

ACF / CCF NATIONAL RADIO NET COMPETITIONS

General

National Radio Net competitions usually take place once a term, using the issued PRC 320 HF radios. The object of all the competitions is to try and contact as many different competing stations on as many frequencies as are available within a certain time span. The competitions have differing scoring systems, but the more contacts made or messages sent to one particular station, the higher the number of points awarded. So, if station A contacts station B on 7 different frequencies it may only score only 7 points, but if it contacts station B on 10 frequencies, it might score 20 points.

The three competitions are called *Ex Easter Bunny*, *Ex Summer Whine* and *Ex Christmas Cracker*.

Ex Easter Bunny

This is a relatively short competition taking place on a Saturday and Sunday in mid - March from 1000 – 1500 hrs. It is intended that junior cadets should be the operators and is aimed mainly at ACF units. In this competition stations exchange signal strength reports and serial numbers. The more contacts made with one station, the more points scored.

Ex Summer Whine

It is intended that this competition should be between stations operating in field locations. The competition lasts from 1400 hrs on the Saturday until 1400 hrs on the Sunday. 24 hrs of non-stop operating, where cadets learn about working in field conditions, shift working, taking rests, understanding that HF radio contacts depend upon the prevailing weather, general atmospheric conditions and having the correct antenna for the frequency. Once again, the format is similar to *Ex Easter Bunny*. The competition takes place usually on the last weekend in June, after exams have finished and before the CCF units go off to their summer camps.

Ex Christmas Cracker

Ex Christmas Cracker usually takes place over the last weekend in November. Once again it is a 24 hr competition, but requires cadets to send and receive a short BATCO message to qualify for points. The operating takes place at a unit's base location, but a few hardy souls have been known to operate from field locations..... Scoring the most points results in being the winning team.

The winners

The team scoring the highest number of points is declared the winner by the organiser. **Taking part is more important than winning**, because if it were not for all the stations joining in and then sending in their score sheets to the organiser, there would not be a winner. Some teams have been surprised that they have done so well, when the results have been announced. The *Ex Christmas Cracker* result is always announced at noon on Christmas Day, when some of the adults and a few cadets have a radio schedule.

The competitions are great fun and I still remember camping in the New Forest when I was a cadet. We had our first taste of compo rations, tried to contact the other stations all Saturday and most of Sunday morning without any joy, only to discover on the Sunday afternoon that we did not have the correct antenna.....

MGV