
The DX Bulletin

ISSUE 180 MARCH 1, 1983

THE NATIONAL RADIO QUIET ZONE

A REPORT

by JIM CAIN, EDITOR, TDXB

EARLY IN 1979 the Federal Communications commission established a "National Radio Quiet Zone," covering some 10,000 square miles (twice the size of Connecticut). The Zone includes large parts of West Virginia and Virginia, and FCC granted the Zone on petition of the National Radio Astronomy Observatory at Green Bank, West Virginia and the "Naval Research Laboratory" at Sugar Grove, West Virginia.

The regulations of the Zone affecting amateurs are limited to repeater stations; new repeaters or modifications to existing repeaters must apply to the NRAO for permission. QST, January, 1979, page 62-63, described the negotiations:

"ARRL disputed the petitioners" (NRAO and NRL) "claims, stating that NRAO and NRL had failed to set forth what present interference they were receiving from amateur activities. The League also cited the petitioners' failure to indicate how amateur operations would interfere with the observatories' (sic) work, and submitted that any possible problem might be better remedied by informal cooperation between NRAO, NRL and the amateur community than by a formal rulemaking proceeding."

A highly-placed ARRL source revealed that the NRAO was most cooperative but that the "people at Sugar Grove" (supposedly the Naval Research Laboratory) "responded to questions only with blank stares." Another source asserted that "ARRL fought the Quiet Zone bitterly, but they really closed the door on that one."

Questions which could have arisen at the time include 1) why does one radio telescope need a radio quiet zone but not others? 2) how could radio operators hope to deal with interference problems at NRL when NRL officials would not reveal the nature of their operations? 3) why were repeater stations singled out, when it would still be perfectly all right for an individual to operate, say, a kilowatt on 144 MHz CW literally on top of either government site?

In 1956, the West Virginia state legislature created the original Quiet Zone, recognizing the unique properties of the area...its remoteness, lack of broadcast stations and power lines, and altitude above sea level. According to The Puzzle Palace, by James Bamford (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982), the Naval Research Laboratory moved the receiving end of its Cheltenham, Maryland, Naval Radio Station to Sugar Grove in 1969. This came after an aborted attempt by the National Security Agency to build a 600-foot dish at Sugar Grove. The NSA had hoped to receive Soviet radio and radar signals reflected off the moon!

According to Bamford, NRL relinquished control of Sugar Grove, to the NSA, in 1975, at least four years before "NRL" petitioned FCC for the Quiet Zone. The Puzzle Palace states that the NSA wanted the site back in order to intercept both uplink and downlink commercial satellite signals. FCC had already done a survey for them of the feasibility of such intercepts, conveniently concluding that such an intercept site would need to duplicate the commercial stations, and be close to the commercial ground stations. Sugar Grove was perfect, being only 55 miles from North America's biggest COMSAT station, at Etam, West Virginia.

Today, the NSA operates one of their most important listening posts at Sugar Grove, in the center of the Quiet Zone, just 25 miles from the radio telescope at Green Bank. Bamford describes the Sugar Grove operation as one of the most secretive of all NSA's facilities. It is unlikely any of Sugar Grove's forty two residents had the faintest idea of what was going on just a few miles out of town, until the publication of The Puzzle Palace.

It is equally apparent that ARRL probably had no idea who they were dealing with when "the door was closed" in 1978/79. But it is easy to speculate that FCC knew the real purpose of the Quiet Zone.

The other three COMSAT earth stations are located in Andover Maine, Brewster Washington, and Jamesburg California. NSA sites are close by each of these, but do not have Quiet Zones. A guess would be because these three sites do not have the convenient cover of a radio telescope (which Sugar Grove does).

An FCC official told TDXB he could think of no comparable Quiet Zones, except one at Boulder, Colorado. Those who work for defense contractors do not need to be told the significance of Boulder; the National Bureau of Standards at Boulder would make a convenient "cover."

