In 2015, QST's centennial year, each issue will feature an article from a past issue of QST. A day after the December 7, 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Federal Communications Commission suspended all Amateur Radio operations in the continental US. In response, ARRL Secretary K. B. Warner, W1EH, authored this special insert for publication in the January 1942 issue of QST.

WAR COMES!

We Take Our Posts in the Country's Defense

IN time of emergency, amateur radio steps forward and applies its specialized knowledge to the task of replacing and restoring and supplementing the normal communications system. That is our traditional responsibility — a tradition we have ourselves built and a responsibility we have ourselves sought. War is the gravest emergency of all, and it is now our duty to discharge that traditional responsibility in the war emergency with discipline and patriotic devotion.

Since December 7th, amateur radio has been operating under wartime controls. Eight hours after the first bomb fell in Pearl Harbor, amateur radio as we have known it in peacetime was suspended for the duration. In its place, in the past five days, the volunteer communication system upon which the civilian defense of these shores will be built has begun to take form.

FCC's order suspending normal amateur radio, with its hamming and chewing, should be examined simultaneously with its announcement of a mechanism under which amateur stations whose operation is essential to national defense are being returned to the air:

ORDER NO. 87

At a session of the Federal Communications Commission held at its offices in Washington, D. C., on the 8th day of December, 1941;

Whereas a state of war exists between the United States and the Imperial Japanese Government, and the withdrawal from private use of all amateur frequencies is required for the purpose of the National Defense;

IT IS ORDERED, that except as may hereafter be specifically authorized by the Commission, no person shall engage in any amateur radio operation in the continental United States, its territories and possessions, and that all frequencies heretofore allocated to amateur radio stations under Part 12 of the Rules and Regulations BE, AND THEY ARE HEREBY, WITHDRAWN from use by any person except as may hereafter be authorized by the Commission.

By order of the Commission:

— *T. J. Slowie, Secretary.*

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D. C.

December 8, 1941

NOTICE TO ALL AMATEUR LICENSEES

All amateur licensees are hereby notified that the Commission has ordered the immediate suspension of all amateur radio operation in the continental United States, its territories and possessions. Under this action all amateur radio operation in the continental United States, its territories and possessions is prohibited until further notice. In any instances where amateur radio operation is deemed to be required in connection with the national defense, appropriate authorization to engage in such operation will be issued but only upon application by a duly authorized federal, state, or local official made to the Defense Communications Board.

Pay particular attention to the language in the latter portion of the notice: *The way is open for every amateur whose services are desired by proper officials to get back on the air and help.* We should perhaps say "desired and needed," because hams aren't going to be able to get back on the air simply because they want to or because they are "willing to help" or even because they can get some small-fry or "unofficial" official to certify them. Chiseling is definitely discouraged and there must be a bona-fide defense need to be served. But once there is, the route is open. Our situation, then, is that rather than being off the air we are being resifted in what amounts to a species of relicensing under DCB whenever it is apparent that a competent official needs our help. Already, as we write, numerous amateur groups and nets have been activated and returned to the air for a purely defense purpose. It's a new kind of amateur radio but it is still the familiar picture of amateurs and their gear and their traditional skill and loyalty.

SPECIAL AUTHORIZATION

HERE is some practical information on the mechanism that is permitting defense activities to retain the services of amateur radio — although we should emphasize that in a

rapidly-changing situation the information we have to-day may not be entirely reliable by the time this is in print. (Suggestion: Check official broadcasts from W1AW.)

When an authorized public official, such as a governor or a mayor, wires or writes DCB or FCC a description of his proposed communication plan and a statement of why he has to have it, together with the names, calls and addresses of the amateurs he desires to serve in it, he may reasonably expect to receive a prompt response to the effect that the named amateurs are authorized to work in his system until further notice, as an exception to Order 87, for communications directly connected with national defense activities primarily relating to the defense work in his charge. A copy of that authorization will be sent to each individual amateur concerned and will be his operating credentials.

Note carefully that no authorizations are issued direct to an amateur or simply because an amateur wishes to offer his services. Application for the activation of amateurs may be made only by a duly-authorized federal, state or local official, and must spring from a need. Moreover, that official cannot be given a blanket authorization to permit operation by any amateurs he wishes. He must first explain his plan and show that the requested operation is necessary to perform a special national-defense function, and then he must name the individual amateurs concerned — not only their calls but their names and addresses as well. One reason for this is that Washington and the monitoring services must have a record of who has been authorized; another is that authorization from DCB must be sent to each individual amateur.

