W5AMK CTARC Central Texas Amateur Radio Club

THE Wavelength NEWSLETTER

March 2018

The Central Texas Amateur Radio Club
meets the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM at the
Bell County Communications Center, 708 West Avenue O, in Belton

Terry's Telegram...

Terry Evans, KF5OHR

Well, not to get on a soap box about gun control, but maybe, just maybe, it's not the guns. Maybe it's the way the kids are raised. When I was in school we all had guns in the back window of our trucks and from time to time we would get into fights. When things cooled down, it was time to shake hands and go for a coke or a Pepsi and be friends again. I don't remember anyone going to the truck and getting a gun. That's just not the way we were raised. If you got your butt kicked then you learned to fight better, or move faster, or keep your mouth shut.

We would stand for the flag and say the pledge of allegiance to the flag. As a Vietnam veteran, I know what it's like to not be respected for doing what's right and coming home to people that call you names and spit on you for preserving their right to do just that. And with no regrets, I would do it all over the same way. I know this doesn't help the families that have lost children and it will not fill the hole in their hearts. But looking to the future, a little more patriotism and a little more of God in school might be a better way to go. It use to work.

Speaking of the future... we've recently received an email that said too much time is consumed at club meetings with conducting club business, and that there's not enough time to talk to other members. There will always be business at hand that needs addressing, but Amateur Radio is suppose to be a hobby where there is an advancement of the art, through the sharing of ideas. Maybe we need to pay a little more attention to this aspect at our meetings.

Also upcoming, at the February 10th Skywarn class, KCEN Meteorologist Andy Andersen, reported they are very close to finishing the amateur radio desk at their studio.

And, we still have members who have not renewed their 2018 membership. If you're one of them, our Treasurer would be happy to see you! Hope to see you all at our next club meeting on March 6th, at 7:00 PM at the Bell County Communications Center.

73, Terry - KF5OHR

Spring is just around the corner.

STRAYS

"Blue Ribbon Beer presents Blue Ribbon Town, starring Groucho Marx..."

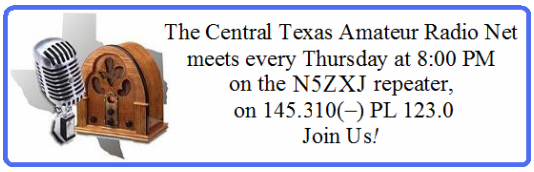
Blue Ribbon Town was a comedy-variety radio series, sponsored by Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer, and was broadcast over CBS from March 27, 1943, to August 5, 1944. It was also known as *Pabst Blue Ribbon Town*.

The show featured comedy situations starring Groucho Marx, and took place in the mythical American community of Blue Ribbon Town where men were men, women were women, and the jokes were mainly puns.

Many of the jokes were dated at the time and reminiscent of his films featuring quick skits and one-liners. To modern audiences this adds considerable charm to the show.

The February 12th, 1944 episode featured what America will be like one hundred years in the future.

These rare episodes are a treat. Blue Ribbon Town is definitely worth the listen. Have a few laughs, sip some suds in remembrance and visit: https://archive.org/details/otr_blueribbontown



March NCS & Back-Up NCS Schedule

March 1st:	March 8th:
Net Control: W5VEX	AD5SK
Back-Up: AD5SK	K6WXA

March 15th:	March 22nd:
Net Control: K6WXA	KF5OHR
Back-Up: KF5OHR	KE5ISN

March 29th:
Net Control: KE5ISN
Back-Up: W5VEX

Free Training Course Available

The Texas Department of Emergency Management is offering a free 3-day training course March 2nd - 4th, from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM each day. The course is entitled "PER-213 Wide Area Search" and is designed to provide training for search responders to effectively conduct wide area searches due to natural disasters or man-made incidents at a disaster incident site. The course uses the 2007 Greensburg, Kansas tornado as a case study to demonstrate the various teaching points.

The course will be held at the Temple Fire & Rescue Station, 7268 Airport Road, in Temple. The Point-of-Contact for this course, is My Young with the City of Killeen Emergency Management Tel: (254) 501-7706, or by email at: emcoordinator@killeentexas.gov.