TDXB concludes that, while no amateur will admit to having been inconvenienced by the National Radio Quiet Zone, it appears that the new regulations were most likely unnecessary. After all, there are no quiet zones around the COMSAT earth stations. ARRL, confronted in the negotiations by either the silent treatment or the old "national security" argument, was helpless. And FCC was complicit in adding an additional regulatory burden for amateurs. We do not suggest that there is no need for much of the work done by the NSA. But we believe the Quiet Zone was as much a bureaucratic error as the 600-foot dish was.

Copyright 1983 *The DX Bulletin*

The DX Bulletin (ISSN 0279-8077) is published weekly fifty times per year at the following rates: 48 contiguous states \$28 per year (\$35 per year optional first class mail); Canada, Mexico, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, APO, and FPO boxes, \$35 per year; all others \$50 per year (airmail). *The DX Bulletin* is published at 306 Vernon Avenue, Vernon CT 06066. Second-class postage paid at Vernon, CT. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The DX Bulletin*, P.O. Box 873, Vernon, CT. 06066

PROPAGATION: Mar 1, Above Normal; Mar 2, Above Normal going to Disturbed; Mar 3-6, Disturbed; Mar 7, Low Normal; Mar 8, High/Low Normal; Mar 9, Below Normal; Mar 10, Low Normal. TNX N4XX.

Flux (81)	Flux (82)	Date (83)	Flux (83)	Alpha (83)	K (83)
n/a	n/a	2/9	125	10	3
n/a	n/a	2/10	116	20	2
n/a	n/a	2/11	110	14	3
n/a	n/a	2/12	103	30	2
n/a	n/a	2/13	98	30	3
n/a	n/a	2/14	94	22	2
n/a	n/a	2/15	91	21	2
192	175	2/16	92	21	2
190	167	2/17	94	15	2
189	170	2/18	100	12	2
183	179	2/19	97	11	3
193	175	2/20	100	25	4
207	169	2/21	104	24	3
204	167	2/22	109	17	3

SPRATLY

DK9KD advises that DF6SI and DJ3NG will operate 1S1SI on CW and 1S3NG on SSB beginning Mar 22 or 23 for five days. CW QSLs to DJ6SI, SSB QSLs to DK9KD, Dieter Löffler, PO BOX 620 260, 5000 Köln Fed Rep of Germany.

Readers with long memories will recall that TDXB first hit the mails in August, 1979, just a few months after the most recent (1S1DX) operation. Our Issue 7, Sept 25, 1979, carried a front-page article on Spratly. We mentioned the various dangers inherent in a Spratly operation, and reported that the Philippines had very quietly annexed several of the Spratly chain on Sept 7, 1979. China, Viet Nam, and the Philippines all claim the Spratly group.

CLIPPERTON

ALTHOUGH only five years have passed since the FO0XC/FO0XE operation of early 1978, Clipperton has climbed into the TDXB top thirty or so of needed countries.

The next Clipperton operation is scheduled for late this year or early next. The radio club of French Polynesia, the Club d'Océanie Radio et Astronomie, had planned for March of this year but that had to be scrapped. The club president, FO8IW, advises that eight FO8 operators, six U.S. amateurs, and maybe two Japanese hams are tentatively on board. Landing permission is in hand and the Club is now doing "final preparations." TDXB is in contact with two of the Americans involved, and we'll be updating as time goes along.

K5YY, San Hutson, sent along an itinerary: Singapore 9V1 Mar 2; Brunei VS5 Mar 3-8; E. Malaysia 9M6 Mar 9-15; 9V1 again Mar 16-18. San doesn't have much hope of getting a 9M6 ticket. Operation (as noted last week) will be 40 and 80 Meters...3507, 7007, 3795, and 7064-7070, concentrating on USA sunrises at 1100-1400Z. San is taking a TS930 and Butternut nertical. He's also taking an ARRL "WARC transceiver kit" to give to the Boy Scouts in E. Malaysia.

