

JA1BK



TOP NEWS!

●3rd BS7H Information Vol.9 ●MAY 10th,1997

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3rd BS7H Summary..... May 9th , 1997



QSO started at 04:49Z on April 30th with BA4CH, by W6RGG/Bob on Rock #2.
QRT was at 06:46Z, May 3rd . Final QSO was Rock #1's JA1RJU/Kazu and JA2DDN
at 21 MHz SSB.

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Total operating time was 73 hours 57 minutes.

QSOs:

Rock #1	4,584
Rock #2	6,111
Rock #3	2,459
total	13,154

3rd BS7H Operation Report



Although we refrained from publicly announcing until now, the project was able to get the support of two large ships belonging to the State Oceanic Administration, South China Sea Branch. The two ships, "74" and "72(Guangzhou)", weighing 1000 tons and 900 tons respectively, left the harbor in Guangzhou on April 28th at 9:00 a.m., in front of a large send-off crowd. "72" departed first followed by "74" (the ship we were on board).

The vessels were to travel past Zhu Jiang, through the South China Sea and then to Scarborough. After leaving the harbor, we made a brief stop in order to go over some emergency evacuation drills. 3 hours later the ships

began heading south again. On our way to the South China Sea we saw Macao on the port side followed by Hong Kong on the starboard. Once we reached the ocean the two ships picked up speed to its maximum and headed directly for our destination.

The weather was fine and the sea was calm. I was anxious about getting sea sick and had with myself plenty of motion sickness pills along with dried codfish but fortunately nothing disturbing happened. The two day cruise ended up being extremely pleasant.

Our arrival at Scarborough was on the night of the 30th , approximately 36 hours after departure.

At 6 o'clock a.m.(2200Z), right after first light, the patrol boat took off looking for Rocks. On the boat were BA10K, N7NG, JA1RJU and myself.

According to a rough map, there was supposed to be an open waterway near a submerged ship wreck, which lead inside the coral reef. However, this waterway could not be found and we ended up spending considerable time going up and down several times along the reef, occasionally rubbing the bottom of the small boat against the coral. After some time we finally decided to enter the coral reef from the east. From there we went west and then south and found Rock #2, the place that became our main communication site.



Once a Rock was discovered somebody had to remain at the spot with a huge sunshade umbrella so that it could be identified from a distance. This was agreed upon earlier and N7NG decided to stay behind. The rest of us went on to look for Rock #1 and it was found immediately. This time JA1RJU remained behind.

I happen to have a 2nd degree boat license, therefore the ocean to me is not an unfamiliar place. Such huge markers are a necessity, since the earth is round.

According to our plan, completion of the platforms for Rock #2 and #1 were to be done within the day. Everybody remaining on the patrol boat hurried back to the mother ship. A report was given to Deputy Officer Lee, while the ship was relocated to the south side of the reef. This enabled us to make the next move promptly. The patrol boat and another boat (slightly larger than the patrol boat) was loaded with construction materials and took off for Rock #2 again.

The open waterway into the reef was luckily found after a Filipino fishing boat was sighted using it. The reef was now easily accessible regardless of the tide. Locating a ship wreck and an open waterway in a huge body of water is extremely difficult. I must admit we were fortunate.



The platform used for Rock #2 was my design and it had been completed by the combined efforts of the on-board carpenters, the robust sailors and the young BY operators. DXCC regulations state that all man-made structures must remain above water level at all times, therefore I went back to the construction sight at high tide to

ensure it cleared the regulation. Some minor alterations were made and the platform was ready.

Everyone worked hard with one common goal in mind. To begin transmission as soon as possible. Antennas, rigs, power supply units etc. were quickly carried onto the platform and by 04:49Z, W6RGG started the first CQ. Six hours had past since the discovery of the reef. QRV after such a short period of time was never possible without the strenuous efforts of the constructors and the kind weather. I would like to extend my warmest appreciation, especially to the courage and the prompt work done by the carpenters and the young sailors.

At the end of the day, we were able to QRV from two Rocks. Fortunately the weather remained nice (except for some wind) and we decided to QRV 24 hours.

For safety reasons the following rules had been decided: 1. Rocks were to remain lighted at all times during the night, 2. Rocks will communicate with the mother ship at 144 MHz FM, on every hour, 3. QRV will be carried out by two members on a shift.

These precautions were taken since there had been reports of pirates in the region. Boats could not approach the Rocks during the night, so shifts were determined as follows:

morning • 0600 - 1200

afternoon 1200 - 1800

night • 1800 -0600

N7NG and W6EU left the mother ship in the evening for the first evening duty at Rock #2.

In this manner the 24 hour QRV from Rock #1 and #2 started. Rock #1 had a 50 MHz HB9CV and a R5 antenna set up in a very limited space. Room was hardly available for two persons and since JA1RJU Kazu was in charge of operating the 50 MHz, he served both the morning and afternoon shifts on his own. The night shift was carried out by BY operators.

We first intended to set up an A3S at Rock #2, however the conditions turned out extremely well, and communication with W's east coast were quite clear using an R7000. Although a 6m mast was prepared, we decided to use it only if the conditions

deteriorated.

The next day preparations began for transmission from Rock #3. QRV began at 02:33Z, May 1st on 7MHz SSB.



Now, 3 stations were simultaneously in operation. Although Rock #3 was not operated during the night.

According to our plan, Low Band and RTTY QRV were intended for use during the last 2 days. However, after two days in operation we received a message from Beijing on the evening of May 3rd, requesting us to

QRT.

We had no choice but to abandon the usage of Low Band. The RTTY testing however, we were still considering at this point. But after all we had to abandon this also due to a technical malfunction and some bad luck. Before taking the RTTY to Rock #2, we decided to conduct a test. The test was done on board mother ship BS7H/MM and this ended up ruining the whole attempt.

The regulation on the ship's DC power unit was unstable, instantaneously causing damage to the TNC to an extent where repair was impossible.

When I think back about it now I can't help but to regret this move. I really believed that QRV was possible if only we took the RTTY straight to Rock #2. At any rate, we'll have to wait for the next opportunity.

Conditions were best while we were transmitting from MM and the first two days were not bad either.

Conditions started to deteriorate on the third day and communication between the east coast became rather difficult.



A point of special interest which I should mention was the fact that Kazu, with the 50 MHz, was able to QSO with 10 stations in 3 countries(JA, VS6, DU) during this low sun spot period. He was also able to QSO with 4 stations via satellite.

On the HF, we were able to QRV in all bands except 160/80meters (40-10 meters and work bands).

This is a list of the equipment we used.