More information on this is at: http://www.riccorp.com/psani/Ric5.pdf

Texas Severe Storms Association
National Storm Conference

The 2018 Texas Severe Storms Association National Storm Conference will be held on Saturday, March 3rd from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the Colleyville Center, 5301 Riverwalk Drive, in Colleyville. For more info on this training session, please visit: http://www.tessa.org/index.html

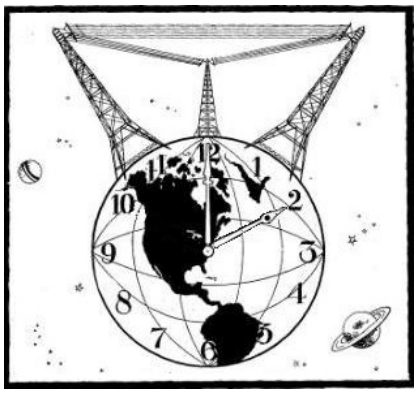
International DX Contest

Contest period runs from 0001Z March 3rd, to 2400Z March 4th on 160, 80, 40, 20, 15 and 10 Meters SSB phone. For more information on this, please visit: http://www.arrl.org/arrl-dx

Novice Rig Round-Up

This 9-day event runs from March 3rd - 11th on 80, 40, 15 and 2 Meters CW. More information on this event is at: http://novicerigroundup.com/

Daylight Saving Time Begins



Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday, March 11th, at 2:00 AM. Be sure to set your clocks one hour ahead before going to bed the preceding Saturday night.

Coryell County Joint Comm Group Meeting

The next meeting of the Coryell County Joint Communications Group, will be on Tuesday, March 13th, at 11:30 AM at the Lil Tex Restaurant, 502 South Main Street, (FM 116) in Copperas Cove.

St. Patrick's Day On-Air Event

This event sponsored by the Radio Society of Great Britain, runs from 6:00 AM, March 16th - 6:00 AM, March 18th and is 48 hours of fun in a non-competitive on air celebration of St. Patrick's Day, celebrating the Irish in all of us. For more information on this event, visit: http://stpatrickaward.webs.com/

Greater Houston Hamfest
ARRL South Texas Convention

The Greater Houston Hamfest and the ARRL South Texas State Convention, is on March 16th & 17th, at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds, 4310 Highway 36, in Rosenberg. Talk-In frequency is 146.940(-) PL 167.9 and call for KK5W.

More information is available at: http://www.houstonhamfest.org

Williamson County Swapfest

The Williamson County ARC will be holding their annual swapfest on Saturday, March 17th at the Community Center in the San Gabriel Park, 445 East Morrow Street, in Georgetown. Hours are 8:00 AM to Noon. Talk-in frequency is 146.640(-) PL 162.2 and call for N5TT. For more information, please visit: http://www.wcarc.com/

St. Patrick's Day Hamfest
ARRL West Texas Convention

The St. Patrick's Day Hamfest and the ARRL West Texas State Convention, is on March 17th, at the MLK Community Center, 2300 Butternut Lane in Midland. Talk-in frequency is 147.300(+) PL 88.5, and call for W5QGG. For more information, visit: http://hamfest.w5qgg.org/

CQ World-Wide WPX Contest

Contest period runs from 0001Z March 24th to 2400Z, March 25th on 160, 80, 40, 20, 15 and 10 Meters SSB. For more information on this contest, please visit: http://www.cqwpx.com/rules.htm

Skywarn Training

Bosque County *(Basic Spotter Training)* Tuesday, March 13th, 6:30 - 8:30 PM at the ClifTex Theater, 306 West 5th Street, in Clifton.

Lampasas County *(Basic Spotter Training)* Monday, March 12th, 6:30 - 8:30 PM, at the Lampasas Fire Dept., 1107 East 4th Street in Lampasas.

Milam County *(Basic Spotter Training)* Monday, March 12th, 6:00 - 8:00 PM, at the Cameron VFD, 1505 North Travis Street, in Cameron.

Mills County *(Basic Spotter Training)* Tuesday, March 13th, 6:00 - 8:00 PM, at the Mills County Law Enforcement Center, 2111 Priddy Road, in Goldthwaite.

Chicken Little Contest

John Williams, VK4JJW

If your guessing game is good - and you don't run around shouting every 10 minutes that the sky is falling - you might have a chance at a nice prize in what's being called the Chicken Little Contest. No, the sky isn't falling but a Chinese space laboratory weighing nine tons is definitely set for a less-than-glorious return home sometime around the middle of this month. The word "sometime" is the key here.

