

# AP1529

## THE 'Q' CODE

(2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. June 1937; Rep. June 1941)

## ON CD-ROM



The Q code was instituted at the Radiotelegraph Convention held in London in 1912 as a means of creating a 'shorthand' for use with Morse code. At that time, the Q code was intended for use by shipping. The code consists of a large number of three-letter groups beginning with 'Q', of which the groups QAA to QNZ were later reserved for the aeronautical service.

When radio was introduced to civil aviation in the early 1930s all radio communication was by wireless telegraphy (W/T). It should be noted that this included aeronautical point-to-point, as well as air-ground services.

Each code group had a specific meaning assigned which remained the same regardless of the language spoken by either operator, thus neatly overcoming the problem of communications on international services (the later move to voice communication by HF and VHF radio-telephone necessitated the adoption of English as the international language of aviation).

The aeronautical part of the Q-code was, for British (including Australian) users, originally contained in [Air Publication 1529](#) *The 'Q' Code and Other Abbreviations to be Used in the Civil Aeronautical Radio Service*. Although wireless telegraphy in aviation is virtually non-existent these days, the Q code still exists and is contained in ICAO PANS (Procedures for Air Navigation Services) Doc 8400 : *The ICAO Q Code*.

A few remnants of the Q code survive in speech communications. For example, QNH is used to refer to the altimeter pressure setting that would show elevation above sea level if the aircraft were on the ground at that location.



Used by all Allied Air Forces in World War Two – many ex-Wireless Operators retained the salient points of this code, as they did Morse, in their memories for the rest of their lives.



Includes coverage of 'International Morse Code' and 'Service Signals'.



A unique reference tool for anyone with an interest in vintage radio.



If specifically interested in Wireless Ops of World War Two and their duties, then knowledge of the 'Q' Code would assist greatly your deeper understanding.



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and other Abbreviations to be used in  
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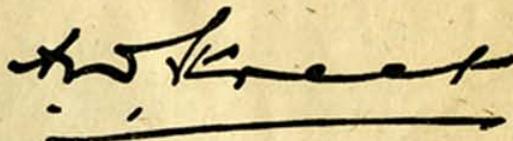
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- I 'Q' CODE
- II MISCELLANEOUS ABBREVIATIONS
- III INTERNATIONAL MORSE CODE
- IV SERVICE SIGNALS

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*Issued by Direction of the Secretary of State for Air*



AIR MINISTRY

*Secretary*

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## I.—'Q' CODE

*Notes.—(i) The groups take the form of questions when they are followed by a note of interrogation.*

*(ii) When an answer includes an indication of height, one of the groups 'MER', 'SOL', 'STD' or 'MB PRES' may be added, to indicate the datum used.*

*The group 'MER' means that the height is given as above sea level.*

*The group 'SOL' means that the height is given as above aerodrome level, and should only be used in the immediate vicinity of the aerodrome at which the aircraft intends to land.*

*The group 'STD' means that the height is given as above the standard reference surface, i.e. the isobaric surface at an atmospheric pressure of 1013.3 millibars.*

*The group 'MB PRES' means that the height is expressed as the surrounding atmospheric pressure in millibars, i.e. the absolute pressure at the height and in the position of the aircraft.*

*(iii) The groups 'ASC' and 'DES' used in combination with the abbreviation 'QBF' (see page 10) may be used if desired, within the United Kingdom only, in combination with other abbreviations regarding flying height.*

*(iv) In Great Britain, all signals directing the movements of aircraft should be considered to be of an advisory nature.*

### (A) IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

(To be used for decoding)

| Abbreviation. | Question.                                       | Answer or advice.                             |
|---------------|---|---|
|               | <b>(1) QA..</b>                                 |   |
| <b>QAA</b>    | At what time do you expect to arrive at ..... ? | I expect to arrive at ..... at ..... (time).  |
| <b>QAB</b>    | Are you making for ..... ?                      | I am making for .....<br>or<br>Make for ..... |