ARALB CW Practice Net—QRS & QRQ
by Bob Grubic, NC6Q - revised Jan 2011

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

This Net has two sections: the slow speed (QRS) section and the faster speed (QRQ) section. The slow speed QRS section is first, then comes the faster QRQ. The Check In Procedure and Format are the same for both sections. Only the Morse code speed (words per minute, wpm) is different. The QRS section is about 12 wpm with lots of extra space between characters and words. All speeds are accepted. The Net Control Station (NCS) will adapt to whatever speed you send at. The QRQ section is sent at 20 wpm.

The ARALB CW Practice Net is a directed net and the NCS (Net Control Station) directs all activity. Its purpose is to provide an opportunity to practice CW operating skills, both copying and sending, in a relaxed net setting. It meets Monday nights at 7:00 P.M. (except on Board of Directors meeting night which is the Monday after the 1st Friday of the month). This Net meets on 28.130 MHz (plus or minus QRM). All stations are welcomed no matter what (slow) speed. We are happy to slow down to accommodate you. There is no membership requirement, no dues, no club affiliation, no meetings, no problems. Check in when your schedule permits.

PROCEDURES

Please familiarize yourself with the Net Script and format below. If you are new to all of this, it is suggested that you listen a few times to be able to follow the proceedings of the Net. You may even want to record a Net or two to practice off the air. That's what's it's there for—to help you feel more and more comfortable with CW and CW Net operations. Then, when you feel ready to "check in" to the Net—do it! When your confidence is up (or you already have some CW experience), after the Net is closed, if you want, you might want to call another station to have a QSO with you.

Many procedures followed here are taken from the more formal Traffic Nets of the ARRL National Traffic System (NTS). Such procedures are simply efficient and useful, even in a practice net like this one.

This Net has been structured with a progression so that operators of various skill levels can benefit from it. Much like the learning of a second language involves a certain "quiet period" of just listening before "speaking," so too may be your progression and involvement in this Net.

For some ops, a natural progression may be like this:

- just being able to follow what is happening by listening and reading the script
- then, following what is happening by copying (writing down) and <u>not</u> using the script
- then, being able to follow without a script and copying successfully the out-stations' comments and the announcement that is given each week
- then, doing all of the above (though maybe not 100%) and actually checking in to the Net but not having anything to say
- then, all of the above and checking in to the Net AND having something to say or comment on when being addressed
- then, all of the above and immediately after the Net, have a QSO with another station for further practice

The basic format of each section of the Net is:

- Preamble (or opening)
- Check in
- Out-Stations' News/Comments
- Announcement
- Closing

SOME DETAILS

o The Slow Speed Net is between 5 and 12 wpm. Don't rush. Don't exceed 12 wpm. Send your code carefully at a speed where you will minimize mistakes. Take care to form your characters and words with standard dit/dah weighting. Don't "customize" or "personalize" your weighting. Let's try to provide as good CW as possible. Some people on the net (or just listeners) may have a marginal ability to receive code. Fast code, code with lots of errors/resends, or code with poorly formed words or characters may cause net participants (or the NCS, for that matter) to be unable to copy you.

o If you make a mistake sending, send a series of 8 dits and then restart with the mis-sent word.

o Listen for QNI K, then check in.

o Check in with one letter. It can be any letter (just so no two stations use the same letter). Many folks use the 1st letter of their suffix, but any letter will do as long as it is unique. NCS replies by sending back one of the letters he heard (he may hear several at the same time, like in a DX pile-up). Then that station checks-in by sending "DE [call sign] NAME [name] QTH [location] AR K" (See the script below for these and other details.) By checking in this way each time, the station gets practice sending this QSO-common

response and other hams (new to the Net or otherwise) get to know and learn about the participants in the Net.

o You can end your transmission and turn it back to the NCS with either: AR K, K, or BK. BK, sent together as one sound, is for "break" or "back to you real quick." It can also precede a station's return to your BK and it can serve as a mini-format for several quick back-and-forth exchanges. Listen for it and hear how it's used.

o Check ins will be taken by NCS at the beginning of the Net and periodically thereafter. Do not "break in" to check in. Wait until you hear QNI from NCS. NCS will QNI periodically throughout the net. Remember, this is a directed Net (QND).

o In the "Out-Stations' News/Comments" phase, NCS will rotate through the check in list asking each station to Go Ahead (GA). The NCS will call each participant one at a time, in the order they checked in and have a short exchange. That station will turn it back to NCS and then NCS will have a short exchange with the next check in. The NCS will limit his sending to a minimum to allow participants the most practice. Each out-station can use this opportunity to respond to earlier remarks, ask questions, state an opinion, communicate news, etc. News can be an item of personal interest (a vacation), a radio achievement (got a new antenna up), basically anything you'd like to say in a minute or two. During this phase, a station can indicate nothing to say by sending "DE [call sign] PASS AR K" or "DE [call sign] QRU AR K" (QRU being "I have nothing"). NCS will then move to the next station on the check in list.

o If you decide to check in to both the QRS and the QRQ sections, you can pre-plan (and even write out) your comments—with something different to say in each section.

o The "News/Comments" phase will continue until all out-stations have commented. Then the Announcement phase will begin. We don't want the Net to drag on a long time. If you would like more practice sending, you are invited to have more actual QSOs with other hams—maybe even call another out-station after the Net closes.

o In the Announcement phase, the NCS will send a brief announcement or message that will be different each week. It is hoped that this announcement will also further add to the practice nature of the Net.

o If you are simply listening for familiarity and practice, we may not know you're out there. An email or phone call to let me know of your use of the Net would be appreciated. Please email comments to Bob at nc6q@arrl.net or call him at 562 961-6711.