K5YY mentioned that over the past fourteen years he has made ten DXpeditions to over thirty DXCC spots, all out of his own pocket. This time, his last for a while, he is shooting to pass the 100,000 QSO barrier for his operations.

BANGLADESH: nothing heard as we go to press from JA8MWU and JH8NYK in S21. It may be as we predicted last week that the political situation was just too hot for them. Look for 8Q7JA next.

5X5FS, who's been showing almost daily on 15 M both CW and SSB, says he's been active from Uganda for 32 years! He likes 1800-1900Z, and has been using some lists on 15, as well as the "African Safari Net" on 21292 at 1800Z. Apparently, Carl and Martha Henson operated from the 5X5FS house when they were there a couple of years ago.

Jim Bullington, N4HX, of TYAll fame, has been appointed U.S. Ambassador to Burundi, succeeding Frances Cook. Bullington was most recently senior adviser on African affairs to the U.S. delegation to the United Nations. He has served with the government in Viet Nam, Thailand, and Burma, and was Deputy Chief of Mission in Chad (N4HX/TT8) and in Dahomey.

PY1EFW/PY0T Trindade is appearing nightly on 14215 at 2300Z, with lists run by PY2PE. The operator is a military-type and apparently speaks no English, so the operation goes maddeningly slowly. They are trying to work out a U.S. QSL manager. No indication of length of stay.

Speaking of QSL information, our computer print-out did not arrive this week. Look for it next issue. All QSL information which readers submit is forwarded to our computer outlet and the information is regurgitated onto the pages of TDXB monthly.

Much excitement over ON6BC/C9, who appeared several days last week on 20 Meters, both phone and CW. It is our understanding that operations from Mozambique (such as SM2DWH/C9 last year) will have no chance of counting for DXCC, as there is no licensing authority in the country. But it is always possible that someone like ON6BC will produce a piece of paper changing that.

TT8AD first appeared Feb 23 and he's a good CW operator. Said QSL to HB9CLA (in Bandpass).

No reports of anyone working 9Y4RD/ST0 but ARRL's bulletin says he's there for two months and likes 10 and 15 Meter SSB. A German bulletin says he's a U.N. employee and will be back-and-forth from S. Sudan to Egypt for a month or so.

YASME: W6KG and W6QL opened from Kuwait, signing 9K2QL, Feb 26. They will probably be there about two weeks, and got assistance from Mike Smedal, A71AD. Next stop HZ. No license in Bahrain.

The Federal German South Polar Station DP0LEX will change to DP0AA sometime in March. QSL DARC.

Briefly noted: there is no official prefix for Desecheo, per KP4EQF; KP1 is Navassa and KP2 is Puerto Rico. TDXB Sticker Bank doing a brisk business, and desperately needs deposits of 160, 270, 320, 325. Fraser Valley DX Club officers are W7EKM, N7RO, WA7WZWG, and VE7IN. "Fresno" Convention if April getting into high gear and we'll have a full report next issue.

Small World...a new subscriber in California called in a hot tip just a few moments ago, and offhandedly mentioned that he is an actor. He was one of the people suspected of shooting J.R. on "Dallas." We told him we never had watched "Dallas" and he said "Oh, you have taste!"