It will be noted that no stipulations of frequencies are required. The thought at the moment is that it is proper and desirable to permit the use of any band needed by an authorized official. Therefore when operation is authorized it is subject to all the usual FCC regulations and the special orders that have recently governed us, but all the usual amateur bands are made available. Most of the nets that have been authorized these last few days have been voice systems on 2½ and 5 meters but some are 80-meter c.w. operation and some are 160-meter and 75-meter 'phone nets, with or without connecting u.h.f. networks at each city.

While it is not permitted the individual amateur to get back on the air solely under his own auspices, there is of course no objection to amateurs, groups, nets and clubs explaining the present mechanism to competent officials who have need of amateur assistance; or to their doing some of the manual work of typing the requests for the signature and certification of the official. Certification, by the way, is not confined to any stated language: when a proper official asks authorization and asserts that he needs a certain amateur arrangement for a specified defense purpose, that is sufficient certification. There is no standard form, and requests may be telegraphic or by mail. The state defense systems are better known and better organized than many of the local ones and in some states OCD organization is not very far advanced. If there is room for any doubt about the recognition that DCB would give some particular local coördinator of civilian defense, it would be better if the request came from the mayor of the town, or from the chief of police if that is a proper function of the latter in the local plans.

A word here about DCB. Under an Executive Order recently signed by the President, all the latter's wartime powers over communications are lodged with DCB. It is at the very top of the wartime communications picture. But DCB is a board, not a commission with extensive personnel, and much of its work will be done for it by FCC personnel. Net result is that the applications we are talking about may be filed with either the Defense Communications Board or the Federal Communications Commission at Washington.

Headquarters urges that all League officials who have contact with authorities who are using amateurs, or who ought to be using them, bring to their attention the mechanism whereby amateur stations may be reactivated and assist them in making requests in proper form. We urge all amateurs to develop an association with a defense activity that will permit them to be returned to the air for that purpose, and then to do their best in the discharge of such duties. Radio amateurs are needed — in some places desperately. We believe we can count upon the amateurs of the country to see their duty, to devote themselves to patriotic service, and willingly to get back on the air for that purpose in large numbers.

SOME CAUTIONS

THE nation is at war. Complete Naval censorship of outgoing international correspondence was instituted December 7th. Ama-

teurs in defense work are on their honor to censor themselves similarly. *The permits now given amateurs rigidly confine them to defense operation.* No ragchewing will be tolerated and the fellows who engage in it will fare much worse than simply to lose their permits. The NDO monitoring service daily receives lists of the amateurs whose return to the air has been authorized and it is a safe bet that FBI will walk in pretty promptly on any gatecrasher who is not specifically certified for defense operations. As we value our return to the air, let there be no monkey business about this. If we are undisciplined or just playing around, or are incautious in our remarks, the War Department is practically certain to wash us up promptly and permanently and we would thereby forfeit our one chance to be on the air. They can't take chances with us if we don't show ourselves to be absolutely trustworthy. We'll all have a serious purpose but we mustn't even be careless, not even for a moment.

It is also emphatically worthy of notice that the suddenness of the emergency has given us tasks that were not originally contemplated for us, so that we are in the presence of our one big chance to make good. Let no careless amateur spoil this!

There are no specified details on what a net or group may or may not do. The agency for whom the group is authorized is in charge of its operation. If that agency says there may be no closing of switches until there is traffic of that agency to be handled, then there is no closing of switches. If that agency orders daily or hourly testing of the net, that testing is proper. If mayors or other proper local officials handling civilian protection work say that u.h.f. rigs must be installed and tested, that makes it proper for authorized amateurs to do so. But testing means disciplined testing and there must be *no idle gossiping and chewing the fat.*

Let it also be clearly understood that the amateur regulations are in full effect on those who are put back on the air. That means, among other things, that only licensed amateur operators may control the equipment; that the required log must be kept; and that great care must be taken to prevent unauthorized persons from having access to the apparatus.

CIVILIAN PROTECTION

WHEN war came, OCD's planning for civilian protection in air raids was still incomplete. Naturally this work is now being accelerated tremendously, particularly on the seaboards. Within a few weeks it may be expected that every vulnerable community will have its organization well in hand. We learn that each local coördinator of civilian defense is being called upon to appoint a competent communications administrator with the duty of creating and managing the community communications plan. It is under this official that we amateurs will participate in the ARP work. Thinking over the communications facilities that exist in cities with which we are familiar, it seems to us that the only systems that satisfy the need for the primary network are the wire telephones and the municipal signaling systems. Other facilities inevitably will be pretty random and catch-as-catch-can. It is imperative that the community possess a secondary system to go into operation whenever the primary one is interrupted — or, for that matter, whenever it begins to near its capacity, so that there may be retained in it some elasticity for the traffic of higher priorities. The backbone of this secondary system necessarily is amateur radio with its u.h.f. Thousands of us are needed with our home-built low-powered gear, to aid the communities in which we have lived and worked. Our job will be to bridge the gaps that occur in the primary system, to deal with critical overloads, and to provide portable or mobile service for incident officers, wardens and so on.

