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ARRL at 100: A Century of Ham Radio

“A new video traces how ARRL members have protected and advanced Amateur Radio throughout its history.”

On the evening before its January meeting the ARRL Board of Directors was treated to the premiere showing of a 24-minute video, *ARRL at 100: A Century of Ham Radio*. Written by recently retired Media and Public Relations Manager Allen Pitts, W1AGP, and hosted by *QST* Managing Editor Becky Schoenfeld, W1BXY, this new video takes the viewer on a visit to the Hiram Percy Maxim Memorial Amateur Radio Station, W1AW, and then on a journey through time beginning with the earliest experiments with wireless communications. It traces how ARRL members have protected and advanced Amateur Radio for 100 years, making it possible for all radio amateurs to enjoy it today.

Allen began work on the script in 2012. To put the history of the ARRL in context he assembled a timeline of major events in electronics and communications beginning with Faraday's early work with electricity and magnetism in 1831. The timeline serves both as an outline of the video and as a backdrop for the on-screen narrative. This approach reminds us that, important as he is to us, Mr Maxim did not invent radio — not even Amateur Radio. The ARRL's story begins in 1914, more than a decade after amateurs began communicating by radio and more than a year after the advent of licensing.

The video highlights two significant events in ARRL history that occurred before World War I: its genesis as an organized network of "relay stations" and the introduction of *QST* in late 1915. Right after the war our association came into its own, emerging from wartime suspension as the primary advocate pressuring Congress to restore amateurs' operating privileges. Adopting technical advances more quickly than their commercial counterparts, amateurs soon discovered the unique properties of the "short waves" that permit the global communication we still experience today. This led Mr Maxim in 1925 to form the International Amateur Radio Union as the vehicle for worldwide advocacy, an essential role that it still plays today.

The decade of the '30s saw new operating activities such as Field Day and the DX Century Club and the creation of what is now the Amateur Radio Emergency Service. The '40s began with the curtailment and eventual suspension of Amateur Radio for the duration of World War II, but this time there was no doubt that amateurs would return to the air once the wartime emergency was over. Sputnik's launch in 1957 led to increased emphasis on science education and was followed by Amateur Radio's first satellite just 4 years later.

Working together over a period of more than 5 years, the ARRL and the IARU met the challenge of a comprehensive review of radio spectrum allocations by the International Telecommunication Union. This culminated in the 1979 World Administrative Radio Conference, from which the Amateur Radio Service emerged with all of its bands virtually intact and with new allocations at 10, 18, and 24 MHz, and where the amateur-satellite

service gained important access to additional spectrum. The video also notes the more recent achievements of limited pre-emption of local regulation of antennas and the beating back of challenges from commercial low Earth orbit ("little LEO") satellites and Broadband over Power Line interference.

The video chronicles the ARRL's role as the disseminator of technical information for amateurs who want to increase their knowledge and improve their stations. From the first issue of *QST* through 91 editions of the *The ARRL Handbook* and hundreds of other publications, ARRL members have shared their innovations and explanations with one another in language we can understand.

The overarching message is that the ARRL is people: you, me, and more than 162,000 other members, working together to advance the art and science of radio — just as members have done since 1914.

While it is designed to remain relevant for years to come, *ARRL at 100: A Century of Ham Radio* is especially appropriate for viewing during this, our Centennial Year. It is available on the ARRL YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/ARRLHQ, and as a DVD in the online ARRL Store. The detailed timeline is available for downloading as a PDF at arrrl.org/ARRLTimeline.

The video ends with a question and a promise.

The question is, "Where do we go from here?" We continue to promote and advance the art, science, and enjoyment of Amateur Radio. By being an ARRL member you not only reflect the commitment and enthusiasm of American hams, but also provide leadership as the voice of Amateur Radio in the United States and to our colleagues abroad.

ARRL members have been there:

- to defend our spectrum
- to help teach new hams
- to encourage the development of skills and capabilities through contests and other activities
- to encourage community service and promote Amateur Radio in the media
- to advocate for hams in regulatory arenas
- to share the joy of creating new things, learning new things, and realizing, "Hey, I can do that!"

And here is the promise: We're just getting started!