BANDPASS: Call/Frequency/UTC (plus West, Central, East Coast report)/Date

AP2KD 14022 13E 16	W9NXD/	VP8AQU 14012 03E 13	6W8EX 21271 22C 12
A4XJO 7004 01E 19	HR1 3511 01E 20	VS6DO 3503 23E 17	6W8DY 3797 07E 14
BY8AA 14019 01E 17	HZ1HZ 7042 01E 19	VU2BK 14048 12E 15	7P8CL 7004 03E 16
CE6EAT 3504 10E 17	JA6IEF 3794 12E 14	VU2BX 3502 23E 17	7P8CG 7026 01E 19
CE0AE 28750 15C 18	JT1AO 14038 13E 23	VU2BK 7005 23E 17	7P8CI 14201 20E 20
CN8EU 14251 23E 17	J73A 3505 00E 13	VU2TTC 7007 00E 18	7Q7LW 21291 19E 14
CN8CO 7003 04E 19	KC4AAA 14228 04E 12	V2AAW 7031 01E 19	7X5BV 14220 22E 17
CO2KK 3795 11E 14	AH2G 7004 12E 15	XT2AW 21251 19E 12	8P6GG 14010 23E 17
CO2OM 7002 04E 18	LU9LBJ 7004 02E 14	XT2AW 7002 06E 13	9J2TY 14006 01C 13
CT2EE 7006 23E 18	OA4CYK 3505 04E 12	YB5AES 3502 22E 15	9J2TY 14009 23E 14
CT2QN 7004 02E 19	OX5JM 14012 18W 15	YI1BGD 14204 15C 12	9K2BE 14030 13E 18
CT3AF 14226 12E 14	W2BBK/	YI1BGD 14212 14C 17	9N1MM 14213 12C 17
CX8DT 3503 00E 14	PJ7 14022 12E 18	YK1AO 14209 14C 19	9N1MM 14238 01C 24
C53DF 28536 14E 12	PY1MAG 3502 22E 17	ZB2GR 28605 14E 12	9X5WB 21344 19W 13
D44BC 21261 20E 14	SV0CT 7006 04E 19	ZD7BW 3775 05W 13	9X5MB 21287 21E 14
D44BC 3784 07E 14	TI5FBP 3794 12E 14	ZD7BW 7083 06W 13	
EA6DY 7002 23E 17	TL8TX 21285 20E 21	ZD7BW 21273 21E 21	
EA8AK 3502 22E 14	TR8DR 14011 23E 16	ZD9BZ 21026 20C 13	
EA8QO 3506 02E 15	TR8WAN 14056 20E 20	ZS5BK 3507 04E 12	
G3CW/	TT8AD 21039 22C 23	3B8FE 14250 03E 23	
EA8 14011 22E 16	TU2IF 21261 22C 12	3V8PS 14204 20E 23	
EA9GK 14028 23E 17	T30AT 14023 19W 14	4K1D 3502 00E 14	
EA9CE 7013 01E 19	T30DB 21291 19E 14	4K0A 14022 23E 16	
EL2P 14022 01E 14	T32AB 14022 01E 18	4K1D 7006 05E 19	
FB8WI 14066 14E 20	UA9MEA 3501 01E 18	4Z4AB 3512 02E 20	
FB8WI 14020 13E 23	UD6DJH 7006 02E 15	5N2LED 14213 00W 12	
FR0GGL 14026 03E 15	UF6FFJ 14005 12E 13	5T5AP 14229 22E 17	
FR0GGL 7001 03E 23	UI8LBA 14016 13E 14	5T5TO 21025 23E 17	
HC8GI 14260 05E 17	UM8MBA 14009 12E 13	5T5TO 3506 00E 21	
HH2VP 7006 12E 19	VK5AJK 3503 10E 15	5X5FS 28507 18E 12	
HI3PC 7027 07W 18	VK6HD 3800 22E 17	5X5FS 21038 18E 13	
HK0LR 21015 15E 13	VK6HD 3503 22E 20	5X5FS 21286 18E 21	
HK1QQ 3512 04E 15	VP8AQU 14210 04E 17	5Z4WL 21264 18E 14	
HP1XJC 3504 10E 21	(S. Orkneys)	5Z4CM 7003 02E 19	

Please mail reports
to reach Vernon by
Wednesday, or phone:

203-871-7699

Best contributor of
information each
month wins a free
year of TDXB.