OCD is according definite recognition to amateurs. Instructions are being sent the local volunteer enrollment centers that will soon make it possible for all radio amateurs reporting locally for registration to be "earmarked" exclusively for communications work. In the meanwhile, we repeat that all amateurs interested in the protection work in their community should register themselves with the local ARRL Emergency Coördinator, which is our only way to have a group spokesman to represent us until the time the communities open amateur enrollment and appoint the local communication aide to the CD chief. Our Emergency Coördinators have now been instructed by the League to report at once to the local coördinators of civilian defense to arrange *something* to serve during the critical period until organization can be perfected, or to lay the facilities of our gang before the mayor or chief of police in cities where OCD work is not yet sufficiently advanced. See pages 7 and 8 of this issue for more information.

In the current situation no city in America can feel itself entirely safe and some are definitely anything but immune. We can see our job: if trouble comes to our home town, we'll be needed, for we are the only ones who can help when the wires go dead. We must build movable self-powered u.h.f. sets after the general prescriptions of *QST* — build them by the thousands! We must enroll for operating work with our gear — temporarily with our own ECs, later through the volunteer centers. We must help our communities in the actual job of organizing and lend them aid in securing the required special authorization for amateur communication assistance.

DISASTER RELIEF

ALL the foregoing arrangements relate to defense communications in the *military* emergency. At the moment of writing, no provision exists for the usual amateur aid in the event of interruption of communications by *natural* disasters such as floods, hurricanes or earthquakes. The activation of a defense net for this purpose would seem to be unauthorized unless the agency for whom the net was organized could establish that the disaster was also imperiling national defense.

Officials of the League are urgently endeavoring to obtain government approval of a formal plan whereunder amateurs may maintain their time-honored duties in this field, in the knowledge that Nature is no respecter of military emergencies. Should a disaster occur before such a plan is put into effect, the League will urge FCC to broadcast special authority to *all* hams in the affected area to get on the air and help. If this occurs, we can do the usual job, but it will be no excuse for a clambake and again we must confine ourselves strictly to the job in hand. Meanwhile all amateurs must distinctly understand that unless they do receive some such authority they may not come on to the air for this purpose, even though communities are suffering.

WATCH FOR W1AW

THE regulatory situation is likely to change from day to day, hour to hour. New rules may come out at any time. By special federal authority, our headquarters station W1AW is remaining indefinitely on the air, conveying government announcements to amateurs and watching over our bands. Whenever there are new needs or new rules affecting the amateur in defense work or disaster work, it may be expected that W1AW will bring you the news faster than any other means. Keep an ear out for it.

TEARS AND CHEERS

IF WE had the time, in our rush to get these special pages to press, we'd pause to shed a tear over the fact that for the first time in over twenty-two years the fun and camaraderie and rough-house of the amateur bands are stilled. Instead, we have a call to arms. If we could afford the luxury of a more leisurely mood, there are some deep-down-in-the-heart remarks we might make about that situation, and some pointed ones we'd like to get off on the cause of it all. But *QST* is basically the medium of our particular art and we are already a group of people schooled in industry, patience and conscientious application to our responsibilities. In the position of America to-day, Headquarters sees no need for flag-waving when it addresses the membership of the American Radio Relay League. We are a mature group and our emotions toward our country need no artificial stimulus. The field of the League is amateur radio and we have here confined ourselves to practical considerations in the application of that skill to the nation's needs. The dear glad days are necessarily gone for a while and there is no time or place for tears. Instead of the old kind of amateur radio, our actions are now directed solely to the assistance of the defense of the nation, at the urgent request of competent officials. Our stations, our operating ability, our devotion are being summoned for innumerable communications tasks of the sort that only we are prepared to discharge. We are now engaged — all of us — in the traditional duty of amateurs: supplying all-essential communication in an emergency. Let it be our high resolve that we shall never be found wanting!

December 12, 1941 K. B. W.

Strays

For the first time since conscription began, it is now possible to enlist in the Signal Corps. The Army needs operators — many of them. Any licensed amateur or commercial operator who presents his license to an Army recruiting officer will be permitted to enlist and will be assured of radio work.