The Tiangong-1 spacecraft is the first space lab built and launched by China. It went up in September 2011 and now, it's poised to come back down in an uncontrolled re-entry. The Aerospace Corporation's Center for Orbital and Re-entry Debris Studies is sponsoring a contest, asking people to guess as best as they can when the lab will fall. The center will provide a prize, which it hasn't yet disclosed.

More information on the Tiangong-1 spacecraft's particulars and re-entry is at: http://www.aerospace.org/cords/reentry-predictions/tiangong-1-reentry/

You can submit your guess by writing the Aerospace Corporation's Center for Orbital and Re-entry Debris Studies at: http://www.aerospace.org/cords/contacting-cords/general-inquiries/

CTARC Survey

Tom Robinson, KG5NJG

Your Club Officers and Board Members want to know what the club members want from the club and their interests. Please let us know if you are interested in any of the following:

Information on Digital Radio
Antenna Building
Soldering Techniques
Study Group for the General Class Exam
Non-Meeting Events (Lunches, Socials)
General Ham Radio Training & Information
Becoming a Member of ARES
Other _____

At this time I'm trying to set up a study group for the General Class Exam. I am looking at Saturday, March 31st so that the group can be ready for testing at HamExpo on April 7th. I hope to have a place to hold the study group soon. You will need a General Class License Manual for a study guide.

Please contact me if you are interested in getting your General Class License or are interested in helping teaching for the test, as well as your interests as mentioned above.

I can be reached at: (254) 217-4033, or by email at: tomrobinson577@gmail.com

"You needn't worry about the amateurs. They'll keep their own bands clearer of spies, subversive dogmas and propaganda, than the F.C.C. could ever do."

- *Steve Early,* (March, 1940)
Secretary to President Franklin D. Roosevelt

A New "Big Gun" on AM

This past January 30th, Christian broadcaster *Trans World Radio* on the island of Bonaire, took to the air on 800 KHz AM, with its new 450,000 watt transmitter making it the most powerful Medium Wave broadcaster in the Western Hemisphere. The station identifies as *"Shine 800"* with a target audience of listeners in Venezuela, Cuba, Colombia, Brazil and the Caribbean.

Some readers may recall back in the 1960s, some of the Mexican 'border blaster' stations running half as much power, could easily be heard across the country. *Shine 800* should no doubt, be an easy catch as well.

Their website, which also has a link to their broadcast schedule, can be found at: http://www.twrbonaire.com/ QSL requests can be sent to: TWR-Bonaire, 64 Kaya Gob. N. Debrot, Kralendijk, Caribbean Netherlands. Be sure to place $1.15 worth of postage on your letter for the international postage rate.

"Mic Fright"

So maybe Annie the cat isn't cut out for being on the air as can be seen during her visit to station WERA in Arlington, VA. Perhaps she might be better suited de-mousing a transmitter shack.

How's DX?

KH6OO will be active from Tahiti Island, 10 - 17 March as **TX5X**. QSL via his home call.

A group will be active from Sherbro Island, Sierra Leone, Mid March as **9L1T**. QSL via I2YSB.

G7VJR will be active from Efate Island, Vanuatu, 2 - 19 March as **YJØGB**. QSL via MØOXO.

IZ4AMS will be active from New Caledonia 20 March - 4 April as **FK/5B4ALX**. QSL via his home call.

A group is active on Rotuma Island, until 16 March, as **3D2EU**. QSL via DK2AMM.

DCØKK is active from Sri Lanka until 25 March as **4S7KKG**. QSL via his home call.

UA1OJL is active as **RI5ØANO** from Belligshausen Station, South Shetland Islands, until 31 March. QSL via RN1ON.

K5MDK will be active from Belize, 1 - 5 March as **V31MK**. QSL via his home call.

G3TXF will be active from Mauritius Island, 10 - 11 March as **3B8XF**. QSL via his home call.

A group will be active from Macau, 9 - 17 March as **XX9B**. QSL via PP1CZ.

A group is active on Sagar Island, until 31 March as **AU2WBR**. QSL via VU2NRO.

HB9FIH is active from El Hierro Island, Canary Islands, until the end of March, signing **stroke EA8**. QSL via his home call.

