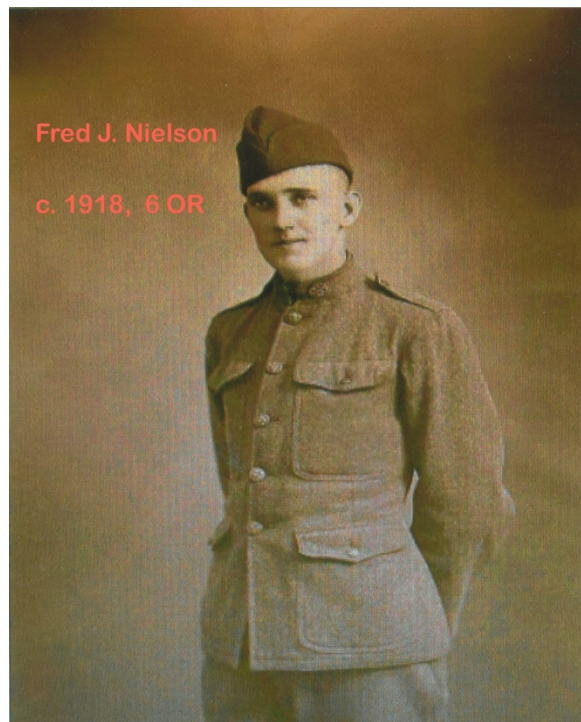


Bart Lee, A Vintage Vignette:

6OR -- An Early San Francisco Ham.

A Note from the late Don Meehan, AC6LE, Napa, California.

My great uncle, Fredrick John Nielson, who was born in 1896 and who died in 1979, was an early Amateur Radio Operator about 1913 through 1916, in San Francisco. But I didn't know his callsign.



My father, Francis E. Meehan, Sr., lived with his grandfather, Fredrick A. Nielsen and uncle Fred J. Nielsen during the time Fred J. was an amateur operator. Dad was born 1904 and married in 1926. Dad told me stories about Fred having a ham

radio station and antenna in back yard at 136 Caine Avenue in San Francisco. When Dad was about ten years old he ran into the antenna and said it either shocked or burned him.

When a relative passed away in 1946, Dad went to the funeral. After a time he brought back some furniture from his grandparents. One of the pieces was a Philco console AM radio with a 30 MHz converter. Around 1948 I set the radio up and hooked up a long wire and listened to many clear-channel AM stations and 80 meter AM phone amateurs. One day I rode my bike 7 miles into town along Highway 121 to a dentist appointment. I saw the ARRL 1948 Handbook in a store window. I bought it for \$2, and I still have it. With Fred J.'s example, that's how I got into amateur radio nearly eighty years ago.

Back to Fred J.: Doing genealogy, I found where he worked at a radio store, but I not find the name. By 1940 he was working at Moore Shipyard in Oakland. Although his father was a photographer, I did not find any pictures of his station or antenna. I could not determine his old pre- World War One callsign. The house in San Francisco is still there after all these years. They had moved there after the 1906 earthquake.

I do have a picture of the TRF home radio that Dad and family listened to during the 1920s.

Nielson Family TRF Radio
1920s -- 6 OR story



When I grew up, we only had AM radio and movies. I listened to Jack Armstrong and Captain Midnight every afternoon. In mid 1940s we moved to Napa and we had double session school, so I was home in mornings and listen to KRE music at 11 o'clock AM.

One thing led to another and I did not get back to much ham radio listening, what with school and working. I did get into the Electronic Shop at Mare Island and got to work the Calibration Shop and worked ten years with the Instrument Shop. I did 30 years and just before retiring, I heard about the no-code Technician License. In 1992 I passed my first test. Then during the next couple of years I passed all the other tests.

It took my wife, Jean, ten years of listening to me to get her license. So we have fun using the radio around the Napa area. My callsign is AC6LE and Jean's is KG6OQG.

While searching genealogy, I found grandchildren of my Dad's side and that his mother had saved all his early photos his grandfather took of him. We have a great time getting together. Enclosed are several pictures. The one of Fred standing in the house is special because that is a picture of my father behind Fred's shoulder. The other one is Fred J. during World War One, *circa* 1918. There is also a picture of the family TRF radio.

I found out Fred J.'s very early callsign from the California Historical Radio Society through Judith Mears and Bart Lee. Judith stopped by my wife Jean's shop in Napa one day. Jean is KG6OQG and Judith heard the ham radio. They exchanged information and that led me to write Bart about my Great Uncle Fred. He contacted me and gave me the information about Fred's old amateur radio license callsign — 6OR, from 1913 to 1916. Thank you, California Historical Radio Society. ##