FCC NEWS: just at deadline time we received a copy of FCC's NPRM, released Feb 8, concerning the volunteer examination program. In scanning it we see no proposed start-up date. FCC proposes to make up exam questions for all amateur license classes, and have the exams administered by volunteers of a license class higher than the exam being given. The volunteers would be approved by "Volunteer Examiner Coordinators" such as the ARRL, IEEE, etc. The VECs would have to apply for their status to the FCC, and they would "assemble, print, and distribute" the examinations. No conflict of interest will be allowed, meaning that radio store employees, ARRL employees, independent publishers, and the like could not act as volunteer examiners. As usual, FCC has set a deadline for comments which

is too close to allow for any publicity in the monthly magazines: the deadline is April 8 for comments to FCC and May 9 for reply comments. You can bet ARRL will ask for an extension of the time allowed for comments.

Just some food for thought...ARRL is a national organization and is specifically mentioned in the NPRM as a potential VEC. But, as we see it, their employees would be forbidden from giving the examinations due to the conflict of interest clause. We wonder where this leaves such publishers as 73, CQ, etc.

CALENDAR

BEACONS On 14.100 MHz NOW; I 168, 172
 BEACONS On 18, 24 MHz now; I 176
 Uganda 5X5FS on NOW; I 180
 Trindade PY1EFW/PYØT on NOW; I 180
 Kuwait 9K2QL on NOW by YASME; I 180

Rodriguez 3B8DA/3B9 on 20 NOW through May
 Crozet FB8WI active 20 CW and SSB on 14.110
 N Cooks No reports on ZK1WL (ZL3AFH)...CW only
 Singapore 9V1 by K5YY Mar 2; I 180
 Turks VP5XX now to Mar 9

Antigua K4LTA/V2A Mar 1-8
 Montserrat VP2MKD Mar 1-10
 Antigua V2AMK by K9MK Mar 1-10
 Brunei VS5 by K5YY Mar 3-8; I 180
 Competition ARRL DX Phone Mar 5/6

Bahamas K9VV/C6A Mar 5/6
 Malaysia 9M6 by K5YY Mar 9-15; I 180
 Maldives 8Q7AH by HB9TL Mar 5-23
 Malagasy 5R8AL by F6EXV Mar 13-27
 Singapore 9V1 again by K5YY Mar 16-18; I 180
 SPRATLY 1S1SI, 1S3NG start Mar 22/23; I 180
 Chad TT8 by DJ5RT and TJ1GH Mar 20-27
 St Maarten K3UOC/PJ6, PJ8, Mar 26-31
 Macao Possible late Mar by KL7IHP; I 172
 St Maarten K3UOC/PJ7 Apr 1-3
 Hong Kong KL7IHP/VS6 Mar 26-Apr 2

FRESNO International DX Convention Apr 22-24

CONTRIBUTORS

KA1BU, WA7ZWG, W6OKX, K7UU, KA1BE,
 KA3R, WAØQZW, K6IR, W1NH, K1XM,
 KØCVD, K4BAI, W1DEO, W7YF, WD5AAM,
 WB8ZRL, K3MRT, WØBW, W4VQ, KA1LY,
 W8AH, K4CEF, KB8KW, N6AIT, AB8K,
 WD9BEG, W1MLG, KB8RT, K3ZO, K1SA,
 K5YY, WB6GFJ, DK9KD

"I never did work that GU station,"
 Tom uttered. K1XM

"I missed the Falklands, too,"
 Tom said sheepishly. K1XM

"I think my keyer is broken,"
 Tom expounded. KN8Z

"Can you help me read this schematic?"
 Tom asked circuitously. KN8Z

"My notch isn't working,"
 Tom said rejectedly. KN8Z

"That counts for West Carolines,"
 Tom yapped. KØCVD

"The bands are all dead,"
 Tom hissed. KØCVD

"You were buried in the pile-up,"
 Tom said gravely. W1DO

JACK GUTZERT, W2LZX
 75-02 168TH STREET
 FLUSHING NY 11366

NEWSPAPER

Second Class
 Postage Paid
 at Vernon, CT

(ISSN 0279-8077)
 306 Vernon Avenue
 Vernon, Conn. 06066

The DX Bulletin