



New York City's 107<sup>th</sup> mayor, Rudolph W. Giuliani, launched the official Consolidation Centennial observance May 5<sup>th</sup> 1997, by unveiling that charter in City Hall. Signed into law May - 1897, the document mandated more than 40 local governmental units merge into a single multi-borough municipality on January first, 1898. Celebration of the 100-th Birthday of the Five Boroughs– Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and the Bronx – continued throughout 1998.

One of the governmental units was DOC (Department of Corrections) and as you have guessed, there were known folks who were shortwave enthusiasts and amateur radio operators. One of the better known individuals was **Warden Edward Dros W2PVR 1905-1978**. Ed held call W2PVR and in retirement W4SJE - He was described as an old time ham, his joined the Navy and graduated from Radio School Great Lakes ILL 1920, then aboard various ships in the South China patrol. He was employed by NY Telephone as a lineman, then to sea again with the U.S.C.G. as Radioman. In 1928 worked for Con Ed as high tension switchboard operator, retired from NY City Corrections in 1966.

In the late twenties Warden Dros was appointed a position NYC Corrections. - The only way to travel to Hart Island was via car ferry from City Island. The ten minute ride could be blustery according to the time of year. While stationed there, the Hart prison family resided in residence provided for the DOC. Hart Island has some very interesting history; first came into public use during the American Civil War when used as a disciplinary and training camp for Union Soldiers. Toward the end of the war Hart became a concentration camp for Confederate Soldiers. In 1868 Hart and the buildings were purchased by NYC for the purpose of burying the unclaimed, unidentified, the first interred was in 1869, better known as Potters Field. Since then, housing incorrigible boys, sanitarium for yellow fever, Navy and Coast Guard lockup, German prisoners of war in WW2, NYC City work house and finally U.S. Army Nike installation.

Yet the most important duty that Warden Dros had was to supervise the burials of the down and out, the unknown and the unwanted. To date they recognize over 800,000 are buried there and the figure could even go beyond 1 million because of loss of markers & records in 1902 and 03 due to grass fires about the Island.

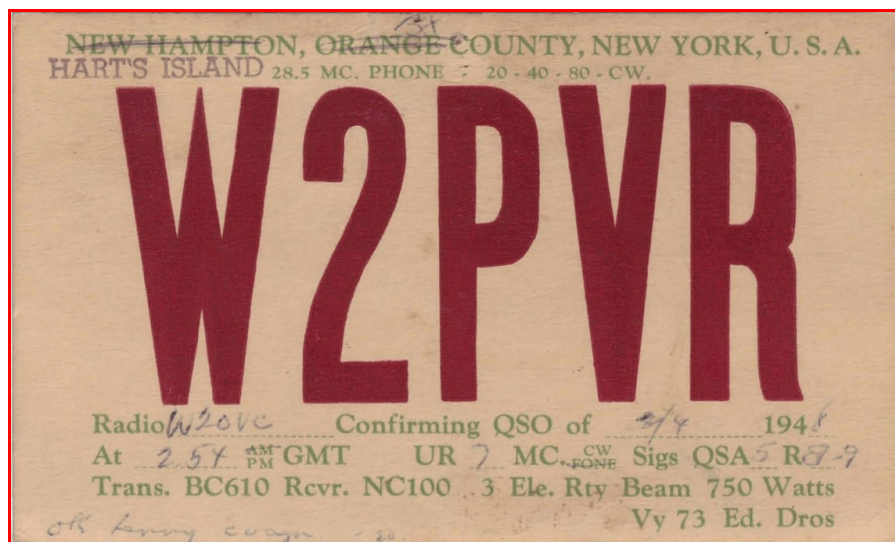


Former Wardens Hart Island residence.  
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Warden Ed's address per the call book was 154 Reveille Street Bronx which is City Island.

Lenny K5OVC one time W2OVC from Brooklyn knew Ed Dros W2PVR and visited Hart Island Prison several times during Radio Club functions. The Brooklyn gang were invited out to Hart Island for picnics and fun. Lenny said he learned how to drive a Motor Cycle at Potters Field in the late 40s. The warden had his ham station set up in the wardens quarters on Hart. Lenny had personally worked Ed from the wardens quarters and would share the QSL card with us.



Lenny said club picnics were something else “the chicken detail was left to the inmates and they could clean and cook chicken that was perfect in every way.”

With thanks to NYC DOC and K5OVC.

W8SU added 2010