

20 Years of MRCA

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MILITARY RADIO COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION



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About MRCA

The Military Radio Collectors Association, organized in 2000, is intended to bring together people with a genuine interest in the subject. It is an outgrowth of the Old Military Radio Net that meets every Saturday at 05:00AM (prevailing Eastern time) on 3885KHz in the 75-meter amateur band.

The organization is loosely structured, and consists of those who participate, whether in person at our meets, on the radio on our nets, or on the web via our Email Reflector.

[VISIT OUR WEBPAGE](#)

Our Logo



- Inspired by the dial of the WWII-surplus “Command Sets” that got many of us interested in operating and collecting military radios.
- In this case a BC-454 receiver tuned to 3885 KHz the traditional AM calling frequency used by the Old Military Radio Net.
- With apologies to the Radio Corporation of America “Meat Ball.”
- Designed by AI – N3FRQ in 2001.

Y2K – Founding of MRCA

8-9 Sep 2000

- The first MRCA meet was held in conjunction with Red Ball Military Transport rally at the Tobyhanna Army Depot.
- Radio people had participated in earlier Tobyhanna meets, but this time the Army wanted to get a handle on who was operating radios on their property.
- The Tobyhanna Depot people wanted an organization name. They also required a written description of what we wanted to do, and to get permission from them for specific operating frequencies & power output restrictions during the show date/hours.
- A small group, led by Steve Finelli – N3NNG established the name Military Radio Collectors Association, took care of the paperwork, distributed a flyer, and arranged for a circus tent.

Y2K – Founding of MRCA



- Who were these kids?
- [Meet Coverage](#)



Tobyhanna 2001

Tentative Schedule:

Thursday, 13 September: Initial setup. Everyone welcome, but provide you own entertainment.

Friday, 14 September: Tailgating, radio operation, and informal displays and demos.

Saturday, 15 September: 05:00 - The Old Military Radio Net, W3PWW – NCS
07:00 - Swapmeet
10:00 – Formal Presentations
All day – More radio operation, demos, and displays.

Sunday, 16 September: 09:00 – Site clean-up (We must vacate completely by 12:00.)

Contact: Pete Hamersma WB2JWU, P.O. Box 467, Holderness, N.H. 03245 E-mail: pehamers@worldpath.net

We were all set. We even had a logo. Then 9-11 happened. The base was closed to use by outsiders, and the meet was cancelled.



Gilbert 2002

- The Redball Military Transport Club found a new home at the West End Fairgrounds in Gilbert, Pa.
- We negotiated the use of the Howell Building, a really nice timber-frame structure which has been our home ever since.
- 2002 also marked out first organized radio field exercise.
- [Meet Coverage](#)



Gilbert – 5-6 Sep 2003

- Meet Coverage



Gilbert – 17-18 Sep 2004

- **Hurricane Ivan!** (Reduced to a tropical storm with a lot of rain.)
- We conducted the Field Exercise as scheduled on Friday.
- Pix from Big Pocono Mountain



Breck – K4CHE



Brown – W1NZR



AI – N3FRQ

Gilbert 2004

- Ted – W3PWW and Al – N3FRQ pulled their vans into the Howell Building for the night and turned off the lights.
- When Ted got up for the Old Military Radio Net at about 04:30 he found himself in ankle-deep water.
- We had to literally dump water out of the power supply to get on the air. The net was successful, non the less.



Rubber frog
courtesy of
K4CHE

Gilbert 2004

- As others arose, we swept most of the water out of the building and conducted Saturday's activities.



Coverage of More Meets

Moose & Squirrel Radio Net Origins

- After the 2010 MRCA Gilbert Meet, I pondered the fact that these were some rather interesting folks, and I had now known some of them, via MRCA, for ten years. However, I only saw them a couple times a year.
- How about a radio net? There was the Old Military Radio Net, AM on 3885 KHz, at 05:00 Saturdays. I worked that a bit, but often found conditions annoying. There was also a CW version on Sunday evening, but I'm severely Morse challenged.

