
SCANNERS

SHORTWAVE

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TSA INVESTIGATES DISAPPEARANCE OF RADIOS FROM DIA

At least four radios belonging to the Transportation Security Administration have gone missing from Denver International Airport. One turned up for sale on eBay. TSA spokesman Mike Fierberg wouldn't discuss the technical specifications of the handheld radios, but he says the devices use public frequencies.

"It is a concern in the sense that they are government property that has been misplaced. I don't think it rises to the level of a security concern," said Fierberg.

Fierberg says the TSA uses a "layered system designed to thwart any kind of breach." He wouldn't elaborate on that system. However, one analyst said that the radios, which are used to communicate between TSA employees or with police, could pose a threat in the hands of anyone who wants to cause trouble at the airport.

"Have they been listening in?" questioned aviation security expert David Forbes. "Is there something that they are being able to calculate: the procedural practices, the radio protocols of TSA and its relationship with law enforcement? How much have they learned by simply having this equipment?"

Forbes says the lost radios are an example of what he calls TSA's incompetence.

"We need to have confidence that this is an organization that has good management, good discipline and well-trained people, and they are in control of their own inventory, and that is obviously not the case."

The radio that was sold on eBay was turned in to DIA's lost and found department. It was then turned over to Denver County's surplus property department and put up for auction.

THE URBAN DX'ER

Established 1984

Fierberg says the TSA contacted the person who bought the radio and notified that buyer that the radio has to be returned.

SOUND CARD SOFTWARE

Many years ago, modes like RTTY, SSTV and fax were only used by specialists who had the knowledge and financial resources. Expensive converters were necessary. This changed after home computers were used substituting a part of the expensive hardware. Even with very little hardware (like the well-known HamComm modem) you can get astonishing results. To go one step further, you can drop any extra hardware if your computer has a sound card (as most computers will have nowadays). The soundcard and the computer do all the work necessary to decode/encode the signals.

Here's a great web site that offers a wide variety of software to assist the radio hobbyist.
<http://www.muenster.de/~welp/sb.htm>

NYS PD "Metro 21" UPDATE

Bob, N1MLZ caught a new talk group on the NYS PD Metro 21 trunked system. It is **06-026** it's been carrying some "very interesting" communications for extended periods of time. This appears to be used for some type of surveillance in NYC.

NEW 800 MHZ ANTENNA

GRE America has just unveiled a new 800 MHz Gain rubber duck antenna that is superior in performance to any 800 MHz antenna I have tried. It Out performs the one I currently sell for \$25.95 and is only priced at \$16.95. It is 8.25" long, with a heavy duty swivel joint at the bottom end that allows it to be at either 45 degrees or 90 degrees from horizontal, so it can be used on a hand-held or as a back of the set antenna. We will be able to ship them starting this Thursday (7/14)." ... **Joe, N2OAD**

USCG ACTIVITY

Increased activity on the USCG Activities NY repeater on 164.9125 PL103.5 has been noted. Many boarding's of foreign vessels taking place around NYC under the increased terrorism threat.

KISS RADIO

Kiss Radio 9290 signed on the air for the very first time Sunday 11th of July 2004 at 08-09 hours UTC on 9290 kHz via relay-facilities in Latvia. Program format is classic soul and R&B. Read more about the station at www.kiss9290.net

USMA – WEST POINT NY UPDATE

Recently our net received some questions related to radio communications originating from the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, NY. Kevin, K2DHS passed on this information.

There are two repeaters are in use by the Army at West Point, NY. I believe both new repeaters are located on the new Bull Mountain tower.

The first is **140.1625 (PL 136.5)**, this is the one that was queried last week. This is used by Force Protection/Military Police for the new contract Alutiiq-Wackenhut Security Officer force that has replaced the USMA Military Police at all gates and points of entry to the main base and outlying training areas, such as Camp Buckner and Camp Natural Bridge, where summer Cadet Field Training exercises are being held currently. The identifier for the Security/Force Protection base is "GUARDIAN BASE", and the "Charlie" units are posted around Camp Buckner and usually check in on the hour.. You will also hear the MP's come on the repeater (their identifier is "JUSTICE"). Peter, KC2CDC mentioned hearing an unidentified repeater on 140.16. It now appears that the actual frequency is 140.1625

The second new repeater is **140.950 (PL 136.5)**, and is used as the Cadet Field Training operations repeater. Every summer an active duty unit is brought into West Point to train cadets on Artillery and Infantry tactics. This year "Task Force Widowmaker" is comprised of USMA Staff and soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division. On this

repeater you will hear them coordinate ambushes and other tactical operations around the USMA training area.

