

"WORTH A TRY" LESSONS IN MORSE

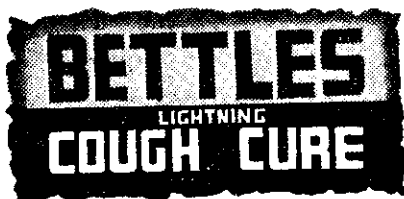
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August 30, 1940. N. McARTHUR, Secretary.



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(1) Important Points For Beginners

For the benefit of all classes of listeners we print here the first of the series of signal training lessons for Air Force recruits which are being broadcast from stations 2YC, 1ZM, and 3YL. This lesson will be given on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, September 9-11, inclusive, and the next one (Lesson No. 2)—a draft of which will appear in next week's "Listener"—will be broadcast on the same evenings of next week, beginning at 6.35 p.m.:

WHEN learning the Morse code it is important to distinguish between dots and dashes; that is, a dot or a dash must always be properly characterised. A dash should be three times as long as a dot. Beginners commonly make the mistake of "holding the dots"—not making dots at all, but a series of long and short dashes.

A dot is made by one quick sharp touch of the key. A dash should never be made longer than the time required to make three quick dots. The secret of good operating is in the spacing between letters and words, but there should be no spacing between dots and dashes which make up an individual letter.

For example: take the letter A. It consists of a dot and a dash. Phonetically it is pronounced as "Dit-Dah," dit for the dot and dah for the dash. Thus the letter "A" becomes "Dit-Dah" not "Dot Dash."

By repeating the phonetic sounds the letters soon become firmly fixed in the mind.

During mental repetition no pause should be made between the "Dit" and the "Dah"; the two must roll smoothly into each other thus "ditdah." One of the greatest mistakes made by learners is permitting a pause to come between the "Dit" and the "Dah." As a further illustration take the letter "B" which consists of a dash and three dots. There must be no spacing between the dash and the three dots. It is "Dahditditdit." Now if a space is permitted to come between the dah and the three dits, the code character will have the form of the letters T S instead of B.

Some learners will adapt themselves more readily than others to this method of signalling and their progress will naturally be rapid. The rate of progress depends entirely upon the degree of application.

Holding the Key

It is most important that the telegraph key be held and manipulated correctly.

In effect, the telegraph key is a metal lever which is pivoted so that pressure on the mushroom-shaped knob causes contact to be made between two contact points. A short contact forms a dot (or dit) and a longer contact a dash (or dah). A morse key is not absolutely necessary right at the beginning of practice. A fairly good substitute will be found in an ordinary table. While in a comfortable sitting position and using your right hand, let the thumb rest lightly under the table top and the tips of the first and second fingers on the top of the table. The third and little fingers will fall into a natural relaxed position. Do not grip the table tightly but just exert sufficient pressure to prevent your fingers from slipping. For example: apply the same pressure as you would in holding a pen or a pencil. The grip on the key or table top should always remain light and flexible. The thumb acts more or less as a guide, while

the first and second fingers serve to convey wrist movement to the key. A tight grip becomes very tiring and also prevents the attainment of rhythm and speed. The whole hand and the wrist must remain semi-relaxed at all times.

The forearm to the point of the elbow should be in line with and on the same level as the lever of the key with the upper arm held fairly close to the side of the body. The back of the hand should be in a position to allow of unrestricted vertical movement of the wrist. The importance of a vertical wrist action cannot be over emphasised. A diagonal movement of the wrist would cause incorrect formation of the Morse characters.

If the correct position of the hand is observed, vertical wrist movement will result and no difficulty should be experienced in transmitting clear, readable Morse.

Try a little wrist work. Slowly send a succession of dots. Merely move the wrist up and down trying at the same time to exert the same pressure on the key with each downward movement. Remember dots are being sent, not a mixture of dots and dashes. Now try a few more dots and a little faster this time watching your wrist action. Unconsciously you may be gripping the key a little tighter and consequently restricting the movement of the wrist. Relax your grip and carry on with the dots. Endeavour to obtain rhythm. This means that all dots should be of the same relative length and spacing.

Some Examples

Now send a word which is made up of dots only. Write down the word "SISSIE" in block letters.