XE1B will be active as **4B4B** from Socorro Island, Revillagigedo Islands, 1 - 15 March. QSL via his home call.

Special event station **EI5ØAOM** is active until 24 March. QSL via EI2KA. More info: https://www.qrz.com/db/EI50AOM

SP5APW will be active signing **stroke DU1**, from Palawan Island, 13 - 18 March. QSL via his home call.

W6NN and **KE1B** will be active from Tobago Island, each signing **stroke 9Y4**, 18 - 31 March. QSL each via their home call.

F2JD is active from Honduras, until 10 May, signing **stroke HR5**. QSL via F6AJA.

WB2TJO is active as **3D2JS** from Fiji through mid-March. QSL via his home call.

G4SGX will be active from Ambergris Caye, Belize, 6 - 16 March, as **V31GX**. QSL via his home call.

F6HMQ and **F6GWV** are active from Guadeloupe, until 12 March, signing **stroke FG**. During the period 3 - 4 March they'll be operating as **TO3Z**. QSL via F6HMQ.

F6ITD signing **stroke FG**, is active from Desirade Island, until 15 March. QSL via his home call.

W5JON is active from St. Kitts Island until 16 March as **V47JA**. QSL via his home call.

WB2REM and WY1G are active as **H7DX**, from Nicaragua, until 6 March. QSL via WY1G.

WB2REM will be active as **VP2EGO** from Anguilla Island, 17 - 24 March. QSL via his home call.

VA7VM is active as **H4ØYM**, from Nendo Island, until 13 March. He will then be active as **H44YM** from Guadalcanal Island, 13 - 16 March. QSL via EA5GL.

A group will be active from The Congo as **TN5R**, 9 - 19 March. QSL via EA5RM.

XV9HL is active from Vietnam until 6 March. QSL via HL1AHS.

G3RWL will be active from Barbados, 20 March - 29 April as **8P6DR**. QSL via his home call.

Tech Redundancy is Vital for Disaster Preparation

© *Gary Shapiro,* President & CEO Consumer Technology Association

Recently, I stayed at a stunning hotel in Napa Valley. I remember marveling both at the beauty of the location and the high-tech accommodations. The rooms had the most up-to-date, cutting-edge innovations – down to the toilet that automatically raised its cover as soon as you set foot in the bathroom. However, the last night of my trip, neither the stunning views nor the high-tech accommodations mattered much. Wind gusts swept through the area, rendering everything in the room – from the lighting and the internet to the toilet cover – completely useless.

This experience transformed the way I think about technology. Most Americans rely on digital devices and appliances around us, whether it's a smartphone or a tablet. In one sense, it's empowering – but it also leaves us vulnerable. Unless our devices have some sort of backup capabilities, it's easy to feel helpless when technology stops working. If there had been a fire at the front door, the electric-powered blinds meant I couldn't escape via the windows or door to the patio.

Disasters like those we've seen – whether it be the fires in California or the hurricanes that swept through Texas, Puerto Rico and Florida – have crucial lessons for users of technology. Consider backup plans for when the products break or electricity or telecommunication systems go down. Technology sometimes fails. Redundancy is more important when safety is vital, than when consumers can choose it for convenience.

Every home should have a hand-crank flashlight for the times when power is lost. I never thought I would need or want to carry a flashlight – after all, I have one on my phone. But when I saw how quickly the flashlight ate up my cell phone charge and realized that I couldn't recharge my phone, I was reminded of the importance of a basic level of redundancy.

When buying smart home locks and thermostats, ask about what happens with the loss of electricity. Is there a backup battery? Is there a manual backup? Consider having a hand-crank or solar radio, or a phone with a working FM radio option.

Yet, in emergency situations, AM radio is probably a better bet for information to the public than FM. Generally speaking, FM transmitter sites are located on mountain tops or other high locations, often accessed by two-rut mountain roads, just the kind of places often first affected by wildfire. Whereas AM stations are most often found in the valleys close to the urban areas. While not immune to the effects of wildfire, they are often easily accessed by heavy firefighting equipment and city fire department personnel.

As we determine which technologies guide our self-driving cars – car-to-car communication, GPS, on-board computers, smartphone-based spectrum – we should bear in mind the importance of redundancy. Better to test and perhaps incorporate redundant features than to have only one and watch it fail.