Another very active repeater during the summer season (although not new) is **149.700 PL 167.9**, this is West Point's Range Control repeater. Kevin commented that all three repeaters have good coverage into Northern New Jersey.

Peter, KC2CDC mentioned hearing an unidentified repeater on 140.16. It now appears that the actual frequency is 140.1625, mentioned previously.

A MOVE FROM KHAKI TO BLUE

At the Gates of West Point, a Move From Khaki to Blue
By MAREK FUCHS

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/01/22/nyregion/22academy.html>

http://govtsecurity.com/mag/changing_guard_2/

When it comes to standing guard at the gates of the United States Military Academy at West Point, the hallowed military ground where the careers of George S. Patton, Douglas MacArthur and Dwight D. Eisenhower were forged, it's out with military-issued camouflage and in with mall-cop blue.

Beginning in May, private security guards will replace National Guardsmen as part of a Defense Department initiative to have civilian contractors take over tasks like base security with the hope of lightening the load for military personnel so they can focus on more important tasks, like Iraq.

"The contracts will free up soldiers to do jobs that only soldiers can do," said Maj. Kent Cassella, a spokesman for West Point, which plays host to surges of 40,000 visitors on football game days.

Before Sept. 11, gate duties at West Point were handled by a company of military police, but security was cursory, said Major Cassella, and though there were spot checks, pretty much anyone who wanted to could get onto the grounds. The terrorist attacks created a need for round-the-

clock protection of a higher order at the academy's three opened gates, too large a commitment for the military police, who are also responsible for basic police functions like traffic and crowd control.

National Guard troops in two units, about 100 at a time, were then rotated in to protect the gates, and there were no incidents, said Major Cassella.

On May 1, however, the private guards will begin to arrive, with some overlap to ensure a smooth transition before they take over from the National Guard at the end of the month.

Alutiiq Security and Technology, an Anchorage, Alaska, company, will be providing the guards, subcontracting with Wackenhut Services of Florida to provide additional guards. Both firm names will appear on the guards' uniform patches, with Alutiiq higher and bigger. Bruce Swagler, the contracts program manager for Alutiiq, said that though final figures had not been agreed on, he expected to provide West Point with 100 to 160 guards for \$4 million to \$5 million annually, which will pay for everything from offices to uniforms to weapons. Major Cassella said the contract should run through 2007.

Mr. Swagler added that the company, under a larger agreement with the Defense Department, was already providing private security guards at Fort Bragg in North Carolina and Carlisle Barracks in Pennsylvania, home of the Army War College. He expects to be rolling out private security guards to more than 10 other military installations in the spring.

There is a challenge to finding guards near West Point, Mr. Swagler acknowledged, what with the population in the general vicinity a little heavier on retired investment bankers than on the retired military personnel who often surround the military bases the company works with.

"West Point is also so officer heavy, and we usually recruit from the enlisted ranks," he said. Advertising, though, will begin this weekend, in local as well as military papers and on

Monster.com. The company looks for retired law enforcement officials, too, and though the new guards in charge of watching West Point will be armed, they will not be on the same footing in terms of weaponry as the guards they will replace.

Nine-millimeter pistols and shotguns will be the order of the day, and standard-issue M-16s will be out.

Major Cassella does not think that having private guards in blue will diminish West Point's mystique. He says the public will see it as another way Sept. 11 changed conventions.

UNIDEN BC796D FIRMWARE UPDATE

Uniden recently released new firmware for the BC796D. This is ONLY for the 796D, not the 296 or 785. It's said to reduce birdies and improves APCO 25 reception. It's available at:

http://www.uniden.com/productsupport_downloads_cfm?product=BC796D

Urban DX'er would like to thank all those who contributed to this month's issue!

Charlie - N2NOV; "R" from Bridgeport, CT; N1MLZ, Kevin, K2DHS, "NY028", Dave, KE2SL

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