S is three dots
I is two dots
S is three dots
S is three dots
I is two dots; and
E is one dot

It is sent as follows: ditditdit ditdit ditditdit ditditdit ditdit. Try sending it a few times and endeavour to correct any little fault you may notice. For instance, you may be sending R for S or N for I. This is probably due to faulty wrist action and a tight grip. Watch your wrist as you send and try to maintain a uniform up and down movement.

Now try a sentence comprised of all dots. "She is his sissie." It is sent as follows:

"SHE" ditditdit ditditditdit dit
"IS" ditdit ditditdit
"HIS" ditditditdit ditdit ditditdit
"SISSIE" ditditdit ditdit ditditdit ditditdit ditdit dit

This is a good sentence for practice purposes. Send it a few times each day and adapt the speed of your sending to the stage of your advancement. At this stage of your training you must concentrate on quality. The spacing between words should be pronounced.

Now try a few dashes. As pointed out earlier a dash is three times the length

of a dot. This does not mean, however, that you have to press the key with three times the pressure you exert to transmit a dot. The same pressure will do. Should you have a tendency to grip tightly on the downward movement of the wrist, you must endeavour to overcome it.

For further practice on dashes try the letter "M" which is comprised of two dashes.

In this the first lesson an endeavour has been made to illustrate how you should hold and manipulate the Morse key, and it is suggested that you mould your style accordingly. Those who have already begun practising are recommended to check up on their style, and, if necessary, revise it so as to conform with the method outlined here.

TEST ANSWERS

THESE are the answers to Test No. 2, given on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, the 5th, 6th and 7th of September, from stations 2YC, 4YO and 1YX in lesson No. 10.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5.

Line	1	K	A	Y	C	Q
"	2	N	O	F	V	N
"	3	P	V	Z	Q	X
"	4	F	W	B	A	K
"	5	T	U	V	X	R
"	6	N	I	J	E	C
"	7	G	E	H	O	P
"	8	P	U	S	I	Z
"	9	B	E	W	K	U
"	10	X	I	A	Z	C
"	11	Q	R	V	L	D
"	12	E	A	N	T	Y
"	13	C	E	G	T	F
"	14	S	O	H	P	N
"	15	B	I	C	W	R
"	16	M	U	S	N	H
"	17	K	A	B	N	S
"	18	F	A	D	M	O
"	19	H	E	W	P	Q
"	20	L	C	Y	F	Z
"	21	G	I	K	T	V
"	22	S	U	N	M	O
"	23	W	E	B	P	D

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6.

Line	1	B	O	Z	K	A
"	2	A	Q	R	W	E
"	3	S	U	D	C	M
"	4	F	O	L	C	Y
"	5	G	H	J	I	N
"	6	T	U	H	R	W
"	7	P	B	A	K	E
"	8	M	I	E	F	K
"	9	V	E	Q	Z	O
"	10	M	A	L	N	W
"	11	D	U	R	N	G
"	12	L	Q	Y	F	P
"	13	S	E	L	N	J
"	14	T	R	B	N	L
"	15	B	A	K	N	S
"	16	W	E	H	Q	P
"	17	C	I	B	W	R
"	18	P	V	B	O	S
"	19	C	U	L	J	K
"	20	T	X	O	W	J
"	21	Q	Y	L	N	E
"	22	C	I	M	P	L
"	23	C	K	Y	L	F
"	24	L	A	M	R	S

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

Line	4	D	T	W	Y	H
"	1	K	U	L	C	J
"	2	A	G	S	F	L
"	3	V	B	Q	R	O
"	4	D	T	W	Y	H
"	5	I	M	C	R	Q
"	6	U	D	R	O	G
"	7	Z	W	N	Q	T
"	8	E	N	Y	W	L
"	9	H	O	R	Q	V
"	10	O	L	F	S	A
"	11	L	J	C	S	K
"	12	J	F	U	G	Z
"	13	T	X	Q	L	E
"	14	L	Y	C	N	F
"	15	K	E	B	S	J
"	16	M	O	Z	R	L
"	17	W	P	A	N	M
"	18	S	L	W	R	G
"	19	L	T	R	B	M
"	20	T	U	G	N	Y
"	21	B	V	P	O	S
"	22	F	E	I	M	K