

RACES Notes for 04/22/2009

News and Announcements

1) Upcoming Events:

- 4/25-26 - La Vuelta de Bisbee
- 5/2 - CARA Hamfest
- 5/21 - Ft Huachuca Safety day
- 7/4 - Bisbee Coaster Race

2) Home Again – Some of you are aware that I was out of town for the past couple weeks. I spent 2 weeks visiting some friends from my military days in England. I had a great time. Two places might of interest to you as ham radio operators – Bletchley Park and Beaumanor. Bletchley Park is known as Station X or also as the home of the Turing Machine or Bombe, the device used to decode daily code settings for the German Enigma encode/decode machine. Also located on the grounds was the Colossus computer used to actually decode some of the coded messages used by the Germans during WW II. Station X was also used by MI6 during the war to send messages to agents in neutral countries in Europe, and also for messages to, and from resistance movements in occupied countries. The second location, Beaumanor, was used as an intercept site and late in the war also used to decode Enigma traffic. It has been said that the efforts of these two sites played a very important role in curtailing the war by at least two years. As a final note, the Milton Keynes Amateur Radio Club has a station located in the museum and frequently operates as a special event from this historic location using callsign GB2BP. The day I was visiting they were doing some antenna cabling work so, although I was able to see the station, I was unable to operate on that day.

3) La Vuelta Support – Just a reminder that the La Vuelta support is this coming weekend. Albert has requested that the support vehicles be in place by 0700 on both Saturday and Sunday. I currently have the following names for support:

Bill – N7BIL Sat & Sun
Pat – KD7HAB Sat & Sun
RB – K7HVV Sat
Rob – AC7XA Sun
Dale – NJ7C Sat & Sun
Nancy – KC7PCX Sun
Mike – N7ZGO Sat & Sun
Charles – K4AFN Sat
Gregg – KC7GNM Sat & ? for Sun
Jack – WB7ADC Sat & Sun
Lee – KD7OED Sun
Bob – N7INK Sat & Sun (APRS)
Ranny – KE5DJ

If there are any changes to the schedule or your availability please let me know. Also please confirm whether or not you have APRS capability and what type vehicle (Car/PU/Jeep) you are probably going to drive. This will help me make final assignments.

Training: Tonight we will briefly go over the safety briefing for the La Vuelta de Bisbee Bike Race.

On the morning of the race, remember to show up at the parking lot beside the Bisbee Convention Center. You will get your race assignment, Magnetic Race Sign for your vehicle, and find out who will be riding with you. Under normal conditions, the following will occur. Each race will have a lead police car and a trail police car. There will usually be a motorcycle official as well to help control and report race violations. We usually have at least two amateur radio equipped vehicles for each race: One with an Official to observe the race, and one with a medic and/or bike mechanic. You may be asked to carry

some spare bicycle tires with you to allow riders to exchange tires if they get a flat. You may also be asked to allow an APRS Tracker to be installed in your vehicle. This will allow the Net Control Station to follow your progress with little voice communications. Unfortunately, we have seen in the past that there are dead spots where the trackers do not get reported so you may still be asked periodically to give your location and status.

Part of your assignment involves being observant to potentially dangerous situations within your line of sight. Examples are: automobiles passing you and the pack, dangerous or illegal maneuvers by the bike racers such as crossing the yellow line where it is not allowed. Be alert and try to observe license numbers when this happens and or racer shirt numbers. These occurrences should be reported back to the Net Control Station. If your official asks you to do something that you feel is unsafe or you are uncomfortable with, politely refuse. They can get pushy so you may have to be firm. You know your vehicle and reflexes better than they do if you have to stop quickly. I have had bicyclists accidentally drop off their bicycles almost in front of me and needed to avoid these conditions. Your primary assignment is to stay safe. Cyclists that have fallen back will occasionally try to use your vehicle to their advantage and will draft behind you. "Drafting" means they will follow you very closely and hope you can pull them along with the breeze and they save energy. Watch out for that. First, race regulations make that illegal for them to do it, but some will try. Second, it is particularly dangerous when they try to pass you, sometimes on both sides of you. Gradually slow down until they are forced to go around you. Sudden changes of direction or speed are bad for everybody. We are using the following frequencies:

147.02 (PL 162.2)

146.52 Simplex (Used for direct vehicle to vehicle communications)

144.39 APRS

AZ DPS will likely be using car-to-car (460.225) if you have the ability to monitor them during the race. That may help you know when they are releasing cars to pass the pack.

I suggest that you preprogram your radios before the race so that you can rapidly switch back and forth from memory to VFO or adjacent channels if you need to during the race. Trying to program your radio during the race is a really bad idea.

Under incident command we use plain language only. No Ten-Codes or other short cuts should be used. Remember, if you have to repeat the message for understanding, you have not saved any time by using short cuts. Although we will use tactical call signs to simplify identification of your assignment/location, do not forget the FCC requirement to sign off with your amateur callsign at least once every ten minutes. Example: "RACE Command, NJ7C" or "Men's Senior Race Sweep, K7HVV".

When you arrive on the scene you will receive a printed copy of the safety briefing. You should write down your duty assignment and Tactical Callsign. Remember to do a comm check with the Race Command before you leave the Start Line. This will be the persons operating in the Mobile Communications Unit or MCU. Also remember that during the race you should have your **Headlights and emergency flashers on**. In the event of an emergency on the course transmit: **BREAK, BREAK, BREAK**. Briefly identify the nature of the emergency and type of assistance required. Wait for the Net Control Operator to acknowledge your emergency and respond to his/her questions. All other stations should immediately cease transmitting until the emergency situation has been handled or you are asked specifically for assistance. To speed dispatch of emergency responders to your location, try to have good cross street or mile post information.

Remember to wear/display your RACES/ARES ID Card. If you have one, please wear your bright orange safety vest. In the event you need to be out of your vehicle on the highway this is a critical safety issue. Be sure you sign out on the air with the NCS before leaving the incident scene for any reason. For your safety we must have 100 percent accountability of all our volunteers. It's a long race so be sure you take advantage of the rest room before you take off. If you have any questions, ask them when we go down the roster for comments.

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to assist during this event.

Have Fun, Stay Safe.

That's it for training.

Bob

Robert L Hollister

Thought for the day:

"The resistance that you fight physically in the gym and the resistance that you fight in life can only build a strong character."

Arnold Schwarzenegger