

## RACES Net Notes for July 28, 2010

### News and Announcements

#### 1) Upcoming Events

##### 9/4-5-6 Paradise Outing

2) Paradise – If you have not made plans yet, this is a good time to start thinking about the annual outing to Paradise over the Labor Day Weekend. For any new folks, we operate a "Special Event Station" from the Ghost Town of Paradise on the east side of the Chiricahua Mountains. We are coming up on our 31<sup>st</sup> anniversary. It is always a fun event contacting stations around the country and occasionally even DX stations over that weekend. You get some good operating experience on the MCU as well as just plain good camaraderie with fellow hams and their families. It is a low pressure event, families are invited. Well behaved pets are also invited. Some folks use this as test of their 24 hour deployment kits. We leave on Saturday morning at approximately 0730. We are usually up and operating by noon. After a group breakfast on Monday morning with our famous "Eggs Paradise" we tear down and return in the afternoon. If you do not want to stay the whole weekend, that is OK. Just come out on work/play on whichever day you would like to.

3) MCU Update – We recently temporarily swapped out the VHF Tait public service band radio that is in the MCU to send back to the factory service point. The original firmware was improperly configured by the factory when shipped and did not allow the P-25 Digital Common Air Interface (CAI) to be active. This prohibits us from being able to talk to customers like Bisbee Police Dept or any of the other customers such as the Border Patrol who are now, or will be, using the P-25 Digital mode. Hopefully the repair won't take too long and we will be fully operational. This repair still won't let us talk to the Border Patrol when they are using their encryption but, they can switch it off as needed if we are working together on a particular incident such as a search mission. We also recently added a safety chain across the back door and a wheel stop at the bottom of the door to keep chairs from accidentally rolling out the back door. The back door really should not be used for ingress or egress except in an emergency. The step down/up at the back door is really too much for safely getting into or out of the Van. We are still waiting for the IT Department to fix the Mast Camera. They are running short handed at the moment so not sure when it will make it up the priority list.

4) FYI – Those of you who know Pablo (KF7FPP) will be happy to hear that he has accepted a position as a Senior Field Technician with Durham Communications out of Mesa, AZ. He will be based out of Douglas and will remain a member of RACES but, because of his new job, may not have much time to devote to helping us except on an occasional mission. Good Luck Pablo!!

#### Training – MCU Mission Tips

Tonight I would like to go over a few mission tips. As most of you know our most regular customer is the Search and Rescue Unit of the Sheriff's Office. For that reason, I will focus my few tips tonight on that type of mission.

1 – Once the page has been received, be ready to answer about your availability – Are you available immediately or maybe for a second operational period if it goes long? Once you come up on the radio and hear the details you will know the location and type of mission and it may be easier to answer.

2 – If you are going immediately, grab your "Go-Kit" and head out to the "Rendezvous point". This will usually be the CARA Club site but, depending on where you live and your assignment, you may meet up with the MCU somewhere on the way.

3 – If you are the MCU Driver/co-driver, it is a really good practice to unlock the "I/O Port" door on the driver's side as well as the "Antenna Storage" door on the curb side as you prepare to leave. This will make it quicker and easier upon arrival at the site for someone to check the vehicle level bubbles and get the wood leveling blocks out as needed without turning off the vehicle first.

4 - We usually use the 147.02 repeater for communication and coordination to and from a mission site. Sometimes it is necessary to switch to one of the simplex channels on your radio such as 146.52 or 146.56. If those are physically located close in your memory channels, it will simplify your ability to "QSY" or change frequencies without wading through a long list. Another way to handle that is to have the simplex channel preset in the VFO so you can just switch between the VFO and the Memory Channel.

5 – If you are the designated driver or co-driver for the MCU, be sure to get the MCU starting mileage on the log before you depart Green Acres. You will need that for the "End of Mission" report.

6 – If you are the MCU Driver or Co-Driver, be sure to check on with CCSO Dispatch on SO1 on the Public Service radio departing Green Acres. If you hear the "Emergency Tone" on SO-1 indicating there is a "situation" going on, switch to SO-2 to complete your check on with. The Emergency Tone is only turned on for a situation when the SO wants to keep a clear channel for emergency traffic. After checking Once you have checked on with the Dispatch Channel, switch the Public Service Radio to the SAR channel and continue to monitor there. You can hear a lot of what is happening relating to the incident while enroute to the mission such as the AZ DPS helicopter and other chatter that will keep you updated as you are driving down the road. The simplex coverage is surprising.

7 – Also, if you are the MCU Driver/co-driver, be sure to do a commo check with the Chase Vehicle and the Home Unit station before you leave Green Acres. If you make a "comfort stop" while on your way to the mission site, make another commo check. More than once we have had problems after a "comfort stop" trying to terminate or turn around because we have received a mission terminated signal because the radio did not get turned back on after the stop. Depending on who the Lead Operator or Home Unit Operator is, they may receive the "777" signal on their cell phone and may be trying to turn the RACES team around. It is also good practice to announce on-the-air before switching between channels and receive an acknowledgement from all team members.

8 – Upon completion of the mission, it is standard practice to refuel the MCU before putting it away. For all "actual missions" the County is reimbursed by the state for any fuel used. We must turn in a Fuel Used report and Fuel Receipt within a week of the Mission Termination to get reimbursement from the state. There should be forms on the clip board in the MCU cab. This is when you need the Starting Mileage/Finishing Mileage and the Mission Number. The Mission Number and Vehicle number should also be written on the receipt as well as on the Fuel Used report. Put them all in one of the envelopes on the clipboard and mail them in. If you do not have the mission number, give the envelope to the Lead Operator and he/she will get the mission number to complete the report and then send it in. If you are running low on either

reports or pre stamped envelopes on the clip board, let me know so that I can replenish the supply. This is important. The Sheriff's Office lost almost \$2500 in reimbursable fuel costs last year for late or missing reports. In today's limited budget environment we need to recover all that we can.

That's it for tonight's training. If you have any questions, please ask them during comments. Don't forget our next Net will be on Wednesday, Aug. 11 at 2000 Hrs. Don't forget the CARA net on Thursday evenings at 1900 hours on the 146.76 repeater. This is N7INK and the net is closed. Out.

Bob

Robert L Hollister

Thought for the day:

*If you don't see a light at the end of the tunnel, march down there and turn it on yourself!*