

An International Dxpedition to Resica Falls

By Kris W. Field, ASM Hatboro Troop 3, DSWCI-3597

This year Hatboro Troop 3's Boy Scouts traveled to beautiful Resica Falls in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania for a week of summer camp. The week was filled with many other activities and merit badges; i.e., swimming, camping, cooking, hiking, wilderness survival, rifle & shotgun shooting, archery, canoeing, First Aid, Tenderfoot, 1st Class, 2nd Class and other important scout skills.

This is my third summer teaching the Radio Merit Badge at Camp for Troop 3. Each camp presents an opportunity for unexpected listening adventures. This year was no different.

I always enjoy teaching shortwave listening to the Boy Scouts. Before camp I had 2 scouts sign up for the badge – Rob Walls and Eric Schaefer. By the end of the week, 3 more scouts- Joe Allard, Andrew Yale, and Tony Rombola and 2 scouters enjoyed having a chance to travel the world via the HF bands.

I took along 2 receivers: a Lowe HF 150 (Figure 1) and an ample supply of batteries, and a Grundig FR-200 emergency AM/FM/SW radio as a backup. As it turned out this year, the Lowe was all that was necessary and proved more than adequate. The HF 150, while no longer being manufactured, is built like a brick- tough and nearly indestructible; it has good AM, sideband and synchronous detection; and uses the detachable telescoping whip antenna or an external antenna like the 35- feet of 14 gauge wire I brought along. The Lowe is an extremely rugged and sensitive radio with features and reception that rivals many good tabletop receivers. Plus it's very compact and is easily packed and transported.



Figure 1: The Lowe HF 150

Remember the thrill of hearing music from the other side of the globe; a call to prayers from the Mideast; the drums of Africa? How about the wonder of all of the different languages; the hope of hearing secret signals from government agents? All this brought many of us to shortwave –and it's still there. Ask any of these boys. Adventure awaits you each time you turn on the radio. You never know what you'll hear.

During our sessions, we spent half our time learning basic theory, and the other half letting the boys do what they enjoyed most- spinning the dials and finding programs from different countries. The basic theory consisted of discussing the many different types and uses of radios for broadcast, commercial and non-commercial communications. We also learned some basic propagation theory- like- use WWV on 5, 10, 15 & 20 mHz to determine which bands are most likely to be open at the time you're listening; the use of Q-codes and phonetics; safety, and some basic electronics, schematic and block diagrams. Then we'd spend time tuning in programming from all over the world. We had the time to hear ham radio operators, digital communication signals, aeronautical traffic from pilots, and some Canadian Coast Guard communications along with the International broadcasters we found.



Figure 2: From the left and sitting on the table: Eric Schaefer, Joe Allard (standing), Rob Walls, Kris Field. Front row on the bench: Tony Rombola, Tsai Yu-len, Andrew Yale.

On the 1st day of listening, several scouts who hadn't selected this merit badge wandered over to the table we were at to discover just what we were doing: what are those strange whistles, beeps and foreign languages that we're hearing? By day 2, 3 more scouts ages 12-16, became intrigued enough to sign up to take the merit badge with the original 2.

We also discovered that along with the 200 or so people at camp that week, there were camp staff members from 2 different countries: Tsai Yu-lun, a teacher of social science from Taiwan who has been in Scouting for 8 years; and Moshik Shecter, an 11th grade student from Israel, who has been in scouting for 7 years.

Thus another challenge and adventure was presented- let's find programming from their native countries in their native language and ask them to listen in with us and translate! It was a good thing I bought along recent copies of the *The Journal**, published monthly by the North American Shortwave Association (NASWA). I was first able to find a schedule of programming from the Republic of Taiwan. We invited Tsai Yu-len to our campfire that evening in hopes of hearing their broadcast. Luck was with us and she was very happy to hear programming from Taiwan; upon tune-in at 0154 UTC, the program was in the Hakka dialect. At the top of the hour there was a brief announcement in Chinese, then an hour of English programming. Imagine you are 1 month into a 2-month stay, and a long way from home. The smile on her face when she heard her homeland told us how pleased she was to listen with us.



Figure 3: Moshik Shecter listening to Kol Israel.

We kept trying to catch up with Moshik, when he wasn't working at Scoutcraft, and when Kol Israel had a broadcast in Hebrew. On July 22 at 1332 UTC we were successful. Moshek translated for us, telling us the announcers were talking about breads and wines. As you can see from his picture, he was very happy to hear programming from home while in the U.S.

