

RACES Notes 03/14/07

News and Announcements

1) Upcoming Events:

3/13-15 DICE 07, JITC, Ft Huachuca
4/13 Benson Hospital Emergency Readiness Display
4/21-22 SAR Mock Search/Overnight
4/28-29 La Vuelta de Bisbee Bike Race
5/9 Ft Huachuca Safety Day

2) ID Cards - We got off to a slow start at the March CARA meeting. Unfortunately we could not find a way to import my database with the ID card database so that meant a lot of manual data entry. Ruben was game though and stayed until nearly 9:00 to finish up those who stayed after the meeting. We will try again in April to get a few more. If you did not get done in March, please show up in April. For those on the east side of the county (Bisbee/Douglas/Portal), you may make an appointment and go to his office in Bisbee. He works out of the Health Department Building off Melody Lane in the County complex. You may call him at (520) 432-9438 to set up an appointment.

3) DICE-07 - As you all know we are participating in the DoD Interoperability Communications Exercise 2007 out at Fort Huachuca this week. Two days are done and one more day to go. Tomorrow morning is VIP day so we will be hosting a number of distinguished visitors. We have completed a large number of our objectives but still have a few more to finish before we tear down tomorrow afternoon. We had a couple disappointments when some expected participants were unable to join us including the Sierra Vista Police Department. Apparently their van recently suffered some damage in an accident and is in the shop as we speak. We have had some very good successes though working with the remaining participants.

I will be asking each of the RACES teams to write down and share their experiences, good & bad with me so that I can capture them for the After Action Report. It will be difficult for me to capture and remember everything on my own.

4) Frequency Update - Earlier this month I provided some information concerning possible frequencies for use in Cochise County David Schurian

(KD7LSD) provided an additional tip for use near Portal. There is a repeater on Jack's Peak in New Mexico on 145.21-(PL Tone 141.3) that is linked with the 146.86 repeater on Heliograph. He said that repeater provides good coverage from near Douglas along Highway 80 on into New Mexico as well as into the Portal/Cave Creek area. Just a note that the 2m simplex frequencies in the AZ band plan are on 20 KHz centers, so 146.52, 54, 56, etc. When we use 146.55 we can cause interference on the adjacent channels.

We will change the 146.55 to 146.60 to avoid that potential problem. My thanks to Mike (N7CK) for bringing that to my attention. When we go down the net for comments this evening, I would like to hear the results of personal frequency testing you were able to accomplish since the last net.

Training Segment -

I would like to share a few of my lessons learned over the last couple days at DICE.

One of the first lessons that was reinforced for me this week is that we have a great group of folks on our RACES Team. I want to personally thank those of you who have already donated your time and energy to come out to support this worthwhile training experience. This would not be as successful as it is without your assistance.

Second - We have had our truck a little over a year now and we are accumulating a lot of stuff. It is time for a good clean out, sort, and repack. Some of the stuff that we have not used in the past year we should probably leave out of the truck. Some weekend in the near future we need to do that. What we keep, we need to be sure we finish labeling the compartments when we put it back so that we can quickly find the stuff we need.

Third - While setting up an external phone patch with the 91st Civil Support Team through the Input/Output panel we discovered that one of our internal patch panels did not get labeled so we need to complete that task. We need to include a short section in the MCU manual on how that works.

Fourth - While setting up in our position we pointed the nose of the truck due north. This puts the mast, when erected, almost in direct path with our satellite feed. Fortunately we have not noticed any significant degradation but it would be better to avoid that situation in the future by pointing in a north east or north west direction, but not due north.

Fifth - While setting up the replacement laptop computer we failed to load scanner drivers so that we can scan documents, save them and email as needed. We also need to put the MCU Hotmail password on the laptop computer for those who don't use it on a regular basis. It was on the old laptop.

Unless you use it on a regular basis it is not something everyone uses often enough to remember.

Sixth - The JITC Information Assurance analyst dropped by and suggested that we apply a level of firewall protection to our WiFi network. Currently it is an open network to anyone who is in range. He suggested that in today's threat environment that is really a bad idea. He briefly discussed some of the possible threats and how that could impact our ability to complete our mission if any of several threats decided to shut down our network or do damage to our onboard computers. We will be discussing this in more detail with our County IT representatives to provide some protection to the network.

Seventh - Our Winlink 2000 network equipment continues to work very well.

All of our Situation Reports were sent out using the Winlink network during this exercise. Several of our operators received some great hands-on training using this system as well as some familiarization using the IC 213 message format. Additionally we were able to assist the operators in the Arizona State Communications Van setup their software and get them operational on the Winlink network. They are now operational at both the AZ State Emergency Operations Center and in

their mobile van. We did however identify one of the PMBO stations in California that seemed to be causing a delay in traffic delivery. We will continue to test that and see if that was just an anomaly.

Well that is enough for this evening, let's go down for comments. If any of the DICE participants have a particularly poignant lesson learned please include that in your comments this evening.