Naming the Net

- There was already the Old Military Radio Net that was an entity onto itself.
- A lot of the MRCA guys were playing with military, paramilitary, and commercial SSB radios. Many were pack sets. I had obtained a Transworld TW-100 “Fly-Away,” the kind of radio the CIA would take to Lower Slobovia in the diplomatic pouch to ensure communications on the QT.
- So, inspired by “The Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in the USA,” I came up with “The Moose and Squirrel Cold-War Clandestine and Long-Range-Reconnaissance-Patrol Net”
- I floated the Idea via the MRCA Webpage, embellished with some Rocky and Bullwinkle artwork.

Original Proposal on Website

TOP SECRET

FIENDISH PLAN



**The Moose and Squirrel
Cold-War
Clandestine and
Long-Range-Reconnaissance-Patrol Net**

(A place to actually use your military radio.)



Motivation: To get our military and paramilitary radios on the air within the NE US region on a regular basis.

Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:00 Eastern Time

Frequencies: 3996, 5403.5(alt 5371.5), 7296 as needed.

Mode: USB

Coordination

Direct email: We can use mrca@mailman.qth.net for the moment, and set up a dedicated reflector if needed.

This Website: (MRCA)

Yahoo: I'm sure we'd be welcome on the HF Now Group
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/hfnow/?yguid=267283022>
 CENTRAL CONTROL would post FOD to this group shortly before net time.





Brownie Points

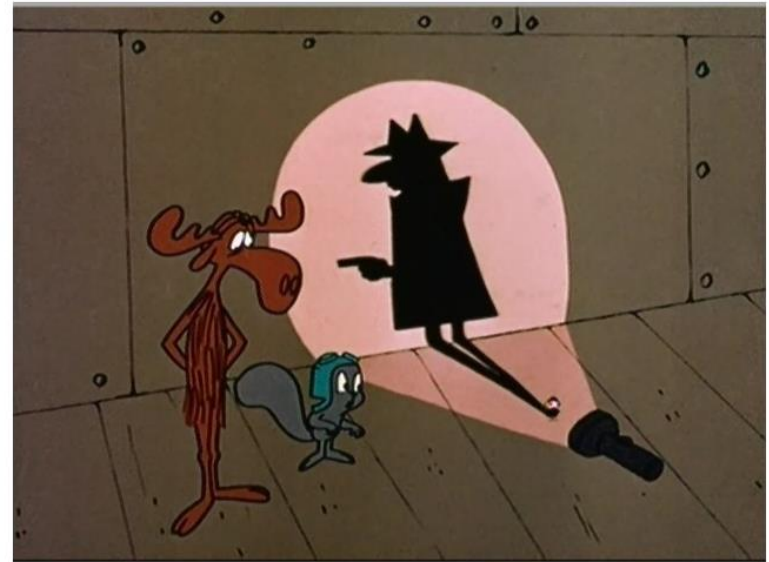
Extra credit for "deployed" operation. Take your radio to the woods, the park, or the picnic table.

The identity of Mr. Big shall remain secret.