The most fun for me this year, was first, having boys get interested enough in SW to ask to join us. That's a lot better than wondering if the boys taking the badge are really enjoying it. And, second, being able to bring a little bit of home to the two scouts who were far away from their families and friends. I can only hope and believe that we were able to do a good turn for them and repay some of the kindness they showed by giving so much of themselves to the boys and adults they helped at camp this summer.

The rest of the week, our listening sessions and theory classes continued. We listened mostly in the afternoon and once after dark. So, the scouts got to experience signals and atmospheric conditions from the 60-meter band as well as 20 and 30 meters at different times of the day. The boys logged and heard identifications from the following stations (all times listed are Universal Coordinated Time or UTC):

4915 kHz **GHANA** Accra-Tema **Ghana BC 1**, Jul 20, 2310 - Pop song by female singer. Man with ID 'This is Radio Ghana'. (Schaefer Troop 3 Resica Falls, PA).

4985 kHz **BRAZIL** Goiania **R.Brasil Central**, Jul 23, 0124 - Male announcers in Portuguese. (Allard, Schaefer, Troop 3 Resica Falls, PA).

5950 kHz **USA** via Okeechobee **CBS TAIPEI** until 0200; **R.TAIWAN.INT.**, Jul 21, 0154 - Man in Hakka dialect. Man in Chinese with ID @ 0200. Then into English with ID. Candidate Kerry wants resolution of Taiwan Strait issue favorable to Taiwanese. (Tsai Yu-lun- Troop 3 Resica Falls, PA).

6000 kHz **CUBA** La Habana **R.HABANA CUBA**, Jul 23, 0045 - Dr. Tony Montero of Philadelphia talks. (Allard, Rombola Troop 3 Resica Falls, PA).

6090 kHz **ANGUILLA** The Valley **WORLD UNIVERS.NETWORK**, Jul 23, 0140 - Dr. Gene Scott with 1-800-338-3030 to call in. (Allard, Rombola, Yale Troop 3 Resica Falls, PA).

6175 kHz **CANADA** Sackville **VOICE OF VIETNAM**, Jul 23, 0043 - Man and woman announcers with many mention of Vietnam & Kampuchea. (Allard, Walls, Schaefer Troop 3 Resica Falls, PA).

9895 kHz **NETHERLANDS** Flevo **R.NEDERLAND**, Jul 22, 2024 - Man with English program about WMD's. ID @2030 by man. (Rombola- Troop 3 Resica Falls, PA).

11530 kHz **VATICAN STATE** St.Maria Galeria **VATICAN RADIO**, Jul 23, 1518 - Female in Sp/It. ID by OM @1520. (Walls, Allard Troop 3 Resica Falls, PA).

11930 kHz **USA** Greenville **R.MARTI**, broadcasting to Cuba. Jul 23, 1526 - ID by OM. Jammer in background. (Allard, Walls, Schaefer Troop 3 Resica Falls, PA).

13645 kHz **GERMANY** Juelich **SWISS RADIO INT.**, Jul 20, 2057 - Polka Mx on accordions; female then male announcer with ID in German then French. (Schaefer- Troop3 Resica, PA).

15120 kHz **NIGERIA** Ikorodu **VOICE OF NIGERIA**, Jul 21, 1942 - Man in English with news about Nigerian government. (Yale Troop 3 Resica Falls, PA).

15205 kHz **RWANDA** Kigali **DEUTSCHE WELLE**, Jul 19, 2128 - Male announcer with ID in GM @2130. (Walls, Troop 3 Resica, PA).

15220 kHz **GUIANA** Montsinery **SWISS RADIO INT.**, Jul 21 0034 - Female with US pop song. Female announcer with ID. // 13645 @1941. (Allard-Troop 3, Resica Falls, PA).

15280 kHz **MOROCCO** Tanger-Brieich **VOICE OF AMERICA**, Jul 21, 1947 - Nx in Slavic lg. Basketball Nx- mentions Shaq O'Neal. ID @2000. (Allard Troop 3 Resica Falls, PA).

17535 kHz **ISRAEL** Tel Aviv-Yavne **VOICE OF ISRAEL**, Jul 22, 1332 - OM's in Hebrew talking about wine and breads. (Schecter-Troop 3 Resica Falls, PA).



* To get a sample copy of *The Journal*, write to Bill Oliver, NASWA, 45 Wildflower Road, Levittown, PA 19057 or go on the web to <http://www.anarc.org/naswa/> NASWA is North America's oldest shortwave broadcast-only radio club and has been active in the business of sharing information about shortwave radio since 1961. NASWA's motto is "Unity and Friendship". The club sponsors an annual Shortwave Listener Festival each year in March in Kulpville, PA.

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