My hope is that people will see these crises as an opportunity to plan ahead and consider how they can implement the kind of redundancies that will prevent them from being totally reliant on technology. The silver lining of the whole situation? I could flush the toilet manually. Thank goodness for redundancy.

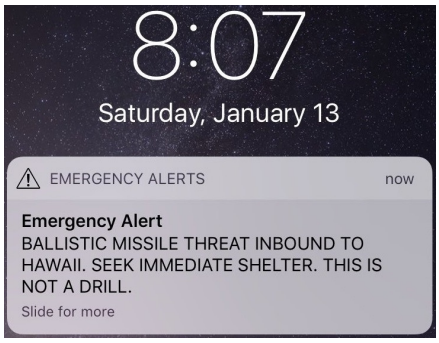
How Amateur Radio Played a Role in the Hawaii EAS Emergency Response

In the minutes after the false missile EAS alert was delivered in Hawaii, there was a great deal of general confusion — a lack of communication, general perplexity about the next steps, and phone call after phone call that didn't get through to the right recipients.

But one group in particular said it knew exactly what it felt it had to do. While an official retraction from emergency officials of the alert did not come until 38 minutes had elapsed, amateur radio operators were able to confirm within 13 minutes that the Hawaii EAS alert was false.

At a January 25th hearing called by the Senate Commerce Committee, Mike Lisenco - N2YBB of the American Radio Relay League, discussed the role that amateur radio operators played in responding to the Hawaii EAS alert response. At the hearing Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS) an advocate for amateur radio operators, asked why amateur radios are considered valuable in a situation such as these.

Lisenco testified that amateur radio, as a distributed form of communications infrastructure, is easily adapted to changing emergency conditions in disaster response situations.



In this case amateur radio operators in Hawaii were well-prepared for the emergency event. Ironically, amateur radio members in Hawaii had just been drilling for 20 hours before the actual false alarm, so everything was fresh on their minds. Lisenco said during the hearing.

Rumors and stories began to circulate through various VHF and UHF repeaters about the alarm as part of the Hawaii State Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service. Amateur radio operators picked up a conversation from a Coast Guard vessel outside the area that was relaying news that the alert was false. The operators, taught to listen for a local siren that indicates a true emergency, realized that siren had not sounded. The result was that amateur radio networks were able to disseminate validated cancellation information long before the cellular networks via WEA were able to do so. Because they were able to disseminate that information freely, they were able to get word out right way that the alert was false. Lisenco said.

We're not dependent on the same infrastructure to operate, and because we understand how radio works, we're able to adapt quickly to many situations. We have amateur operators both within and outside a disaster area, that gives us a unique ability to disseminate information within a disaster zone that others don't have. Lisenco said.

Weather Net
Operating Procedures

Storm season is quickly approaching, and due to the breadth of the series of weather events, immediate threats to life and property can happen quickly. Weather Nets provide information to the National Weather Service Regional Office located in Fort Worth and various local authorities. The goal is to help protect the people of Central Texas and provide ground truth data to the National Weather Service.

Numerous emergency and public service nets may be in session. In order for Amateur Radio to play an effective role in supporting humanitarian efforts, it is key that all licensees cooperate to minimize potential on-air problems. At this time of year, it's appropriate to re-visit the basic operating guidelines of Weather Net procedures and to list the back-up frequencies of where to tune to in the event a weather system takes out a particular repeater or repeaters, and what and how to report.

Operational Guidelines:

Standby Mode - The repeater is free for use. However, a CTARC Weather Net Control Operator will be standing by for any severe weather reports.

Active Mode - The repeater is under the control of the Net Control operator. All traffic should be directed through the NCS operator. Severe weather is occurring within our coverage area.

Emergency Mode - The repeater is under the control of the Net Control operator. All traffic is restricted to emergency traffic only. Extremely severe weather is occurring within our coverage area.

Other important notes... If you are the net control station for a weather net, don't sign-off with the National Weather Service just because the storm system has left your particular area. For everyone else, listen before transmitting. When checking in to a Weather Net, give your callsign and location. If you have no significant "reportable criteria" in your area, continue to observe conditions; monitor the frequency; and stay off the air. If you have to leave the net for any reason, advise the net control operator.