REFERENCES

Much of the information herein was taken directly from several of the following sources. Reading through these sources will give you a broader knowledge of CW, Q-signals, procedural signal, and abbreviations. In some of these references, you'll notice there are various styles and formats of CW Nets that others have put into operation—from completely informal with no Q-signals or scripts at all to the more formal ones geared toward rapid and efficient handling of third-party traffic (messages). I have tried to adopt those procedures that I've found most appropriate for this CW Practice Net.

http://www.qsl.net/n5lf/cw-nts.html
http://www.qsl.net/ve3bdb/cwnet.html
http://www.arrl.org/w1aw/morse.html
http://www.fists.org/
http://www.netwalk.com/~fsv/CWguide.htm
http://www.qsl.net/n9bor/morse.htm
http://www.cjonline.com/stories/021704/pag_morsecode.shtml
http://w6rec.com/duane/amateur/cw.htm
http://www.magiclink.com/web/shurst/Page2.html
http://www.w6ze.org/OCWNet.html
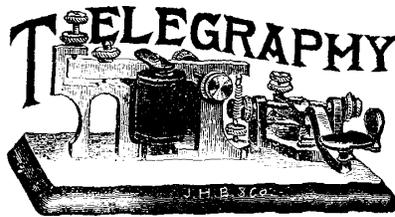
ARALB CW PRACTICE NET SAMPLE SCRIPT
(actual transmissions may vary)
Bold is what is sent in CW
Explanation is in [ ]

Preamble:

STATION	CW	EXPLANATION

NCS:	**QRL? QRL?** [sent at 12 wpm]	[Is this frequency in use?]
	ARALBN DE NC6Q —	[— or BT = pause, "huh"]
	ARALB QRS AND QRQ CW PRACTICE NET NOW OPEN —	
	ALL STATIONS WELCOME —	
	QND QNN NC6Q/BOB/SIGNAL HILL, CA —	[QND = this is a directed net]
		[QNN = follow directions from net control station]
	QNZ V V V	[please zero beat on my freq]

Check In QRS (sample): (three stations check in)

NCS:	**ARALBN DE NC6Q QNI K**	[QNI is a call for check in]
KB6CWO:	**C**	[out-station sends "one letter"]
W6LOH:	**L**	[out-station sends "one letter"]
NCS:	**C**	[NCS recognizes the "C" station]
KB6CWO:	**DE KB6CWO NAME ALLAN**	[out-station checks in with call,
	QTH LAKEWOOD A̅R̅ K	name, and QTH]
NCS:	**GE ALLAN**	["good evening, Allan"]
NCS:	**L**	[NCS recognizes the "L" station]
W6LOH:	**DE W6LOH NAME JACK**	[out-station checks in with call,
	QTH LONG BEACH A̅R̅ K	name, and QTH]
NCS:	**GE JACK QNI K**	["good evening, Jack" QNI again]
NCS:	**U**	[NCS recognizes the "U" station]
K6UIK:	**DE K6UIK NAME ROCK**	[out-station checks in with call,
	QTH LONG BEACH A̅R̅ K	name, and QTH]
NCS:	**GE ROCK QNI K**	["good evening, Rock" QNI again]
	(until is nothing heard)	

Out-Stations' News/Comments (sample): (out-stations called in order of check in)

STATION	CW	EXPLANATION

NCS: **KB6CWO GA**   [NCS calls KB6CWO "go ahead"]

KB6CWO: **DE KB6CWO BT**   [KB6CWO begins his comments]

GE BOB AND THE NET BT I HAVE A NEW ANT HR A G5RV UP ABT 30 FEET BT SRI I MISSED THE MEETING FRIDAY BT HEARD THE SPEAKER WAS GOOD BT AM LOOKING FORWARD TO FIELD DAY IN JUNE AR K

NCS: **FB ALLAN UR NEW ANT DOING GUD JOB BT**

W6LOH GA   [NCS calls W6LOH "go ahead"]

W6LOH: **DE W6LOH PASS (or QRU) AR K**   [W6LOG "passes" also

                                             QRU = I have no more/nothing]

(this phase continues until all stations have taken a turn or passed)

(periodically NCS will send QNI – looking for late check ins)

Announcement:

NCS: **ARALBN DE NC6Q   TONIGHT'S ANNOUNCEMENT IS**

_____

_____

Closing the QRS section:

NCS: **ARALBN DE NC6Q LAST CALL QNI K** [last call for check ins]

    (nothing heard)

QRS SECTION NOW CLOSED AS   [AS = wait, stand by]

Opening the QRQ section:

NCS:

V V V   [sent at 20 wpm]
QRQ SECTION NOW OPEN —
MY KEYER IS SET FOR 20 WPM —
ARALBN DE NC6Q QNI K

QRQ Section Continues with Check Ins, Comments, Announcement...

Closing the QRQ section and the Net:

ARALBN DE NC6Q   **LAST CALL QNI K —**

ARALB QRS AND QRQ CW PRACTICE NET NOW CLOSING —
MORE INFO ABT THIS NET AT WWW.ARALB.ORG —
TNX EVERYONE ES GN
QRU QNX QNF 73 DE NC6Q A̅R̅ S̅K̅   [QRU = I have no more]
                                               [QNX = all are excused from Net]
                                               [QNF = Net freq is clear (free)]