choice.!

What follows is an excerpt from what was sometimes considered to be the ‘bible’ of military procedures, the ACP-124. We lived by these rules – stray from them and you’re gone – ‘back to the farm for you boy!’. I include this in the hope it might explain to those who have had the odd rag-chew with me just where I am from, and my odd idiosyncrasy! (note that this document is in the Public Domain and is not classified.)

Allied Communications Publication ACP-124 COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTIONS RADIO TELEGRAPH PROCEDURES

“RADIO OPERATORS – CIRCUIT DISCIPLINE

a. The attainment of reliability, speed and security depends, to a large extent, upon the operator. It is essential that he be well trained, maintain circuit discipline and understand thoroughly his responsibilities.

b. Adherence to prescribed procedure is mandatory. Unauthorized departures from or variations to prescribed procedure are prohibited. If the procedure prescribed herein does not cover a specific operating requirement, the matter should be brought to the attention of the supervisor.

c. Transmission security is dealt with fully in ACP 122 which should be read in conjunction with this publication.

d. The following basic rules are essential to transmission security and shall be strictly enforced on all military radiotelegraph circuits.

(1) No transmission shall be made which has not been authorized by proper authority.

(2) The following practices are specifically forbidden:

(a) Violation of radio silence

(b) Unofficial conversation between operators

(c) Transmitting in a directed net without permission

(d) Excessive tuning and testing

(e) Transmitting the operator's personal sign

(f) Unauthorized use of plain language

(g) Use of other than authorized prosigns

(h) Unauthorized use of plain language in place of applicable prosigns or operating signals.

(i) Linkage or compromise of classified call signs and address groups by plain language disclosures or association with unclassified call signs

(j) Profane, indecent or obscene language"



The then 19-year-old kid – on TTY!!

By these rules I lived and breathed as a military radio operator and then later as a military communications instructor. (I hasten to add for those questioning the gender specific language used in that publication, that times have since changed, but that I am quoting the rules as written back in the day!)

Morse code was removed as a primary communications mode for our military at about the time I was set to graduate in 1976. For 42 very long years thereafter – save for the occasional airborne testing of one or more ground stations which retained CW a little longer as it was slowly being phased out, I did not touch another CW key.

Can you imagine how I reacted when I first sat down to listen to amateur radio in February 2017? I could not believe what I was hearing! *“How do these cowboys get away with this?”* Yep – it has taken me a while to adjust – and there are aspects of Amateur Radio CW practices that I simply cannot fathom!! (Don’t get me started on voice /SSB and the abuse of the NATO/ICAO phonetic alphabet! ☹️) Other than strict procedures, I was taught International Morse Code – not American Morse Code.. Yeah, I get it! “Say again” in CW was IMI sent as one and is of course the Question or question mark (?). To ask a question we sent “INT” as one – not three separate letters: It was short for “Interrogative”

There were of course many (if not most) things just as they are now. We did not have access to PC generated CW or CW readers, in fact the PC had not been invented!! On a net, the faster operators always slowed to the speed of the slowest operator. Being all professionally trained that was typically anywhere between 15 to 20wpm – what today most consider a comfortable ragchew speed.



Thee Navy Flameproof was fitted to our classrooms, our training aircraft and to the Neptune and P3B Orion maritime patrol aircraft

Well – please relax. Of course, rules and procedures are, and quite rightly, far more relaxed for amateur radio! Until getting my Amateur licence about 18 months ago I had never used plain language in CW – it was always coded groups. The rules and procedures under which I operated as a professional radio operator were there for very good reason – often lives may have depended on their correct use! Those who try to read my CW will sometimes hear me slip back into burnt-in ways... Somethings I will NOT change as they are still correct to me as the day learnt them, and are still used by many to this day.

If you want to test your sending skills, try to imagine being 100 feet above the wave tops, flying at around 250knots – turning and twisting in tight patterns while chasing submarines and sending an 18 to 20 group message under Readback procedures and following all those rules. Everything was sent with the straight key. There were no bugs or paddles or internal keyers used. In many ways however it was easier than when we were using CRATT (Covered Radio Teletype). Touch typing under those same conditions was a lot more demanding! (All messages were sent live – not typed up, edited and sent at high speed, as occurred a few years later....) So, the ‘EEEEEEEE’ correction procedure was often used in TTY as well!!

I loved every minute, and despite a newer bike and new (relaxed) rules, I still do!!



The view from my airborne shack!

(This photo was taken by me as we descended into Milford Sound in December 1977 – just for you ZL friends!!)

Long Live CW

Bill VK1MCW #15215 😊

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So there you go. Sorry – no Key of The Month -it is up to you!

That's all for now!

de Bill
VK1MCW #15215