Weather Net Frequencies:

Primary Repeater N5ZXJ - Eddy, 145.310 MHz(-) PL Tone 123.0
Secondary Repeater W5BEC - Belton, 147.140 MHz(+) PL Tone 123.0
Alternate Repeater W5AMK - Gatesville, 146.960(-) PL Tone 123.0
Alternate Repeater KB5SXV - Lampasas, 147.220 MHz(+) PL Tone 88.5
Alternate Repeater W5ZDN – Lacy / Lakeview, 145.150 MHz(-) PL Tone 123.0
Alternate Repeater KE5URD - Cameron, 147.020 MHz(+) PL Tone 123.0
Alternate Repeater W5BCR - Clifton, 147.180 MHz(+) PL Tone 123.0
CTARC Simplex Frequency 147.550 MHz

Severe Weather Reporting Criteria:

Tornadoes – Violently rotating column of air, extending from a cloud base, in contact with the ground. Not all tornadoes may appear to be "in contact with the ground" look for debris being stirred up at what would be the base of the tornado.

Funnel clouds – A rotating column of air, with a tornado-like appearance, extending from a cloud base, with a vertical axis, not in contact with the ground.

Wall clouds – The lowering of a cloud base, with horizontal rotation and persistence.

Wind damage – (usually from winds ranging from 47 to 54 MPH): large healthy tree limbs breaking off, structural damage such as roof shingles coming off, (usually from winds ranging in excess of 55 MPH): trees uprooted, structural damages to buildings.

Hail – While the "official" reporting criteria is 1-1/2" (quarter size) hail, it has been observed that the NWS is always interested in any size hail reports. And remember... there is no such thing as "marble size" hail.

Flooding – Water rising rapidly, flowing over roads, flooding buildings. More than just "ponding" at intersections or other areas.

Another good idea is to program in to your scanner or a memory channel in your HT, the frequency of the nearest NOAA Weather Radio transmitter in your area.

The National Weather Service Office in Fort Worth operates 13 transmitters located across North Texas. While several NOAA transmitters may be easily heard, for most of us, the principal frequency to tune to for our area is **162.475**, station **WXK35**.

More information on this can be found at: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/

You can also submit storm reports, or post-storm information via email to the NWS office in Fort Worth, at: sr-fwd.webmaster@noaa.gov or telephonically to: (800) 792-2257 or their alternate numbers of: (817) 429-2631, or (817) 831-1157.

To stay abreast of developing weather systems, visit the website of the Fort Worth Weather Forecast Office at: http://www.weather.gov/fwd/ as well as the Austin / San Antonio Weather Forecast Office at: http://www.weather.gov/ewx/

YL NEWS and VIEWS

Mary Harding

Bletchley Park Code-Breaker

Mary Harding was 19 when she went to sign-up with the Royal Air Force without telling her parents, as she wanted to volunteer for war work after being inspired by a smartly dressed WAAF at the Strand. She was a bright but stubborn girl who had no qualifications, but because of her good ear for music, she decided to take part in basic signal training. To her annoyance one course led to another and she was on training pay, learning Morse code, wireless techniques and slip reading for a year until being posted to Bletchley Park - Britain's best kept secret during the Second World War.

At the age of 22, Mary was promoted to Sergeant in charge of a watch and went on to become a wireless operator and a Morse slip reader as part of a nucleus for setting up signal communication using high speed Morse at Bletchley Park, whose mission was to crack the Nazi codes and ciphers. Mary would often recognize the thumb of some of the German Morse operators, these messages were then passed on to the code breakers and so accuracy was of utmost importance and if they intercepted something of national significance they would be thanked by a short note. The work done at Bletchley Park has been credited with shortening the war by two years.

Around January 23, 1940, the mathematicians unraveled the German Army administrative key, then went on to crack the Luftwaffe liaison officers' co-coordinating air support for army units. Other staff deciphered the messages and turned them into intelligence reports. As a result, Bletchley Park was now routinely reading Hitler's mail.

She had the time of her life at Bletchley, but overnight after VE Day, she returned home and was expected to lead a domestic life, first as a daughter, then she went on to marry and had two daughters.

Mary would make no mention of her work during the war years at Bletchley Park until after 1975, when the veil of secrecy around Bletchley Park was finally lifted. Britain's Government Code and the Official Secrets Act, banned them from talking about the work they were doing ---- even with each other.

Mary, one of the unsung heroes of World War 2, passed away on January 19, 2016, in Keynsham - Somerset, England - just days after her 93rd birthday.