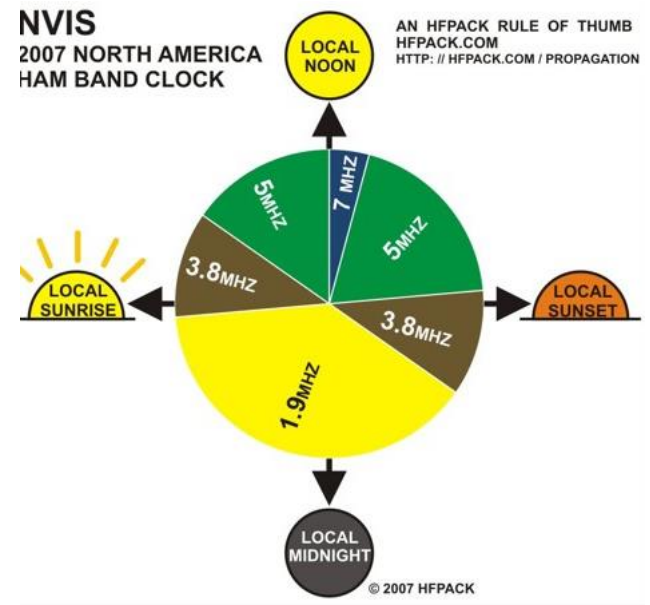
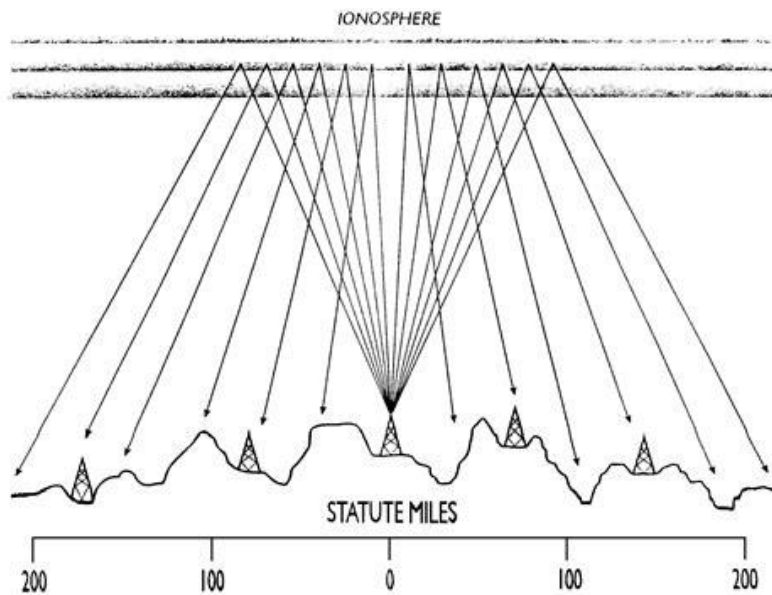
Is this a good idea?
Will you participate?
What changes do we need to make?
Your input is required!

fearlessleader@ar88.net



60-Meters

- I had experimented with this band shortly after it became available in 2003.
- 5 MHz can provide excellent local and regional coverage via near-vertical-incidence-skywave propagation (NVIS)
- For voice, only USB was allowed. This was compatible with many of our radios, e.g. PRC-47 and PRC-74, that would have had problems doing LSB on 80 and 40 meters.
- The band was and still is underutilized.



Early Nets

- The initial activation of the C-LRRP Net took place on 14 Oct 2010 on 5403.5 KHz. We had eight checkins covering the region from Dover, DE to Bow, NH. Conditions were good, with virtually all stations able to work each other. Based on this initial success, we have resolved to continue net operations every Tuesday and Thursday. It was also suggested that all available stations check this frequency for casual contacts on any day at noon.
- Veteran's Day, 11 November fell on a Thursday. I took my PRC-2000 packset to a local park and ran the net from there.
- We've observed the Net anniversary on or about 11 Nov ever since.
- On March 5, 2012, the FCC changed the allocation for 60-meter Channel 3 from 5.366.5MHz to 5357.0 KHz. We adopted this as the primary Moose & Squirrel frequency because some of our radio would only tune in 1 kilohertz steps.

First Saturday C/LRRP - 4 DEC 2010.

We're declaring this a success, and we'll continue Saturday operations. We managed to blow the cobwebs off a bunch of interesting radios.

Net Control: AI - N3FRQ - Transworld TW-100 "Flyaway"



N3FRQ Photo

N2BOX - Pat - AN/PRC-104A



Stock Photo

W1NZR - Brown - URC-35

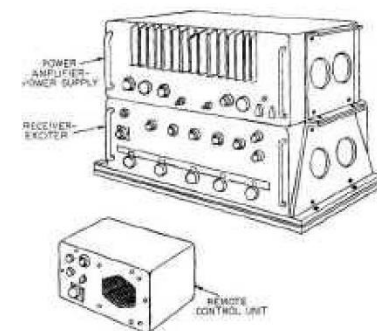


Figure 3-4. —Radio set AN/URC-35. 120.1

KW1I - Dale - Harris RF-230 via 2 -wire remote



KW1I Photo

KA1GON - Charlie - Racal PRM-4031 and Motorola Micom



Stock Photo

WB2JWU - Pete - AN/PRC-47



WB2JWU at Gilbert

W2ILA - Tom

Join In

- MRCA is a loosely structured organization, consisting of those who participate, whether in person at our meets, on the radio on our nets, or on the web via our Email Reflector. [Do subscribe](#).
- Like so many organizations, our in-person events have been severely impacted by Cobid-19. Check our [Webpage](#) for future developments.
- Our [Radio Nets](#) remain alive and well.